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ANTIWAR REPORT TO SWP NATIONAL COMMITTEE PLENUM

March 1, 1970

by Gus Horowitz

The following report will deal with three main areas: 1.) The present status of the war in Vietnam, the mass mood in the U.S., the situation in the antiwar movement, and their relation to the antiwar demonstrations scheduled for April 15; 2.) the expanded opportunities for antiwar activity in sectors of the population other than students; 3.) the significance of the SMC development, both in terms of the antiwar movement generally, and in relation to the points we have made here about the opportunities that lie ahead for our own party.

First, on the war: two grave difficulties continue to beset the American imperialists in Vietnam. Despite a massive effort, they have been unable to win an outright military victory. Second has been the continually increasing growth of the international antiwar movement, especially the antiwar movement right here in the United States.

To deal with this, as we pointed out at the plenum a year ago, and again at the party convention, there has been a shift in the tactics of the ruling class which began under Johnson and continues under Nixon. This tactical shift has included a redistribution of the war effort and a diplomatic and propaganda offensive.

Their strategic goal, however, remains that of crushing the national liberation struggle in Vietnam and imposing a Korea-type settlement which will keep South Vietnam under their domination and preserve it as a major Asian base for American imperialism.

The bombing of North Vietnam was curtailed, although as we know from recent reports, it was never fully brought to a halt. At the same time the war was intensified considerably in the south, in Laos, and in Cambodia.

The policy of "maximum military pressure" in the south led to intensive ground action and a higher rate of American casualties. And this in turn has led to growing domestic opposition to the war. Recently, the American imperialists have tried to keep U.S. battle casualties down, placing greater emphasis on their technological power, especially aerial bombing. What is happening now in Laos is a good example.

On October 1, Le Monde reported that "North Vietnam was more heavily bombed than Korea; Laos is now being bombed even more than North Vietnam, and this battering has been going on for over five years ... The U.S. Air Force carries out more than 12,500 raids a month."

We can add that this figure is out of date, for the bombing has gone up to 20,000 sorties per month -- not just against the supply routes along the so-called Ho Chi Minh trail, but in central and northeast Laos.

Chemical warfare, which continues at a high level, is another example of their massive military-technological efforts. Since 1962, chemical herbicides have been sprayed over more than 4 million acres of Vietnam -- an area larger than all of Massachusetts.

What all of this means in terms of the destruction of Vietnam and Laos was clearly revealed in the recent news reports about the battles in Laos. The population in the Plain of Jars, formerly 150,000, was driven down to 15,000. And, as the New York Times reported before the latest events, "hardly a house is left standing and the refugee camps where the last of the plainsmen live are about to be evacuated."

Conservative estimates place the total number of refugees in Laos at more than 600,000. That's 20% of the population and a 33% increase in the last year.

And, as is well known, this same type of devastation of the countryside is being pursued and intensified in south Vietnam.

The meaning of Nixon's so-called "Vietnamization" policy is thus revealed as the attempt to keep American casualties down and utilize massive technological power to turn a substantial part of the country into a wasteland and a big section of the population into dispersed refugees.

The hopes of the American ruling class rest more on American military power than on illusions in the abilities of the Saigon regime's army.

But there is no evidence that this policy is working. I'd like to

cite two recent editorials that appeared in the New York Times to illustrate the problems as at least a section of the ruling class sees it.

The first appeared on Feb. 24, shortly after the U.S.- supported Laotian army was routed from the Plain of Jars:

"The precipitous withdrawal of the highly touted army of Meo tribesmen who seized the plain last fall underscores the danger involved in overreliance by the United States on the capacity of American-trained native troops to take over basic combat responsibility in Southeast Asia. The failure of massive American air power, including B-52's, to check the Communist advance is an indication of the limited ability of this kind of United States support to overcome the deficiencies of local forces.

"The lack of decisiveness of American air power has sobering implications for Vietnam, where American air and artillery power may be the principal shield between South Vietnamese forces and a determined foe if the Nixon policy of Vietnamization is pursued."

The other editorial appeared on Feb. 5:

"Despite optimistic briefings about the progress of pacification and the badly battered condition of the Communist military forces, the Senate investigators found enough indications of Communist strength and Saigon weakness to conclude that military and pacification gains are fragile and could be reversed.

"Much of the apparent progress appears, in fact, to reflect a shift in Communist tactics from large-unit military offensives back to small-unit guerrilla activity and a strategy of 'protracted war.'...The implication is that Hanoi is simply conserving force and biding its time until the United States either withdraws completely or halts its withdrawals after a significant rundown of its forces. In the latter event, the Senate investigators note, a massive North Vietnamese attack could face the United States with the 'agonizing prospect' of reversing the process of withdrawal or effecting an accelerated, complete withdrawal 'which would be interpreted at home, and probably abroad, as a military and political defeat.'"

And in case there are any questions about the Saigon regime's own confidence in itself, as far as

"Vietnamization" is concerned, let me cite an article that appeared in the New Republic on December 6. It's by Tran Van Dinh, a former member of the Saigon government:

"The possibility of a 'blood-bath' in South Vietnam if U.S. troops were to swiftly withdraw has been worrying both 'hawks' and 'doves'. But the Vietnamese likely to be the most affected by a change of regime in Saigon, or by a Communist take-over -- the wealthy and powerful -- do not talk much about it: they have been getting ready ever since the Tet offensive of 1968, which brought the war into their cities and their air-conditioned living rooms. A quiet exodus began, mostly to France." And he goes on to explain that, "Money has been deposited in European banks. According to Allessandro Cassella of Die Weltwoche of Zurich a total of between \$1.5 and \$2 billion has left Vietnam in this way."

This is not exactly the sign of a confident regime.

* * *

What about the propaganda offensive of the ruling class? In this area they are faring no better. The situation now is not at all comparable to that of the plenum a year ago when there was still widespread disorientation and confusion in the mass of the U.S. population, when the antiwar movement had suffered numerous defections, and when the objective situation made it appear difficult to build truly massive antiwar demonstrations.

In the intervening time we have gone through the experience of seeing an extensive revitalization of the antiwar movement as represented in the demonstrations held on April 5-6, 1969, and, of course, October 15 and November 15.

The latter two actions were unprecedented in size and scope and showed the depth of antiwar sentiment which has reached a sizable majority.

A recent Gallup poll showed 41% favoring either immediate withdrawal of all American troops or their withdrawal by the end of the year, with only 11% for sending more troops to Vietnam. And although the polls do reveal the existence of illusions in Nixon and some disorientation, it must be stated emphatically that there is nothing comparable to the widespread disorientation that existed in the 1968-early 1969 period.

To the contrary, there are a number of impressive signs in the post-November 15 period that illustrate the favorable objective situation for mass antiwar action.

Evidence of this is shown by the continuing local antiwar actions that have occurred in this period, some of which have been quite sizable. In December and January there were the Moratoriums which included demonstrations of several thousands in many cities. Though not comparable to October 15, of course, some of these actions compared quite favorably with other mass actions held on a local basis.

There have been numerous demonstrations in cities whenever Agnew has come to town. The current Militant, for example, reports a demonstration of 800 that was held in Atlanta and another of 2,500 in the Twin Cities -- both sizable for these cities.

Sizable local demonstrations were held right after the verdict in the Chicago "conspiracy" trial. Many thousands demonstrated on very short notice. And even if in some areas there were tendencies towards adventurist confrontation, nevertheless, these examples indicate the existence of an explosive mood which is already manifest prior to a central national focus as April 15 will be.

Another example can be seen in the situation in the local antiwar coalitions which have not disintegrated in the post-Nov. 15 period. In general they have held together and are building for April 15. This very weekend there are local antiwar conferences taking place in Boston, San Francisco and New York to map plans for April 15.

The SMC conference is also an indication of the potential for mass antiwar action. The 4,000 people at the conference made it a sizable antiwar event in itself, if I am not mistaken one of the largest ever held in Cleveland. And the people who came to that conference came only because they wanted to decide on the next action. They wanted to know what to do next.

The SMC conference called the April 15 demonstrations in an impressive fashion. It was a giant step forward in publicizing the action and mobilizing the organized antiwar movement for it.

All in all, we can conclude that the post-November 15 period has now shown wide disorientation. In a

certain sense the "lull" has been more a period of preparation before the coming storm.

The objective situation favors mass antiwar action and all indications are that the demonstrations on April 15 will be quite sizable broad in the scope of participation and wide-ranging geographically.

While it would be out of order to make predictions as to specific size or project a repeat of October 15, we should prepare for the likelihood of very significant actions.

All demonstrations are a sort of test and there are no guarantees in advance. All we know is that April 15 will be the first national focus since the march on Washington and the real test of the current antiwar mood of the mass.

* * *

While it is clear that there are favorable opportunities for April 15, we must take note of the changed situation on the organizational side of the antiwar movement as compared to October 15 and November 15.

First on the Moratorium: Although the Moratorium committee has stated that April 15 will be its major focus, there is no indication that they are organizing for it as such. They are basically turning to the 1970 elections where they are organizing support for capitalist candidates -- as was expected. While this will have an effect in that it indicates that April 15 will not receive the type of financing, publicity and formal endorsements from them as October 15 did, at the same time, there is no basis for expecting that the Moratorium committee will be able to seriously impair the antiwar movement's ability to build the mass action. The elections are not yet a major factor and there are no indications that other major sections of the antiwar movement are being drawn away from mass actions towards the elections. To the contrary, many local Moratorium committees, especially on the campuses, can be won over to full support for April 15. And, in fact, a number of these committees did come to the SMC conference.

A word should also be said about the evolution of the New Mobilization Committee away from mass action. The key thing here is that the reasons for this evolution are not identical to those which resulted

in the disintegration of the old National Mobilization Committee during 1968 and 1969.

At that time the widespread disorientation led to defections from the struggle against the war. The local antiwar coalitions fragmented or fell apart. Similar defections occurred in the national antiwar coalition, and led to a greater relative weight to the ultralefts and confrontationists in its apparatus. The National Mobilization Committee ceased to be a coalition primarily because of these objective factors.

Now, however, there have been no comparable defections. The developments in the New Mobilization Committee are due more to the hybrid character that it carries from its origins. While it was organized for the purpose of building the November 15 mass demonstration, its decision-making structure did not adequately represent the mass action forces and included far too high a proportion of forces left over from the old, unrepresentative National Mobilization Committee. The New Mobe held together through the action, but afterwards the centrifugal tendencies came to the fore. But this was not primarily because of objective political factors.

The civil disobedience and confrontationist forces, which now predominate in the New Mobe apparatus, are not relatively stronger in the antiwar movement. The situation in the New Mobilization Committee does not reflect a lack of opportunities for mass antiwar action. This is the key difference.

In addition, while many in the antiwar movement still have illusions about the New Mobe, the April 15 action is locally based, and the NMC apparatus will not be in a good position to cut across the mass action.

In saying all this, we recognize that the central national burden for building April 15 rests with the Student Mobilization Committee -- not to go it alone, but to spearhead it and to set the lead in organizing coalitions for it. In the process big steps will be taken toward rebuilding the national antiwar coalition. The SMC conference was itself a big step toward this goal.

* * *

In the coming period we should pay attention to the enlarged opportunities for expanding the breadth of the antiwar movement to sectors of

the population other than the students -- specifically to labor, the oppressed national minorities and GIs.

First on labor. One of the factors motivating local demonstrations on April 15 is the opportunity to obtain greater labor support and involvement. We have noticed increasing signs of opportunities in this area.

A number of local unions are now on record against the war, particularly unions in areas such as social services and teaching. In some still exceptional cases there has been formal, organized trade union involvement in antiwar actions. A comrade in Los Angeles, for example, was able to get his local's endorsement for Nov. 15 and its financial backing for buses to San Francisco. In New York City some local unions also organized buses for the march on Washington.

We have noticed a greater willingness by some of the top union officials to speak at antiwar demonstrations. Harold Gibbons of the Teamsters spoke at the march on Washington and the Missouri Teamsters announced in a recent issue of their paper that they are opening a discussion on the Vietnam war. Prior to the October Moratorium the ALA issued an advertisement against the war, and while it had many political weaknesses, the ad was the first of its kind by such a major trade union organization. A few days ago an antiwar advertisement appeared in the Washington Post, sponsored by the Washington Labor for Peace, % the Vietnam Moratorium Committee. The signers of the ad came from a long list of unions. They signed their names as individuals, but they included a number of local labor officials and some national figures, including Victor Reuther of the UAW. In contrast to the earlier ALA ad, this one contained no red-baiting attacks on the antiwar movement.

All of these are signs that expanding opportunities exist. The possibilities for obtaining formal labor endorsement for antiwar actions are even greater on the local level than on the national. We should explore these opportunities for April 15 to the fullest and utilize any statements of support from the bureaucrats to obtain greater rank and file participation.

Another opportunity in this area will be through the antiwar movement's relation to the labor struggles of 1970. Here the SMC's approach to the GE strike can be taken as a model. The SMC supported the strike, not out

of particular multi-issue political perspective, but along an antiwar axis. It saw the ruling class crack-down on labor as an attempt to force labor to pay for the mounting costs of the Vietnam war. Thus the current labor struggles deal blows to the ability of the warmakers to continue to prosecute the war, and as such, deserve the fullest support of the antiwar movement.

The central action taken by the SMC was no change in SMC policy either; it was along the SMC norms -- on campus, on an antiwar axis. The key issue utilized was that of campus complicity with the war. The SMC picked GE as a target because of the strike. Because of the strength that students have in the campus arena, the SMC approach had the potential of giving material aid to the striking GE workers to a greater extent than through focusing on off-campus actions.

The SMC's "GE Off Campus" campaign also helped stimulate educational discussions among students on the importance of linking up with the labor movement. And finally, this type of campaign creates more favorable opportunities to approach organized labor for support to antiwar actions. The SMC is now approaching the electrical workers' unions for support to April 15.

We can expect more opportunities along this line in 1970, with the rise in trade union struggles that we anticipate. The SMC, as the mass national organization of antiwar students, as an organization that has some real political weight among high school and college youth, will be a key factor in establishing links with the organized trade union movement.

* * *

There has never been any question that the oppressed black and Third World minorities have, from the beginning, been opposed to the Vietnam war in even greater proportion than whites. But up to now there has been a disproportion between the mass antiwar mood among oppressed national minorities and their organized participation in antiwar actions. Recently, however, there have been signs of expanded opportunities in this area as well.

On October 15 there were numerous instances of mass antiwar actions organized by and involving Third World students. In New York some 3,000 black high school students organized a mass action. In Detroit some 5,000 out of 20,000 at the mass demonstration were black, mostly black high school students who closed down a number of inner city schools. On December 20, 1969

a Chicano moratorium was held in Los Angeles, involving some 2,000 Chicanos. This was followed up on January 17 when 500 Asian Americans took part in an Asian American moratorium in Los Angeles. Black GIs continue to play a key leadership role in GI antiwar action -- the current issue of The Militant has a report on the formation of an all-black organization at Ft. Bragg. The SMC conference offers another example -- the 100 people who took part in the Third World workshop is the largest number yet for any similar antiwar gathering.

A key opening to expand this is provided by the March 22-29 National Black Referendum on Vietnam, which will ask for a vote on the question of "immediate withdrawal of all American troops and money from Vietnam." The organizers of the referendum state that it will be conducted in black churches, the black community and among black GIs. Among the initiators of the referendum are forces around the National Committee of Black Churchmen, SCLC, and ex-SNCC leaders. It has the formal support of a very wide range of figures encompassing most political tendencies in the black community.

We should step in full steam ahead and build this referendum. At present it does not appear that there is extensive financing or organization behind the referendum, but this should not deter us. A key factor will be our ability to build it and through it lay the groundwork for expanded antiwar actions in this entire area. The best opportunities for building this referendum are through the Third World committees of the SMC, on the campuses and in the high schools. These are key. They can be one of the main forms in which work will be done on the referendum and one of the main areas in which there can be a response. Through the referendum the antiwar movement can link up with BSU, Third World student organizations, etc., and look towards much greater organized black and Third World participation in April 15.

Another form for reaching out in this area is provided by the SMC's high school bill of rights. Many black high school organizations, in the course of their own struggles have come face to face with the same type of civil liberties questions that antiwar student groups have. There is thus a possibility for common actions.

Another opening may also be possible after the Chicano conference in Denver, should it take up the

question of antiwar actions.

But it should be clear that in all of this antiwar work it will be our responsibility, through our Third World cadre, to provide much of the leadership and to spearhead much of the activity. And, as experience has shown -- in Detroit, for example -- our participation in the Third World committees of the SMC is a means of recruiting to our movement.

* * *

At last year's plenum we emphasized the importance of the increasing antiwar activity by GIs. We did so both because of the importance of this development in itself and as an aid in revitalizing the entire antiwar movement. Since then, far from declining, there has been a steady and considerable expansion of GI antiwar sentiment and activity. This is an extremely important development.

One example of this can be seen in the proliferation of GI antiwar groups and "underground" base papers. The GI Press Service of the SMC, which lists these papers on its back page, is continually revising its list, adding papers with each issue. Some of these GI groups are quite large and have well thought out political positions, for example, GIs for Peace, at Ft. Bliss.

We also notice that there have been some repetitions of the fights for the right of GIs to distribute literature on post, the type of fight that was initiated by GIs United. Similar legal fights are now in the works at three or four bases.

There have even been some antiwar actions taken by GIs in Vietnam. Among them were the wearing of black armbands by GIs on Oct. 15, the Thanksgiving Day antiwar fast at Pleiku, and the Jan. 3 censorship protest by GI newscaster Lawrence in Saigon. In addition, close to 200 signers of the SMC's GI antiwar petition that appeared in the New York Times were from Vietnam.

This expanded open GI antiwar activity has gained considerable attention in the major bourgeois newspapers and magazines. Reports indicate a deepening antiwar sentiment among the GIs in Vietnam. A high percentage of these GIs have come right out of the current generation of antiwar protest.

These are but a few examples of expanded GI antiwar activity in the recent time period. Now, in the past

period we have seen the qualitative expansion of the civilian antiwar movement, and this has gained the bulk of attention. But even so, we should not let the developments among the GIs be overshadowed, neglected or downgraded in importance. It would be a serious error to do so -- especially for our movement, which has always set the lead on this question. We want to place the same kind of proportional emphasis on involving the GI component in antiwar activity as we have always attempted to do.

One of the best tools in this regard is the GI Press Service, published by the SMC. It is not presently conceived as a mass paper, but as an informational service to key GI activists. This function enables it to educate and provide political leadership for many of the developments that take place. The GI Press Service has been expanding in circulation and authority and is looked to by many of the new GI groups and papers. A steady and increasing correspondence has been established. An example of what this means concretely is provided by the GI antiwar ad, for which the signatures were obtained in a three week period.

We should give full support to the SMC's plans to expand the utilization and circulation of the GI Press Service. In particular, we should help get bundles in the hands of key GI activists and key civilian antiwar leaders and organizations.

It is very important to pay close attention to all the expanding antiwar opportunities in the mass as a whole. One other method along this line is the use of antiwar referendums which can be used as a propaganda tool on a wide level. The San Francisco antiwar movement is conducting another important referendum there. Where possible this should be initiated in other areas. These can be even more important if we are right about the objective situation.

* * *

In fully evaluating the significance of the SMC, one of the points we made at the time of the October Moratorium is worth repeating here. That is, the changing perspectives as a result of the shifting dynamic of the antiwar movement into a qualitatively larger and broader mass movement. While we cannot predict the exact pace of this development, and while it will recede at times and advance at others,

this general process is clearly beginning to occur.

We have seen powerful forces, as represented by the trade union bureaucrats and capitalist politicians, adapt to the mass antiwar sentiment with the purpose, not of building independent mass actions, but of channeling the antiwar masses into dependence upon capitalist politicians. In this much larger antiwar movement we can anticipate that the relative influence of these forces will be quite strong initially. They will bring great pressure to bear upon the antiwar movement in opposition to the central principles upon which the antiwar struggle until now has been based. They will oppose immediate withdrawal, independent mass action, non-exclusion, and democratic decision-making.

In this process there will tend to be a shift in our role from that of direct political and organizational leadership in a relatively limited mass movement to leadership of the class struggle left wing within a much larger mass movement. We look forward to this development as an expansion of political opportunities for us. The key is that the left wing is not in retreat, but is growing.

The key ingredient in this process is the Student Mobilization Committee. The fundamental principles upon which the SMC is based are those of the militant left wing of the antiwar movement: immediate withdrawal, independent mass action, non-exclusion, and internal democracy. As we know, the antiwar students are a very large sector of the mass antiwar movement which can be won to these SMC principles. The SMC is the largest, best-organized, and most determined fighter for this line. This puts a premium in all our antiwar work on building the SMC and convincing antiwar activists of its line.

We saw an example of the dynamics of this process in the way in which the SMC was able to intervene in the October 15 Moratorium. The SMC was the first of the established antiwar organizations to support the moratorium. It helped build it into an activity that generally turned around the axis of mass action and immediate withdrawal, and the SMC saw to it that the "On To Washington" theme was thrust to the center.

* * *

We are all familiar with the qualitative growth experienced by

the SMC during the fall as a result of the October 15 and November 15 demonstrations. Rather than go into this at any length, the remainder of this report will take up the significance of the SMC development as shown by the SMC conference that was held two weeks ago.

The SMC conference was the largest, broadest, most democratic conference in the history of the antiwar movement. And it accomplished the most as well. It clearly gave the stamp of authority to the SMC as the mass national organization of antiwar students, and as the largest student organization on the general left. And it also resulted in a tremendous enhancement of the prestige and authority of the Trotskyist movement, which is the recognized political leadership of the SMC.

The final credential figures for the SMC conference, which have just been released, give an indication of its breadth and magnitude.

Total registration was 3,308, and we estimate that several hundred people attended without going through the formal registration process, bringing the total attendance near the 4,000 mark. This contrasts with the largest antiwar conference held up to now -- the NCC conference in November, 1965. Only 1,500 attended that gathering in Washington which was held over a Thanksgiving holiday weekend and tied into a mass national demonstration scheduled in Washington at the same time.

The SMC conference was far larger than any held by SDS. Their largest was the split convention last year, attended by 1,500. The SMC conference was equal to or larger than the New Politics conference in 1967 -- and that drew on many forces outside the antiwar movement.

To put it succinctly -- the SMC conference was probably as large as any in the entire history of American student radicalism.

Three quarters of the conference were students. They came from 40 states and Washington, D.C. There were 200 people from the South, 79 from the far West, and 1,189 from Ohio. They came from 298 colleges and 200 high schools. In breadth, there has never been anything close to this. The workshops on GIs, Third World liberation, women's liberation, and high schools were the largest of any antiwar gathering -- indicating the SMC's growing links with these components of

the antiwar movement.

Virtually every tendency in the radical and antiwar movement was present. A long list of international messages of greeting were received. More than 100 representatives of the news media covered the gathering.

The conference and workshop decisions not only outlined the character of the April 15 demonstrations, but also projected a realistic program of ongoing antiwar activity in which the SMC will take the lead. This includes activities relating to high school students, GIs, Third World people, women, labor and campaigns around campus complicity with the war, the draft, and political and legal defense of the movement.

The political discussion at the conference was significant in reaffirming the main principles of the militant left wing of the antiwar movement and educating hundreds of the main antiwar activists about them.

The questions of mass action and immediate withdrawal were thoroughly discussed in the main plenary debates over the April 15 proposal.

The conference reaffirmed the principle of non-exclusion and overwhelmingly rejected red-baiting. All through the conference the opponents of the SMC and YSA line levelled a variety of crude red-baiting charges against the YSA. But this tactic backfired and discredited those who engaged in it. It was significant that Carol Lipman, a well-known YSAer, was elected the SMC's central officer by a sizable majority in a democratic vote. This also illustrates our standing in the antiwar movement.

The fact that all decision-making was clearly and unquestionably democratic will have an impact on the future of the antiwar movement and the radical movement in general. This is especially important because of our recognized leadership role and responsibility.

The example of the SMC conference will go a long way in countering the false charge that the mass action, immediate withdrawal line cannot win in an open and democratic debate. And in countering the notion that a mass democratic conference is a practical impossibility. And in countering the red-baiting charge that we are afraid of democracy and seek to dominate conferences through the artificial force of our numbers.

To the contrary, as the SMC conference showed, our line carries the greatest weight the larger and more representative the gathering is.

In general, the SMC conference definitively showed that our antiwar line is preponderant within the student antiwar movement. It showed also that the SMC is unquestionably the mass national organization of antiwar students -- not only in our estimation, but in the eyes of students and other antiwar forces in general. And even if done grudgingly, it is a fact that will have to be accepted in one form or another by all other groups and tendencies.

The simple fact is that after the total disintegration of SDS, there is no other organization that can even claim to have anywhere near the size and breadth of the SMC. Many other sections of the antiwar movement which have been openly hostile to the SMC, or which have tended to ignore it, will now feel constrained to take an openly friendly and supportive attitude to the SMC.

All of this means that the SMC has before it new and vastly expanded opportunities for growth, for leading mass student actions, and for convincing ever larger numbers of its political line.

As leaders in the SMC, we should look for ways of qualitatively expanding such things as press and publicity, finances, the number of activists that can be involved organizationally and take on major responsibilities, the number of prominent individuals who will associate themselves with the SMC to help build the actions, raise funds and obtain publicity.

The general guideline should be -- Think Big! Think bigger than ever before. And that is only natural for a mass organization like the SMC.

We must also be prepared for the implications for the SMC's internal political life that were indicated by the conference. It is to be expected that some of our opponents will feel that they can no longer afford to abstain from the SMC and will intervene in it to one degree or another. In many places where we were the only organized tendency within the SMC, this will no longer be the case. We have noticed signs of this already.

We will thus have the opportunity on the local level to do what we did at the conference -- to take our opponents on politically and defeat them. In the process we will recruit, enhance our political authority, educate the antiwar activists, and enhance the reputation of the SMC as a broad organization that includes in its ranks anyone opposed to the war and for immediate withdrawal.

This also means that we will have to take the lead in making sure that the SMC abides by all the necessary democratic procedures and organizational norms. These must be clearly defined and strictly observed, on a local level as well as national. There is absolutely no room for sloppiness on this score. As this was a key element in carrying off the SMC conference with all our opponents present, it will also be key in maintaining and building the SMC.

The growth of the SMC means that we must treat it with the importance it deserves. National SMC meetings, mailings from the SMC national office, financial obligations of the local SMC chapters to the national office, etc. -- all must be treated with the type of seriousness that is obviously called for.

* * *

There are two particular areas of SMC activity that bear special emphasis: high school and campus complicity actions.

First, on the high schools. Over the past couple of years, there has been an accelerated radicalization in the high schools and a growth of high school antiwar actions and other struggles. This is an indication of the general deepening of the present radicalization. And it will help accelerate it as high school students go into college, the army, or the work force.

It is here in the high schools that the SMC has some of its greatest strength and opportunities and the fewest opponents. The size of high school contingents on demonstrations and at the SMC conference is a good indication. In some cities, for example, the SMC has contacts and chapters on virtually every high school in the metropolitan area. This is a potential powerhouse for mass action which should be pursued with special attention.

In the high schools, as with the GIs, any attempt to carry out antiwar struggle immediately comes

face to face with the question of civil liberties.

To this problem, the SMC has drafted a high school bill of rights, with the goal of making its demands a central part of antiwar action on the high schools. This document is not conceived as a pure and simple legalistic document. It is intended by the SMC as a document of struggle. In building April 15, high school SMCers will be attempting to implement the provisions of the high school bill of rights in practice. These include the right to distribute leaflets at the high schools, the right to hold meetings, to invite antiwar speakers, to set up committees, etc.

There are big opportunities around this bill of rights. Legal aid from organizations like the ECLC and ACLU is often readily available. There are also opportunities to make links with the Third World high school organizations around both the war and civil liberties issues which are also of vital importance in their own struggles in the high schools.

One example of the potential of this campaign is becoming evident here in New York. Comrades are familiar with the latest Militant story on this. A high school coalition has been formed around a high school bill of rights, composed of SMC, Third World groups and the high school student government of New York City. The initiative and leadership for this came from the SMC and the political demands are essentially those raised by the SMC document. While predictions are out of order, we are aiming for unprecedented mass actions in the high schools around this document which will culminate in the April 15 antiwar demonstrations. This type of thing can be considered in many other areas.

A second area of SMC activity which we should be alert to are campaigns around the issue of campus complicity with the war. The "GE Off Campus" campaign is one example. The opportunities exist for many other campaigns of a similar nature, around which massive campus actions can be built.

In the past we have seen massive campus actions against ROTC, the draft, Dow Chemical, war research, and others. Often these actions have led to student strikes which have shut entire campuses down. The SMC's growth into the mass student

antiwar organization places the responsibility on it to initiate and lead actions of this nature -- and without the ultraleftism and adventurism that has characterized many of these actions in the past. This is the type of action which we should be alert for and provide leadership to.

One final and important point should be made about the perspective we should have in regard to the SMC.

At the plenum a year ago we pointed to the defections of large sections of the antiwar movement and made the point of being careful not to try and go it alone with the SMC in the April 5-6 demonstrations. We led the SMC in sticking to the course of mass antiwar action while others defected in that period -- but we tried to convince the SMC not to build the actions alone, but to spearhead them, to push, prod and bring other forces along in mass action antiwar coalitions. The SMC alone was not enough, and was not what we wanted.

Now the SMC is a much larger organization. In its own right it has the ability to mobilize significant numbers into action. But it still would be a political blunder to go it alone. Precisely because the SMC is significantly larger, it has greater ability to lead many other sectors of the antiwar movement into action and build larger and broader mass action coalitions for the April 15 demonstrations. And in building them as coalition demonstrations, the SMC itself will have an even greater ability to mobilize masses of students into action.

* * *

Finally, let us look at some of the points that the SMC conference indicates for our own organization. In the political report, three basic factors bearing on our ability to become the center of the radical movement were listed: 1) the objective political situation; 2) our situation in relation to our opponents; and 3) our internal situation.

In all three of these areas the SMC conference illustrated what we have been able to accomplish so far, and what the perspectives ahead for us are:

1) The favorable objective situation, of course, was illustrated just by the statistics and nature of the conference itself.

2) Our gains in relation to our opponents were impressive. Here, at the largest student conference since

the largest student conference since the new radicalization began, we were able to take on all of our opponents at once and defeat them overwhelmingly.

In contrast to the maneuvers of their unprincipled bloc, we were able to show the young radicals that we were anxious to put our ideas to the test of a democratic vote, and confident that we could wage a principled political fight and win in the process. We were able to take on the red-baiting and make it backfire. And we won without resorting to the level of our opponents, with their procedural maneuvers, demagogic issues, chanting, shouting, stomping and throwing of paper airplanes.

Now in a balanced analysis we must state that two of our strongest opponents, the Communist Party and Progressive Labor, did not mobilize for the SMC conference. If they had, they would have given us more trouble than we actually had. But at the same time, this reflected their inability to recognize and intervene in such a major political event -- and equally important, their fear of putting their ranks in direct face-to-face political confrontation with us.

3) The third side to the conference was what it revealed about our internal situation -- the points raised in the organization report here and at the SWP convention about such things as press and propaganda, election campaigns, factions and structure, and cadre building.

In all these areas the test of the SMC conference was impressive. Militant sales were over 1,000. More than 400 subscriptions were sold. Literature sales were \$485, and our selection and display was far superior to any of our opponents. In addition, our comrades wrote over 10 position papers for the conference, either proposed SMC resolutions or discussion articles and leaflets.

The way in which we intervened into the conference with our election campaigns is another example of what is happening. First of all, the conference showed how our election campaigns are part of the mass movement. Our candidates spoke in the conference discussions and played an important leadership role in the floor fights. And then, right at the conference itself, we held a press conference where our candidates

announced their support to the decisions that had just been taken. An illustration of the changing image of the SWP that our election campaigns have helped along is shown by the way in which the Cleveland news media covered the conference. They sought out and ran stories on Syd Stapleton, our former candidate for mayor of Cleveland, and Marcia Sweetenham, present candidate for governor. They reported how the socialist candidates were part of the antiwar conference and backed its decisions.

Our fraction, although a small minority of the conference itself, was the largest we have yet had at an antiwar conference. This indicates the depth of our involvement in the mass movement and the seriousness of our cadre. The way in which our comrades intervened in the floor fights indicated the growing political capabilities of our cadre. It is also important to note the way in which our cadre was able to function in different components of the mass movement. Our comrades led the workshops and discussion dealing with the war's relation to GIs, women's liberation, Third World liberation, and high school struggles.

And in addition to the political fights and our general propaganda intervention, our comrades also took on central responsibilities for

organizing the smooth functioning of a conference of such size.

The result of all this is a tremendous enhancement of our authority in the antiwar movement and of our ability to recruit and project ourselves more and more into the very center of the radical movement.

We must not underestimate the significance of the whole SMC development for the SWP and the YSA. This is the first time in our history that we have been the undisputed political leadership of a mass national organization like the SMC. But if it is the first time, it will certainly not be the last.

It is often convenient to look for a moment at the unbroken historical process in terms of specific time periods. If the decade of the 1960's was one of preparation, of assembling the first detachments of cadre from the new radicalization, of shakeups in the relationship of forces on the left, then the decade of the 1970's begins auspiciously with the one-two punch of the YSA convention and the SMC conference. If anything, these signify an acceleration of the process of our becoming the center of the radical movement, and of the steps toward becoming the leading party of mass action in the coming socialist revolution.

YOUTH REPORT TO SWP NC PLENUM

by Susan LaMont

March 1, 1970

The youth report to the SWP convention last August outlined the optimistic prospects for the continued growth in size and influence of the YSA in the context of two significant political developments which we saw occurring.

The first was the continued and deepening process of radicalization, and in particular, the new rise in antiwar sentiment which the April 5-6 antiwar actions had surfaced. With the breakdown in the illusions that Nixon was interested in ending the war, we saw the possibility of drawing larger numbers and broader layers of people than ever before into antiwar actions, and we saw the possibility of the SMC becoming a mass student antiwar organization, mobilizing hundreds of thousands of students in action against the war in Vietnam, and with the YSA in the political leadership of the SMC on a national scale.

The second development, which is related to the first, was the decline of our opponents, especially SDS, and their almost total inability to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by the radicalization and especially their failure to understand the critical importance of the war in Vietnam and the antiwar movement. While the radicalization moved forward, SDS stood paralyzed by their theoretical bankruptcy and their constant internal faction fighting, which came to a head at the famous split convention.

The YSA saw the deepening of the radicalization and the political vacuum left in many places by the demise of SDS as an opening and opportunity to make qualitative steps forward for our movement through building the SMC and the YSA. We understood that the majority of newly radicalized young people and many of those who had been in SDS, while most of them were not ready to join the YSA, could be drawn into the SMC and its actions. And of course, the YSA, because of its role in the SMC and the other struggles in which we are involved, would be able to recruit a significant number of these young people to the YSA.

The correctness of our perspective last fall has been confirmed by four major events -- October 15, November 15, the YSA convention, and

the recent SMC conference. If anything, our most optimistic projections last fall were too modest. We're going into 1970 with the SMC already a mass student antiwar organization with tens of thousands of members, and with the YSA firmly established as the largest and most influential socialist youth organization in the country.

The YSA convention last December made that very clear. That convention was the largest and most geographically representative gathering of Trotskyists which has occurred in 25 years. It made a big public impact, with TV and radio reports, and articles in newspapers all over the country. The clippings from the convention fill 70 pages, and articles are still trickling in from newspapers like the Topeka State Journal. The convention also made a big impact on our own comrades. For a large percentage of the comrades there -- about half -- it was their first convention and the first chance for them to see the YSA as a national organization, to see what kind of people are in the YSA, and to discuss and help arrive at our political perspectives for the coming period.

The Minneapolis convention showed what a big step forward we have made in the past year in the recruitment and development of national fractions in three key areas -- the high school movement, the Black and Third World liberation struggles, and the women's liberation movement. We now have a national team of leaders in these areas -- comrades who are activists and leaders in the struggles in which our movement is involved. The effectiveness and ability of our movement to participate in, assume leadership for, and give direction to the developing struggles that make up the radicalization have been greatly increased in the last year by this recruitment. The fact that we are more and more in the center of these struggles and that both newly radicalized young people and especially our opponents have to orient to us, have to answer us and our line, came through clearly at the SMC conference several weeks ago.

That conference was the largest conference in the history of the current radicalization. Everyone was there -- SMC activists from around

the country, unaffiliated radicals of all shapes and sizes, and all our opponents -- the Workers League, RYM, the Yippies, PL/WSA, YWILL. I believe that Spartacists were the only ones who didn't show up. That conference was the culmination of our work in building the SMC this fall, especially through October 15 and November 15, and proved the correctness of our projection of SMC becoming a mass organization. The conference was especially significant in that YSAers were clearly and openly in the leadership of the SMC and the attempts to challenge the line of the SMC or our position as leading activists were taken head-on and defeated. All our opponents had a chance to present their ideas on everything, and to try to convince and win over people. Our national fraction and sub-fractions were able not only to take on any and every opponent and defeat them in the workshops and in the plenary, but also were able to win over the independent SMCers who were there to our perspective for the antiwar movement. We have begun to recruit to the YSA from the young people we talked to and who saw us in action at the conference, and who had the chance to compare us and our ideas to those of our opponents.

The concrete intervention and organization of our fraction at the SMC conference is an illustration of the kind of people we have in the YSA and their dedication to and confidence in, and willingness to fight for, the YSA. We had a fraction there of about 450 comrades and in addition to taking a good deal of responsibility for the actual organization of the conference, like the defense guard, we manned literature tables, a campaign table, sold 1000 Militants, sold 400 subs, wrote position papers, participated in the workshops and plenary, covered our opponents' caucuses, held a press conference, and did contact work, in addition to attending fraction meetings. It was remarked at the fraction meeting after the conference that that intervention was a good example of what it means to be in a Leninist combat organization, with the entire fraction functioning as a team and carrying out their responsibilities with the understanding of the importance of every single assignment.

It's useful when talking about the YSA to compare it to the state in which our opponents find themselves.

First of all, SDS. The speed with which SDS declined after the

split convention last summer, with none of the main factions -- RYM, Weatherman, or WSA/SDS -- gaining support from even a significant minority of the old SDSers for any length of time, confirmed that in many ways SDS was a paper tiger. That is, although an organization like SDS corresponds to the level of political consciousness of a whole layer of young people, and SDS certainly had chapters on many campuses, most SDSers were not tied together by commitment to a common political program or to a coordinated plan of action, but rather to the name and image of SDS, and when this image was shattered at the convention, many SDSers -- most, in fact -- did not line up with any of the factions. They either formed independent radical student groups, joined or started SMCs, dropped out of politics, or are looking now for another organization to join.

A factor in the decline of SDS was also the disillusionment and demoralization which resulted from the split convention and the practice of the various factions after the convention, where RYM I and II and WSA/SDS attacked each other physically and moreover justified their use of Stalinist goon squad tactics against each other publically. Another factor in the rapid decline of SDS was the demoralization that resulted from the various defeats that SDS presided over last spring during the big upsurge of campus actions.

Where do the three main factions of SDS stand now?

The least significant group is the Weathermen. Their wild-in-the-streets, "Charlie Manson power" version of ultraleft adventurism offers nothing to any serious radicalizing young person today, as their inability to grow and draw people to them shows. They have small groupings in several areas, like Detroit and Cleveland, but on the whole have steadily declined in strength since the October 8-11 action, and it is an open question how much longer they can hold together.

This fall RYM II emerged as the one faction of SDS with the possibility of drawing in many SDSers who wanted a return to the "old" SDS and who looked to RYM II as an alternative to the Maoist-led WSA/SDS and the lunacy of the Weathermen.

RYM, however, has been also beset by internal factionalism and has not been able to emerge with any coherent program for action, although they had groups in quite a few areas across the country this fall. Their main activity this fall has been to participate in the Saigon embassy demonstration on November 14 .

Their theoretical flip-flops and continued inability to understand the central importance of the war in Vietnam and the antiwar movement in this country has meant that they have been unable to take advantage of the potential growth in size and influence which they could have experienced. This was brought home very clearly at the SMC conference.

We had several comrades attend their caucus meetings and it was interesting to observe their attempts to come to grips with exactly what the SMC conference, the politics of the SMC, and the politics of the YSA meant for RYM. They engaged in quite a bit of soul-searching and self-criticism. They remarked several times that the Vietnamese send telegrams to SMC conferences and not to RYM conferences. They finally deduced that certain aspects of our program might be right -- like mass actions are a good idea and that you don't have to have antiimperialist consciousness to march against the war. Of course, they then contradicted this by what they said on the floor. In their caucus, they also decided that rather than demand that the SMC adopt the slogan of "Support the PRG," it should adopt the slogan "Recognize the PRG." Finally, being unable to determine the difference between a slogan and a demand (and also not noticing that the SMC has a button which says "Out Now" on it) they decided that the SMC should say "US get out of Vietnam" rather than "Bring the Troops Home Now."

In general they were unable to make a successful intervention at the conference. Their political perspectives lacked clarity and relevance, and their attempts to combine their proposals with the other forces in the "independent radical caucus" simply demonstrated to the 4000 activists there that RYM did not offer a realistic alternative to either the SMC or the YSA.

The third main faction of the old SDS -- PL's WSA/SDS has also been unable to consolidate any significant groups around them except in a few areas, like Boston, the Bay Area, and Chicago, although WSA/SDS came out of the split convention with the majority of the forces at the convention itself and also with the sympathy of many SDSers nationally because of the undemocratic way in which they had been expelled and also because to some they appeared to offer a rational alternative to the SDS National Office amalgam.

This initial advantage was soon lost however. WSA/SDS made the error of maintaining that they were the "real" SDS and went so far as to set up an SDS office in Boston and put out a Boston New Left Notes, when it was obvious that their SDS involved few forces beyond the old WSA caucus. Their main error -- which stems from PL's politics and its control of WSA/SDS -- was and is that they lack a viable program for involving their members and sympathizers in action -- which flows from their opposition to Black nationalism, the women's liberation movement, the antiwar movement or any other of the struggles -- except their own -- around these issues. WSA's main purpose for existence was as a caucus within SDS from which PL could recruit, and when they were expelled, the advantages which they had from being at least a coherent opposition caucus were lost.

WSA/SDS does not appear to have grown since the convention, but PL still remains a central opponent and will undoubtedly continue to draw some young people to them largely because of their identification with China and their super-workerism.

In less than one year, SDS has gone from being the dominant force in the student movement, with chapters -- however loosely they were actually tied to the National Office -- on hundreds of campuses, to half a dozen warring splinter groups -- RYM, Weathermen, WSA/SDS, and even the Maddogs and the Werewolves. None of these groups encompass any significant forces and none of them has anywhere near the national membership or organization which we do. The break-up of SDS has important implications for the growth and development of the YSA. We should remember, however, that the objective basis for an organization like the old SDS still exists, that is, a radical student organization without a socialist program, and such an organization would, at this stage of development of the student movement, correspond more to the general level of political consciousness than the YSA with its revolutionary socialist program.

I'd like now to deal with some of our other opponents. The first is the International Socialists. They have grown somewhat this fall and have fairly large groups in New York, the Bay Area, and Ann Arbor. They have attempted, primarily through publishing their paper, the I.S. -- which is quite attractive and well-

thought out -- to project a more action-oriented, interventionist image. Their intervention into the SMC in several areas and their contributions to the pre-SMC conference discussion also helped this shift in their image.

However, their left social democratic politics -- including their condemnation of the Cuban leadership and the NLF, leave them far to the right of most radicalizing young people. Their attempts to win people over to their perspective of changing the SMC into a "Peace and Freedom" type formation met with a singular lack of success at the SMC conference. At this point, they are not a major force or opponent, but we will have to keep our eye on them and look for opportunities to engage in polemics with them, such as Nelson Blackstock's article in The Militant. The Labor Committee is another social democratic group which has some strength in a few places. They also have intervened into the SMC, at least in New York, and participated in the SMC pre-conference discussion in the Student Mobilizer. They are not a big problem for us nationally, but we should just remember that the IS and the Labor Committee, show that the social democrats are still around and we may have to deal with them more in the future.

The other group I want to talk about is the new CP youth group -- the Young Workers Liberation League, which was launched several weeks ago at a tightly-closed conference in Chicago which drew about 400 people. This conference was so tightly closed that not even all of their members were allowed to attend, and no one knew where it was going to be held until a few days before it actually occurred. The main reason they were so selective about who they would let in was that they knew that if they opened it up even a little, the YSA would be there. As it was, we did manage to get inside coverage of the convention.

For some time, the DuBois Clubs had for all intents and purposes ceased to function and it was clear that the CP either had to abandon the perspective of forming a youth organization or else get rid of the DBC and start all over again.

There are two main differences between the new YWLL and the DBC. The first is that they openly proclaim in their statement of aims their solidarity with the world Stalinist

movement and especially with the CPUSA. They have apparently recognized the error they made in projecting the DBC as the all-inclusive socialist youth organization and hope to make some gains out of open identification with the Communist Party.

The second thing is that their orientation to the workers is really a retreat from and an excuse for abstention from the living struggles going on today, especially on campus. They are reluctant -- and justifiably so -- to throw their dwindling youth cadres into an arena in which not only the vast majority of radicalizing youth stand to the left of them, but in which the main thorn in their side -- the "Trotskyites" -- have outstripped them in size and influence.

This abstention from and inability to relate to those sectors where the radicalization is the deepest was epitomized by their half-hearted intervention in the recent SMC conference, where 4000 young militants came to discuss the perspectives for the SMC and mass antiwar action in the spring. The CP was not in Cleveland, but in Chicago, at the National NDC conference and the few people they did send to Cleveland made absolutely no impact on the conference.

This organization is still in its early stages, and while at this point it does not pose a real threat to us, we have to remember that behind them stands the CP with all their material resources and the connections and influence which the CP still has in certain areas of the trade union movement and the Black and Third World communities. We cannot write off the YWLL yet. We want to keep a very close eye on them, and encourage locals to send in reports on activities of the YWLL in their areas. There is a tendency among comrades in the YSA to underestimate the strength of the Stalinists in this country, partly because most YSAers have never seen a DBCer or CPer or come into contact with them. Nevertheless, they remain our main opponent in the working class movement.

One other opponent I should deal with here is The Guardian, which, although it is not an opponent organization, does represent a current with some influence in the radical movement, a current which is hostile to the ideas and organization of Trotskyism.

We have been able to deal them a few blows recently. Randy Furst, a former SDS leader and a key reporter for them for the last 2½ years, was sent by them to cover the YSA convention. As the comrades know, he joined the YSA shortly thereafter. Since then it has been a constant tug of war between Randy and the other staff members, like Irving Beinin and Jack Smith.

In an effort to keep the fact that he has joined the YSA out of The Guardian -- something which they realize could be quite damaging -- they have refused to print numerous articles, viewpoint, letters to the editor, and editorials, for a variety of reasons. We, of course, would like to get that fact into The Guardian and are now trying to get an ad into The Guardian telling their readers that Randy has joined the YSA.

The general inability of all of our opponents to take advantage of the continued and deepening process of radicalization in this country has opened up bigger opportunities than have existed ever before for the YSA to recruit the best of the radicalizing youth, expand the YSA geographically, and to participate in and lead actions around the central issues being raised today.

Since the demise of SDS, particularly, there exists a real political vacuum in many areas and on many campuses and our ability to recruit and build in these areas is limited only by the forces which we can allot to actually get out to these places. We know just from the mail that comes into the National Office that there are young people literally everywhere who have become radicalized, who are considering socialist ideas, and who would join the YSA if we could only get to them. Since the SWP convention we have received in the National Office 1,299 inquiries, 450 of which have been requests to join.

There are two main ways in which we are going to be able to reach many of these young people in the coming months who live outside of the major centers where we have branches of the SWP and large YSA locals.

The first is through the YSA's support of the SWP election campaigns in 1970. By supporting and helping to build the election campaigns, the YSA can take advantage of this opportunity to get out the ideas of revolutionary socialism to the largest possible number of young people and over the widest geographical area.

Through the election campaigns, we can explain our views on all the major questions facing young people and society as a whole; we can polemicize against our opponents in the radical movement, none of whom support independent political action; and we can offer an alternative to the liberal spokesmen of both capitalist parties whose main purpose in addressing young people is to persuade them of the necessity of supporting this or that "peace" candidate as an alternative to independent mass action.

The formation of Young Socialist support groups connected with the various statewide campaigns enables us to draw in those young people who support our campaign but who may not be quite ready to join the YSA. Support groups provide a way for these young people to work with us and carry out socialist campaign activity. And YS support groups can and will form the basis in many areas for new locals of the YSA during the elections.

The second way in which we will be able to expand into outlying areas and recruit to the YSA is through systematic, well-planned regional work. This work ties in very closely with the 1970 campaigns, with state-wide campaign headquarters becoming also the center of regional work, the heart of a network of locals and at-largers, and campaign supporters.

The goal which we have set for ourselves is for every major local of the YSA to have at least one team out on the road at all times, as a minimum, and more and more locals and branches have begun to take this perspective seriously and look upon it as an area of work equal in importance to our antiwar work, Third World, or women's liberation work. At our convention, under the Organizational and Young Socialist reports, the importance and necessity of regular regional work was one of the main topics discussed during the discussion period. It was very interesting to note that it was one of our smaller locals -- DeKalb -- which stressed the importance of this work most strongly, and since then, several other smaller locals, such as Gainesville and Binghamton, have laid plans for carrying out regional work in their areas.

There are two reasons why regional work assumes such great importance for us now. The first is that there are possibilities for recruiting YSAers and building locals of the YSA in outlying areas -- and some not so outlying areas, like Pittsburgh, Dallas, and Cincinnati. The field is wide open for us, not only among the newly radicalizing young people who may belong now to an SMC or a BSU, but also among the large number of radical students who belonged to an SDS chapter or took part in an SDS action, and who have since left SDS and are consciously looking for an organization to join. In many cases these are people who have been exposed to the YSA at some time in the past and who are now seriously considering Trotskyist ideas.

For the past eight months, the YSA has had a national field secretary, which emphasizes how important we think this work is. The field secretary helps locals get their own regional work set up, and also works in those areas which are not now being covered by local regional work. Our field secretary is going to be leaving on Monday, and will be going to Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Johnson City, and Knoxville, Tennessee, Nashville, Birmingham, New Orleans, and Fayetteville, Arkansas between now and the end of the school year. We expect his trip to help the at-largers which we have in several of these places and are confident that it will result in the recruitment of at-largers and locals in these areas.

The second reason why consistent regional work is so important is because of the large number of new locals and at-largers we have which are outside of any SWP branch and established local and which in general have no day-to-day contact with more experienced members of our movement from whom they can learn our political and organizational norms.

These locals do not lag behind the larger locals in terms of amount of activity or the enthusiasm and audacity with which they build the YSA. In fact they often set the pace. But they do sometimes have bad experiences with certain routine areas of functioning, like finances or running meetings, simply because they do not know some of the basic organizational procedures necessary for the smooth functioning of a local. It is absolutely necessary for these small locals and at-large areas aspiring to become locals to have regular contact with their regional center through correspondence, regional letters, and

through regional travellers. The National Office is publishing a pamphlet called Organizing the YSA shortly which we feel will also be helpful for these newer areas. We also want to make a major effort starting as soon as possible to bring as many at-largers and members of locals away from SWP branches into these centers for the summer schools.

I want to deal a little more now with the YSA convention, which represented for us the culmination of our fall offensive, not only in antiwar work, but in several campaigns which the YSA conducted during the fall -- the sub drive, the \$24,000 fund drive, and the recruitment drive for 300 new members. At the convention we evaluated these campaigns, our work in the main movements in which we are involved, and projected our course for the coming year.

One of the most impressive and important characteristics of the YSA which was made clear at that convention was the political homogeneity and agreement on the main political lines which we have developed over the past years. YSAers sometimes take this homogeneity for granted and forget that it is somewhat unusual among radical youth groups and is one of the major factors in our ability to be so effective. The general agreement of the YSA on the central political questions is a tribute to the leadership which the SWP has provided in the course of the growth and development of the YSA.

There was, however, evidence especially under the discussion of the antiwar movement of the ultra-left pressures on our movement. It is logical that these pressures should focus on our perspectives for the antiwar movement, because of the importance of the movement itself, because of our deep involvement in it, and because that is the arena in which we come into continual conflict with our opponents. Concretely, these pressures were manifested in the proposals for the YSA to adopt the slogan of "Support the Vietnames Revolution" and for us to participate in confrontations such as the Justice Department on November 15.

These pressures do not come primarily from our organized ultra-left opponents but rather from the general student milieu in which ultraleftism has a wide base of support among young radicals. With the demise of SDS, organized ultraleftism has declined somewhat in the past year, but the recent TDA demonstrations,

which have tended to be ultraleft disasters, show that this is still a major problem in the student movement.

In terms of the YSA itself, ultra-leftism is not a big problem. But we have to be continually conscious of these pressures which will tend to increase as the YSA becomes more and more rooted in the struggles and movements going on today. We have to be very clear that the way to educate and win over young radicals who become enamored with ultraleft politics and actions is not to bend to this pressure one inch but to constantly educate through our propaganda and through our actions why ultraleftism is deadly for any serious revolutionary.

One of the most significant features of the convention was the discussion of the Black and Third World struggles under the Black struggle report, where the multi-national character of the YSA was firmly established. The majority of contributions to the discussion were made by our Third World comrades, and if there was any question about whether or not it is possible for the YSA to recruit Third World militants, it was answered in that discussion.

More of our Third World comrades than ever before are now on campus, and we want to continue this process of focusing the work of our Third World cadres on the campuses where the radicalization is the deepest, the level of political consciousness is the highest, and where there exists a layer of Third World activists who have participated in campus struggles, who have followed the decline of the Black Panther Party and who have begun to draw some of the lessons of that decline. Many of these young people are ready to join the YSA.

The other big step forward we have taken this fall which was discussed at the convention was our work in the women's liberation movement. Between the SWP and YSA conventions, we moved from the stage of making very initial probes into this movement to that of being deeply involved in many areas. Now almost every local has a women's liberation work fraction and is involved in the movement in their area. We can look forward in the coming months to more of our women comrades becoming leaders of this movement and to the recruitment of many women's liberation activists to the YSA.

Another decision which was made at the convention was to launch the publication of The Young Socialist Organizer.

We see this as an extremely effective tool in keeping all our comrades informed about what the YSA is doing nationally, drawing the lessons of the mistakes and successes of the many concrete actions in which YSAers are involved, motivating and building our national campaigns, like the sub drive and our \$28,000 spring fund drive, informing YSAers what is available for them to use in terms of educational materials like tapes and bulletins, in addition to the major political reports, such as those from the national antiwar steering committee which will appear in The Young Socialist Organizer. This is a new undertaking for the YSA, and we want to be flexible and imaginative in our use of The Young Socialist Organizer and what we publish in it.

We now have six comrades working full time for the YSA National Office, one of whom is our national field secretary. We have freed three of the comrades who were working in the National Office to work full time on the new magazine. The comrades working in the National Office are a reflection of the growth of the YSA both quantitatively and qualitatively in the past period. Three of the comrades working in the National Office are from relatively new locals where there is no branch of the SWP. Two of the comrades are 19, and one is twenty. The expansion of the National Office staff, however, has not kept pace with the expansion of the YSA nationally, and we will have to move to bring in more people into the National Office in the near future.

Since the SWP convention, we have published several pamphlets: Maoism in the U.S., and a revised edition of War and Revolution in Vietnam. We are in the process of preparing several other pamphlets: a pamphlet on the Chicano movement, Introduction to the Young Socialist Alliance, Organizing the YSA, and a pamphlet containing some of the convention proceedings from the last convention.

There are now 52 locals of the YSA, seven of which are in the south. We have recruited 18 locals since the SWP convention, and have dropped four. There are 13 states in which there are more than one local: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California, Washington, Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, Texas, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Ohio, and Michigan. We also have 108 at-large members in 47 different places in 30 states.

Two of our at-largers are in the south. We look at each at-large areas as a future YSA local, and many at-largers are working very energetically toward this perspective.

A new development is occurring in the national recruitment to the YSA. More and more frequently, we are recruiting groups of people. This happens where a group of young people have gotten together, talked things

over, and decided that the only thing to do is to join the YSA.

The young people who are joining the YSA are real products of the radicalization -- they are activists, they are confident and serious, and they are dedicated. They have been a part of and trained in the mass movement, and they are optimistic about our revolutionary perspectives.