

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

November 14, 1972

TO MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is an exchange of correspondence and a related document between Comrades Lobato and Matson, and myself.

Comradely,

Barry

Barry Sheppard

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
November 14, 1972

OAKLAND-BERKELEY

Dear Comrades Lobato and Matson,

At its 1961 convention, the party unanimously adopted the following motion concerning party-youth relations:

"Despite possible variations in formal party-youth relations at given stages of objective development, as in all other areas of party activity, party members in the youth organization remain subject at all times to Article VIII, Section 1, of the Party Constitution which states: 'All decisions of the governing bodies of the Party are binding upon the members and subordinate bodies of the Party.'"

The document, which you enclosed with your letter dated November 5, 1972, which you indicate is your "contribution to the 1972 Young Socialist Alliance convention," contains a line contrary to the line decided by the party at its 1971 convention.

For your information, the party National Committee has made no decision to permit party members to take positions contrary to the line decided by the party into the YSA, an independent organization. The proper place and time for you to raise your views will be during the next preconvention discussion period in the party. I am returning your document to you.

Comradely,

Barry Sheppard
National Organization Secretary

NOV 8 1972

481 38 th. St. #3
Oakland, Calif.
94609
November 5, 1972

Political Committee Socialist Workers Party
14 Charles Lane
New York, New York 10014

Dear Comrades,

We are submitting for your consideration our contribution to the 1972 Young Socialist Alliance convention. As Comrade Barry Sheppard made clear at the August, 1971 educational conference the YSA is an organization independent from the SWP. This has been reiterated by the local Party and YSA leadership. YSA organizer, Cynthia Burke, stated in explaining Party-Youth relations that, "The YSA is an independent organization that makes its own decisions." In fact, local YSA leaders, members of the Party including EC YSAer Gordon Fox, have told us to submit our ideas as expressed in pre-convention discussion.

The Oakland/Berkeley YSA, as other locals, have a majority of members that are also in the SWP. Clearly, if the PC denied our right to participate in the YSA discussion on the basis of our document, SWPers would pre-determine the vote in this local. All in all we think our document is consistent with participation in the YSA pre-convention discussion and does not infringe on our loyalty as Party members.

We would be thankful for immediate recognition of receipt of this letter and the document. We would also remind you of the November 13 deadline for contributions to be submitted to the YSA for printing. It is therefore necessary for a decision to be made ~~in~~ advance of this date so that, if it is accepted, a copy of the document could be received by the YSA N.O. in time. If a decision is reached at a late date, we request that you submit the PC's copy directly to the YSA N.O.

Comradely,

Mark Lobato
Mark Lobato
Cathy Watson
Cathy Watson

The Current Radicalization and the Tasks of the Young Socialist Alliance

Submitted by: Mark Lobato and Cathy Matson
Oakland/Berkeley YSA

Once again our organization takes upon itself the enormous task of examining the world and domestic conditions to determine how we may best extend the international struggle for state power by the working class and concomitant with this goal, how to best aid in the building of the revolutionary workers party. The collective knowledge and experience of our membership is required in the writing of documents, in discussions and at the convention so that we may come to a better understanding of capitalist society and how to overthrow the existing order in favor of a workers state and Socialist North America.

The "Youth" Radicalization

Before we analyze the roots of the student movement it would be helpful to define a few terms. Firstly, youth is a multiclass (bourgeois, middle class, working class), multiracial, multisexual and multipolitical (facist, revolutionary socialist, etc.) category. Youth is not confined to students! Students are youth who go to school (high school, university, trade, etc.). They are not only in universities. This exercise in simplistics is necessary because of the confusion that reigns in the national leadership as to what type of social movement we have intervened in. We are active in a student movement. To recognize this fact is important for understanding the present situation and where to direct our work.

The student movement made its first stirrings when the United States had not yet fully emerged from the McCarthyite hangover which was the capitalist way of socially and politically stabilizing class relations after the post war labor upsurge (the workers' price for not making a revolution). In the early sixties the civil rights struggle of Black workers and students began to attract larger numbers of white students. At the same time, a narrower layer of more political students and radicals were crystalizing around the Cuban Revolution and its defense.

At its birth the student protest movement was spurred on not over their own social problems, but in active solidarity with the most oppressed section of the

American working class and by the international proletarian revolution. That the politicalization unfolded with students and intellectuals coming to the fore in the beginning stages should surprise no one with an understanding of the laws of motion in capitalist society. After a period of reaction, intellectuals who are less susceptible to coercion and more giving to critical thought would be among the first, even on a wide scale, to question and denounce the policies of the capitalist rulers.

Above all else, it has been the revolutionary war waged by the Vietnamese to end U.S. intervention and remove the Saigon clique, that has repeatedly brought hundreds of thousands of students into the streets in protest of the imperialist war. The student movement (unorganized and amorphous) continued to grow among the university students who exist in a similar position in society. Within the "radicalization on campus", street demonstrations and student strikes there existed small radical groupings which were grappling with the problems of theory and daily practice. (With the demise of SDS there was no cohesion nationally, which furthered the process of differentiation into anarchists, Maoists, spontaneans, etc.) The YSA was able to provide a unity in analysis and strategy on a national scale. This obvious advantage allowed us to act somewhat as a crystallizing point within the forming radical section of tens of thousands of students who thought in terms of the irrational existence of capitalism as a system.

The years 1967-70 mark a massive expansion of the antiwar movement: October 1969-February 1970 saw a Moratorium of two million, a mass demonstration of a million in the capitol and a Student Mobilization Committee conference of 4,000 militants. This display caused many radical students to become inflated with a feeling of "power" where only potential existed. This effervescent mood overflowed into our own ranks, with many comrades seeing students in of themselves as a revolutionary force for change. A more sophisticated version saw students as the leading component of a movement encompassing all the "oppressed". This type of thinking leaves the real motor force of revolutionary change-- the working class -- relegated to a position of one of many oppressed groups making the socialist revolution. For us, there can be

no question that the American proletariat will carry through the socialist revolution and in so doing begin to solve the social problems of oppressed social groups such as women and national minorities.

For the antiwar student the desire of "Peace Now" was an expression of their moral indignation over the U.S. propagated slaughter in Vietnam. However, the student movement was not a single issue movement. Coalescing within the movement was a highly political layer that looked beyond the boundaries of the university or the issue of Vietnam. This layer temporarily linked itself with the Black student groups as the winter of 1968-69 saw the struggle for black studies spread across the country. The struggle was short-lived because of the lack of wide support by the white students and on virtually all universities the small number of Black students and their general isolation from the Black community. A second important current that arose around 1969 was a growing interest in the workers' struggles. (The October '69-February '70 General Electric strike was the first and one of the only strikes the SMC was to relate to on a national scale.)

If we mark 1961-1970 as the rise of the student movement, 1968-70 was its height. Those years were electric for the student radical. They saw the Tet Offensive, a pre-revolutionary situation in France, the Mexican mass mobilizations, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the spread of the Black Panthers ushering in a new period in world politics. It is with this setting of an increasing section of the student movement actively studying the Marxist classics, a concern over major social problems other than the war, the experience of militant antiwar and "Third World" strikes, that the student movement was posed before the April 1970 invasion of Cambodia by president Nixon.

May 1970 - November 1972: Lull or Decline?

The invasion and subsequent murders at Kent State let loose the anger and frustration of years. Mass meetings were held to discuss and decide the course of action. Repeated clashes with the police brought out the National Guard across the country. While the followers of the liberal bourgeoisie were attempting to divert the strike

into the halls of Congress, the most advanced antiwar activists were directing the masses of students, with their message, to the workers (often "to the community"). There was an intense feeling that "if the workers would join us, we'll not only end the war, but turn America on its head as the workers and students did only two years ago in France." Yet, deep contradictions were imbedded in this upsurge reflected in the remarks of one activist who declared, "What we must do is tear the system down and then elect some Democrats responsive to our demands!"

However, there was virtually no response on the part of workers. Without the involvement of the class, the possibility of ending the war most favorably for the world revolution (no concessions wrought from the Vietnamese) had to go unrealized. This mighty social contradiction of a social layer in motion, unable to achieve its goals and the class that could remain passive, hurled the student movement from its heights down into its present lull. The May 1970 strike had as one of its consequences the acceleration of a conscious feeling of powerlessness which was beginning to permeate the student movement.

After May 1970, a large section of the antiwar movement became demoralized. A situation solidified where millions of students were against the war, but saw no prospect of action that could bring about their goals. Hadn't they marched for years? Now the explosion of May! Weren't the workers continuing "business as usual"? What else could be done? The lack of decisive social weight of students to bring about fundamental social change could be expressed in two forms. A revolutionary consciousness would explain the tremendously important role a mass student movement could play arousing the workers and GIs, explaining to them the imperialist nature of the war, how the war was not in their interests, linking the war with their own demands, and that they were duty bound to come out in active opposition to the war. But a student movement that saw power lying on the campuses and restricted their movement to the campuses could not "Bring All the Troops Home Now!" With overinflated hopes that students themselves could end the war and the heavy legions of the working class too long delayed entry into battle, such a movement had to decline.

The year 1970-71 was one of demoralization and confusion. Many students initially abstained from politics "waiting to see what would happen". The waiting degenerated into apathy and soon religion, occultism, music and any other excuse was used to escape political responsibility.

~~No q~~
 ← Today only a rump student movement independent of the bourgeois politicians remains. The antiwar activities of May 1972 were explosions of a movement in decline. It is not simply that students are preoccupied with the elections, or have electoral illusions, but the politically active students are working for the bourgeois candidates and expect one of the two to solve the major social problems, above all the war in Indochina. This fact we must face truthfully if we are not to go astray from the revolutionary path.

That the student movement can find itself after a two year decline entrapped in the two party system indicates that the student movement was not a revolutionary movement, but largely based on middle class radicalism and moral indignation over some of the cruder aspects of capitalism. The radical students of yesterday have not become doorbell pushers for the capitalist candidates. In fact an estimated 27% of students are fed up with both capitalist parties and think a new party should be organized; 11% think the task of the day is to create the conditions for a revolution! The former figure represents over two million students. But it is precisely these students who are no longer active. At the same time new layers are being thrown up into action, but action of the worst type-- bourgeois electoralism. It will take some time for these new recruits to break from their present dead-end course. We can aid in the process of breaking these activists for the bourgeoisie away toward independent action, but at this time can not decisively stop the trend.

Let it not be said that the independent student movement is dead. But let us not hide either that it is in decline and the thin layer of radicals remaining are becoming increasingly isolated. The student movement will be revived by the radicalizing high school students, but not on the old basis. We can hope for a reversal in the present decline and increased prospects for revolutionaries in the rise of the

workers' struggles. No matter on what basis the student movement shall rise again, it will be our job "to explain to the mass of 'academic' protesters the objective meaning of the conflict, to try and make it consciously political, to multiply ten-fold the agitation carried on by the Social-Democratic groups of students, and to direct all this activity in such a way that revolutionary conclusions will be drawn ... and that our slogans... should once again become a subject of discussions and the touchstone of political concentration for fresh generations." (Lenin, Young Socialist, Dec. 1969, p.16-17.)

Bourgeois America in Crisis

With the economic boom of the early 1960's and the resulting "full" employment, the working class was able to fight for and win a larger portion of the value they produced. At the same time a rise in social expenditures and cost of the Vietnam war, the capitalist class had to resort to an inflationary economy and higher taxes which fell largely on the back of the working class.

Since 1965 real wages have declined, but inflation was not sufficient to reverse the portion of value workers received for their labors. By 1970 it was evident that neo-capitalist policies had died an inglorious death with unemployment, that aged harbinger of hard times, increasing. For the benefit of the capitalist economy wages would have to be brought under control. The employing class must continue their offensive and already we hear reports of wage controls at a 4% level.

American capital has had an advantage on the international market because of its advanced technique and economies of scale. As the other advanced capitalist countries (in particular West Germany and Japan) began to challenge the U.S.'s level of productivity, this advantage disintegrates if the American proletariat's wages remain two or three times the European workers'. In order for American capital to increase its rate of profit and compete internationally, it must accumulate capital ~~through an increase in production~~ by extracting more surplus value. For the worker this means lower wages, a fall in the standard of living, speed-up, worsening work conditions, etc. Despite any temporary economic stabilization, as the trade deals

with Moscow and Peking could produce, it will occur in the context of a system in crisis.

Over the past couple of years the bourgeoisie has fortified its position with extended use of all the tentacles of power. Congress has discussed various bills to strengthen existing anti-labor laws, has issued injunctions against rail workers and the longshore strike and has endorsed wage controls. In California a proposition is being proposed in the November election that would legally eliminate the right of farm workers to strike. The National Guard had its first lesson in strike breaking in the 1970 postal strike. In addition, Nixon was recently sponsoring extensive anti-strike legislation in the transportation field before the Teamster officialdom backed him for president. The courts have done their part by issuing strike and picket injunctions in local strikes, and fining and jailing militant strikers. Finally, the police, who have been heavily armed and received practical "riot" training against students and Blacks, are being increasingly used to bolster up the bosses' bargaining position. As the past two years have seen an evolution toward a strong state, it offers proof to the Marxian axiom that under bourgeois democracy every serious struggle by the working class flares into open clashes with the state and its repressive forces. More and more desperate will the attempts become to confine the union movement.

As for the labor fakers, they have shown no desire to even raise their voices after the major attack on the class launched with the wage freeze. The official misleaders only demand more of a say to arbitrate the future of the class they pretentiously represent. The "right" of the state to interfere in union affairs has gone unchallenged. Union records and funds have come under federal investigation and the building trades' (the first union to have their wages come under control) racist apprenticeship quotas were policed by the capitalist state, e.g. the Philadelphia plan. The bourgeoisie is developing and improving its weaponry for the struggles to come. The next step is attempted direct regulation of the union movement.

To help carry out the class enemy's economic and political program the labor bureaucracy is prepared to apply all the techniques of class collaboration and

betrayal. The struggle for socialism necessitates tearing the unions out of the state apparatus, purging them of the labor lieutenants of capital and welding them into weapons of revolutionary class warfare. We can no longer abstain from the hardships and battles the class, with working youth in the fore, will be facing in the immediate future.

The Working Class and Middle Class Sectarianism

"An intensification of the exploitation of labor, in particular a speed-up in big industry, has produced a structural transformation of the American working class in certain fields. This speed-up has led to a work rhythm that is so fast that the average adult worker is virtually incapable of keeping up for long. This has radically lowered the age structure in certain industries, such as automobiles or steel. Today, since it is increasingly difficult to stay in plants (under conditions of speed-up) for 10 years without becoming a nervous or physical wreck, up to 40 per cent of the automobile workers of the United States are young workers."

(E. Mandel, "Where Is America Going?", Young Socialist, September 1969, p.23; our emphasis.)

The majority of workers in basic industry are either Black, Chicano or under 30. There are hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans in factories, rail, construction, transportation, and as public employees. The telephone and postal systems have a high proportion of women. Despite the leaderships documents seeming interest in Blacks, Chicanos and women, there is nothing but "leftist" abstractions when these Blacks, Chicanos and women are working youth. The continued abstention in relation to the working class cannot simply be explained by the fact that comrades feel more comfortable in the student milieu. Fundamental to this is the belief that students will detonate the American revolution or, even more, students will play a vanguard role in the seizure of power. Students and the other "sectors" of the population--Blacks, Chicanos, women, gays--will fight for socialism through the "mass movements". Or as the document expresses one variation: "...power lies

in the mobilization of masses of people." (p. 15) The only revolutionary class in modern society--the proletariat--is relegated to a contingent in the "mass movement" ! But we know both from theory and the history of the workers' movement that to seize state power (and talk of any other type of "power" is nothing but confusionism), more is needed than a "mobilization of masses of people." The masses require a resolute leadership which is armed with the program of revolutionary Marxism and the will to struggle toward armed insurrection. If the mass movements in France and Spain in the thirties have taught us nothing about the need for revolutionary leadership, the lesson of Bangladesh in 1971 should.

The Only Road

Our situation differs in many ways from our forerunners of the thirties and forties. New and fresh forces have replenished the ranks of the class, which are not confronted with the political hegemony of the Stalinists or Social Democracy (though the trade union bureaucracy is more powerful and entrenched.) At the same time, the historical memory of the class has nearly been obliterated as a result of the "Cold War" period. We must champion problems facing working youth on a day to day basis and at the same time draw the general political lessons of the day and propagandize the Transitional Program. In this way we can begin to establish our credentials and win the ear of the most active and militant workers. Our work in this arena can be facilitated by our experience and base in the student movement.

Taking place today is the beginnings of the radicalization of the American working class. While the combativity exhibited by the class is centering on traditional trade union demands, the workers' grievances are not limited to these issues. Their demands are going beyond those of only a few years ago. Construction workers demanding "Jobs Now" marched in the streets last June in mass demonstrations of 20,000 and 35,000. Some 25,000 auto workers in eight cities have gone out in local strikes over line speedup. This is an elemental movement for aspects of workers' control and strikes at the heart of one phase of the bosses' attempt to increase the rate of exploitation. We should, as Trotskyists, become a part of this process, learn from it and help

direct and educate the workers' movement as to its historical tasks.

The following slogans will of course undergo changes as we come into contact with young militants and as the real class struggle unfolds:

1. Immediate and Unconditional Withdrawal of All U.S. Forces from S.E. Asia
2. End All Controls on Wages and Unions
3. Equal Pay for Equal Work
4. Jobs For All, 32 hrs. Work—40 hrs. Pay
5. Workers' Control of Industry (veto over investment, line speed, closure of plants, etc., no responsibility for maintaining profits)
6. For a Labor Party based on the trade union rank and file (the non-commitment election stance of ~~Robert~~ Meany opens up limited possibilities for this slogan)

In addition to the above we should raise the following immediate demands:

1. Union Democracy: for the election with immediate recall of all officials, the right to vote on contracts and strikes, right of caucuses, etc.
2. End Discrimination in Hiring and Promotions for Black, Raza and Women Workers
3. No Restrictions on the Right to Strike (Farmworkers and public employees are restricted or denied this right. Every worker faces this possibility.)
4. Minimum Wage of \$3.00/hr.— Jobs or Full Wages
5. An Escalator Clause in every contract Equal to Cost of Living—
No Sacrifices for a Capitalist Economy!
6. Organize the Unorganized

The above slogans are advanced as an action program. Every conflict the class or a section of the class engages in must be popularized, extended and the lessons drawn. Even the wage struggle can no longer be fought for as in the past, for inflation devours any gain in too short a period. We must drive home that the economic struggle must be conducted through political means independent of the exploiting class.

The National Executive Committee's Proposed Resolution

The proposed resolution contains within it both accurate analysis and glaring mistakes. We put forward this contribution not as a counter-resolution, but to help

strengthen the Marxist appraisal of events by comrades.

1. Seeking to penetrate the future development of class consciousness the NEC provides us with the following: " The politicalization and radicalization of the working class will be the combined result of both the sharpening struggle around economic questions and the issues raised so far in the radicalization." (p.10) Nothing could be farther from reality, nothing could be more dangerous if believed, for our organization. To date the "mass movements" have largely raised only democratic demands. In a period of a lack of a general radicalization of the working class and moreover a decline in the student radical movement there can be no mass revolutionary movement. To pose as our task the "building of the mass movements" as it is posed by the NEC is a call for rallying the masses to the banner of Democracy, not Socialism. Any real analysis of the present international situation will reveal that nearly every setback has been with the masses, arms in hand, struggling for strictly democratic demands. The world crisis of leadership is primarily a question of program, not organization. In the colonial and neo-colonial countries, the bourgeois demands can only be met by struggling for and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. We see our epoch as one of socialist revolution, not national-democratic revolutions; lacking a revolutionary program the working masses will be defeated. The Palestinian and East Bengali people are absorbing this lesson from a negative experience. Chile, facing a national strike by desperate sections of the middle class, offers a graphic illustration. Bourgeois democracy in crisis will be abolished either through a victory of the working class or the triumph of the reaction.

In the advanced bourgeois democratic countries it is sheer nonsense to project a mass movement on the slogans of democracy (the foremost "right" of which is the exploitation of labor!) We should intervene in movements based on democratic demands and try to transcend those limits by projecting transitional demands and a Marxist outlook. We should continue organizing and educating the antiwar activists around immediate and unconditional withdrawal-- a defeatist slogan. Finally, there can be no illusions about "building mass movements" unless one is seeking to ^{do} this in the

present period on the basis of a democratic program (the program of Social Democracy).

It is a mistake for comrades to counterpose the "Red University" tactic to directly reaching working youth. Inherent within the tactic of the "Red University" is a large scale mobilization of students on a partial or national scope. The concept was conceived of in struggle as a means to break down the isolation of students from the working masses. The mistake is compounded when it is raised as an immediate prospect for our work, with the student movement in a deep lull.

2. The NEC resolution must be corrected on the proposition that students are "socially-necessary skilled workers." (p.18) Rather than smother over the class foundation of the student movement we should take into account university students' privileged position in society. Without a correct appreciation of the social weight of students, we will make such unbalanced statements as: "The most significant of these (victories-L.&M.) was the withdrawal of most ground troops from Vietnam." (p.18) It is without doubt that the U.S. and international antiwar movement had an effect on the imperialists tactical retreat on the use of ground troops. However, the determining factor was the realization after the Tet Offensive that a military victory could not be won on the ground. The Vietnamese workers and peasants have wrought this victory aided by the demonstrations of solidarity. The fact is, students have become so important for the NEC that no where in the entire resolution is the necessity of working with antiwar and GIs highlighted. The Army is of crucial importance in the war and the struggle for socialism.

The crescendo of errors reaches its height with the bold declaration that "... the best immediate opportunities to participate in such struggles (against the wage controls and other economic issues-L.&M.) will be found among high school and college students." (p.10-11) Abstentionism can produce some profoundly wild delusions! Within the past year there has been a demonstration of 1,000 aero-space workers (some walking off the job) in San Francisco. The meatcutters union staged strikes across the country directed against the Pay Board and strikes including the powerful miners and longshore have successfully exceeded the limits of the wage

controls.

With a realistic eye we can discern that the student lull is more profound than electoral illusions. The lull is rooted in the social composition of the student movement. No middle class movement independent of the working class in an advanced industrial country has been able to sustain itself more than temporarily. The social contradiction of a movement unable to achieve its goals, and the class that could remaining politically passive, has wrought the present lull.

3. "YSAers have been in the forefront of the effort to spread feminist ideas and build the movement by involving the largest possible numbers of women in struggle." (p.25) This is a concrete extension of the "building mass movements" strategy. In order to attract the "largest possible numbers" we go over to feminism. Feminism represents the ideology of the middle class. It poses that women can achieve equal social status under capitalism by fighting "as women", and raises demands aimed at reform. This is counterposed to the Marxist understanding that women can only achieve full emancipation through the dictatorship of the working class and the reintegration of women into the productive process. We must work toward the vanguard of the class incorporating the struggle for the liberation of women into its program. We should also raise general political issues, including socialist propaganda, among women.

4. If we comprehend the real danger that the world conspiracy of Washington-Moscow-Peking poses to the Vietnamese Revolution, then it is of crucial importance to understand the nature of the Indochinese war and what will issue from a cessation of the conflict. The proposed resolution sees as central to the role of Vietnam in the world socialist revolution that "...the stakes increased as Vietnam more and more became a test of strength between imperialism and the colonial revolution." (p.5, our emphasis) However, 1971's political resolution saw Vietnam as a test between "revolution and counter-revolution on a world scale." (p.5) The revolutionary process in Vietnam has unfolded under the historical setting of imperialist domination

including military intervention, interwoven with the struggle against the old land relations and the domestic rulers who sought to preserve the exploitative social relations. Contrary to the NEC' resolution, as the Vietnamese engaged in a life and death battle with the U.S., the war more and more became a conflict between U.S. imperialism and the workers states. It was not until 1965, prompted by Johnson's escalation, that the DRV introduced ground troops which were later to assume the brunt of the fighting. Negotiations also reveal the predominance of the DRV vis-a-vis the NLF. The fighting in the South takes on the character of defense of the workers state. The resistance could not have been sustained without assistance from the U.S.S.R. and the Peoples Republic of China.

Only a scoundrel could deny that the chief enemy of the Vietnamese workers and peasants is U.S. imperialism. The role of Moscow/Peking with its shift from half-hearted succorer^{of the DRV} to a well wisher of Nixon has added pressure on the Vietnamese. The revolution also faces an internal danger-- that of the Stalinist leadership. The 1972 NEC resolution refers only to its "Stalinist background". It is the highest duty for the NEC to explain how the Workers Party of the DRV and the NLF underwent a qualitative transformation from a Stalinist party. When did this change take place? What are the consequences for the Trotskyist movement if Stalinist parties can transform themselves under the "pressure of events"? We hope the drafters of the NEC resolution will answer these questions before pre-convention discussion ends.

The question of leadership is not academic. In the history of Vietnam, the Stalinists have heaped two major defeats on the backs of the Vietnamese-- 1945-46, return of British-French imperialism and 1954, entry of U.S. imperialism. The program of the PRG includes establishment of a capitalist ~~and~~ coalition government and "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism, hallmarks of Stalinism. These are not paper tigers; they pose a material threat by the bureaucracy in the DRV which is defending its social basis of existence, a deformed workers state. A settlement could be reached detrimental to the workers' interest if the DRV leaders feel it offers adequate protection for North Vietnam and their counterparts in the PRG, that is

"peaceful coexistence", a coalition government, withdrawal of U.S. troops and ... "socialism" in the North. A healthy workers state cannot be created in Vietnam under the present leadership. If a cease-fire were negotiated with the existing relation of forces, a coalition government would give way to a deformed workers state, though it may be some time before such an overturn came about. The revolution can best be guarded and extended by a truly proletarian internationalist leadership. The best grounds for such a Trotskyist party to arise in Vietnam would be with the military victory of the DRV-NLF. We must aid in every possible way the victory of the workers and peasants movement. Negotiations or not, in the U.S, we recognize only one solution to the war--immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. imperialism.

In Conclusion: A Crisis of Leadership

The student radicalization of the sixties and seventies was the first indication of a new rise in the workers' movement in the advanced industrial countries. Since May-June 1968 and the proletarian explosion in France, the working class is increasingly coming to the fore in the political arena on its own behalf. Even as close to home as Quebec, this fact is given sharp relief. Comrade Ernest Mandel has pointed out that trade union consciousness "creates a major revolutionary potential once the system is no longer capable of satisfying basic trade union demands. Such a transformation of American society under the impact of the international competition of capital is today knocking at the door of U.S. imperialism." ("WIAG", YS, Sept., 1969, p. 25) Since August 15, 1971 we can say that the door has been knocked ajar. Under the impact of economic, domestic and world events the working class is once again finding its collective spirit and will for combat.

While the "right" of the U.S. to play world imperialist cop is not yet massively challenged by the working class, the majority of workers are in favor of immediate withdrawal from Vietnam even if this implicitly means Communist "take over" in the South. To question U.S. rule abroad is to begin to question its rule at home. The innumerable threads that bind these two issues--Vietnam and the economy--

reveals more and more to every thinking worker the indissoluble bond between their struggle and that of the Vietnamese.

The fact that Trotsky wrote that " The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. " can be quoted by anyone! We must feel this "historical crisis" to our bones or we will contently remain on the sidelines of the huge class battles to come. One week ago an old union official told us that he believed there were a thousand Lordstowns in the country. We can only add that in these Lordstowns there are tens of thousands of working youth who are militant and developing embryonic class consciousness. If we are not prepared to reach them, then we abandon the duty of leadership to the Communist Party-Young Workers Liberation League and the labor skates. We can think of no better way of ending this contribution than a quote from a Ford worker in Brook Park, Ohio during a campaign stop by Shiver. The worker says, " The whole working class of people is looking for leadership. We're looking for something that makes sense for the working man and right now we don't know where to turn. "

(S.F. Chronicle, Oct., 1972)