

Revolutionary Strategy in the Fight Against the War



Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin
Volume 15, No.1

25 cents

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Cover Photo:
Washington, D.C., April 24, 1971
photo by Mark Satinoff

Vol. 15, No. 1

October 8, 1971

Published by:

Young Socialist Alliance
P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003

Price 25¢

This draft resolution on the antiwar movement was written for the Young Socialist National Convention to be held in the Civic Center Music Hall in Houston, Texas, December 28 - January 1. The resolution, drafted by the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance, should be read in conjunction with the report on the antiwar movement approved by the plenum of the YSA National Committee, which met in July, 1971. (YSA Internal Information Bulletin, "Reports from the July, 1971, YSA National Committee Plenum.")

Similar resolutions and discussion articles will deal with the movement for women's liberation, the struggles of African-Americans and Chicanos for self-determination, the high school movement and the general political perspectives for revolutionary socialist youth in the U.S. These initial draft resolutions, along with any others submitted to the convention, will be discussed and the general political perspectives outlined in them will be voted on.

The resolutions are being circulated prior to the convention to assure the fullest possible discussion on political perspectives and activities before the convention meets.

Young socialists from around the country are invited to participate in the written discussion and urged to attend the convention. Contributions to the discussion and inquiries can be sent to the Young Socialist Alliance, P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003.

The year 1971 has seen new defeats and increasing difficulties for the war of aggression being waged by the United States in Vietnam.

The crushing defeat inflicted on the South Vietnamese Army during its abortive invasion of Laos was followed by the Calley trial, with its exposure of U. S. war crimes, and by the massive demonstrations in Washington D. C. and San Francisco on April 24.

Since the spring antiwar offensive new proof of the duplicity of the government and the character of the war in Southeast Asia has been circulated to the entire world through the publication of the Pentagon papers. The farce of the South Vietnamese "elections," the resurgent opposition movement of students and Buddhists in Vietnam, and the announcements by Australia and New Zealand that they will withdraw their troops from Vietnam by the end of 1971, further served to expose the war and the Thieu dictatorship and to isolate the U. S. government.

Finally, the current inflation, primarily caused by the war and war-related spending, is part of an economic crisis for American capitalism which has resulted in the imposition of wage controls for the first time since the Korean War.

All of these factors contribute to the deepening antiwar sentiment and the growing willingness of masses of people to take action against the war.

THE FRAUD OF VIETNAMIZATION

In the face of these developments the Nixon administration has been trying desperately to buy time, to convince the American people that the war is winding down. The key aspect of this policy has been the staged troop withdrawals, but Nixon's projected China trip has also engendered considerable illusions about his intentions in Vietnam.

Together with these moves have gone the attempt to substitute Vietnamese for American troops wherever possible, and the relegation of Vietnam to the back pages of the newspapers. Even the wage freeze was proposed as a measure designed to meet "the problems of a peacetime economy."

Nixon, quoted in the September 17 New York Times, spelled out his real intentions. He described the goal of the U. S. in Vietnam as "a South Vietnam able to defend itself against a Communist takeover. . . ." American involvement would be ended, he said, "just as soon as that is consistent with our over-all goals. . . ."

An article in the September 11 issue of the English-language edition of Le Monde points out that despite the partial

troop withdrawals:

"Nothing. . . indicates that Washington has lost interest in the future of South Vietnam or that it has stopped propping up its proteges there.

"The truth is quite the contrary. In the last few months a number of studies have been made on the Vietnamisation of the economy, with the purpose of discovering the conditions under which a viable South Vietnam /sic/ economy, closely meshed with that of the 'free world,' could be built."

"The one premise basic to all these research projects is that South Vietnam will in the future be a State separate from the North, and integrated in the free world's economy.

"The Smithies report, which is apparently not intended for publication, favours what it describes as the 'clearly preferable' and 'feasible' solution of a restoration of security in a military context. But, adds the report, under present conditions the best planning assumption seems to be a military stalemate or withering away of the war, a process that can last for a decade or more." (Emphasis added.)

Nixon's actions have been in consonance with this perspective of a Korea-type settlement. The stepping up of the air war, the continued increases in the military budget and in arms and money going to the Thieu regime, and the stated perspective of maintaining at least a "residual force" in Vietnam are all examples of this. Finally, we have the publication of the Pentagon papers by which we can judge the actions and intentions of the Nixon administration in relation to Vietnam in the light of Nixon's predecessors.

VIETNAM AND WORLD REVOLUTION

The Second World War saw the crumbling of the old colonial empires of France and England. The movements for national liberation grew to a massive tide, and for the last quarter of a century the colonial revolution and the efforts of the advanced imperialist powers to contain it have been the axis of world politics. Indonesia, Algeria, Korea, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, China, Cuba, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Malaya, the Philippines, Venezuela, the Congo, and Angola are only a few of the countries where these battles have been fought.

As the only advanced capitalist power not physically devastated and economically exhausted by the Second World War, and as heir-apparent to the old colonial empires, the U. S. played the major role in the containment of the colonial revolution from the very beginning.

The Pentagon papers detail the efforts of four American

presidents to retain a capitalist South Vietnam. Their purpose was first of all to stem the tide of the colonial revolution. Following the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, the U.S. stepped up its intervention in order to encircle the Chinese workers state by U.S. military bases and, ultimately, to attempt to roll back and destroy the victorious social revolutions in North Vietnam and China.

"As the Pentagon papers show," New York Times Washington correspondent Max Frankel wrote on July 6, "Washington policy makers/ were motivated by the desire to contain China and what they considered to be the Asian branch of 'international communism' to protect the 'dominoes' of non-Communist Asia, to discredit the Communist theories of guerrilla war and 'wars of national liberation' and to demonstrate to allies everywhere that the United States would honor its pledges and make good on its threats no matter how difficult the task or insignificant the terrain."

All of these purposes continue to motivate the American involvement in Vietnam. From the point of view of the imperialists the only change is that the stakes have increased. War and revolution have extended from Vietnam into all of Indochina, including Cambodia, Laos, parts of Thailand, and even into Burma. Moreover, after six years of open warfare, after the investment of untold human and material resources and the commitment of the most powerful military machine of all time, the Vietnamese revolution has not been crushed.

Rather than being an object lesson to all who would defy the American colossus, Vietnam has become an inspiration to the revolutionary movements all over the world. Its decisive victory over American imperialism would be an enormous impetus to the world socialist revolution. It has been these considerations that have prompted the intransigence of the American ruling class in resisting all pressures for the abandonment of its puppets in Vietnam.

The publication of the Pentagon papers by the single most authoritative and prestigious voice of the American ruling class was seen by all as an act aimed directly at Nixon. It reflected the dilemma that the capitalists find themselves in over Vietnam. Those who made the decision to publish those papers were well aware of the consequences, and what was involved was a conscious political decision--not a disinterested historical examination on the part of The New York Times. The Pentagon papers raise for millions of people the question of Nixon's truthfulness. If four previous presidents lied about Vietnam, what about Nixon? This is not an area in which the government can stand too much scrutiny.

The question of what Nixon's real plans were was certainly on Ellsberg's mind when he gave the Pentagon papers to the press. He is quoted in the June 24 New York Times as saying: "I've been very concerned for the last two years. . . since the fall of '69, based on some information I had from people I trusted and respected within the administration, that we were in for a replay of the year 1964. . . ." The fact that The

Times published the documents indicates that they have similar fears.

The essence of the American situation in Vietnam is that as long as the U.S. is not prepared to write off its interests and power in Indochina, there is the constant danger that a massive escalation of the war will be necessary at any point in order to save one or another of the puppet regimes.

As The New York Times editorialized on September 22: "As United States ground strength continues to decline, the plight of the South Vietnamese as well as of the American troops left in Vietnam is likely to become progressively more precarious, forcing the President into increasingly desperate reprisals"

Certainly after three years of negotiations fewer and fewer people still expect anything more from the Paris talks than the ratification of the relationship of forces on the battlefield. However, in addition to the heroic resistance of the Vietnamese, there is another factor on the side of the Vietnamese revolution--the opposition to U.S. imperialism all over the world, and, most significantly, the antiwar movement in the United States itself.

THE INTERNATIONAL ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

The American antiwar movement has greatly changed American and world politics. It has helped to spark an international movement in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution, with massive demonstrations occurring in dozens of countries. The international antiwar movement has not only caused embarrassment and difficulty for the U.S., but it has also been responsible for important developments in the worldwide radicalization.

Furthermore, the international antiwar movement has been the largest single factor in exposing and discrediting Stalinism and Social Democracy in the eyes of the new generation of radicalizing youth. To the extent that the Social Democracy has been a factor in relation to Vietnam, it has either played the role of openly supporting American imperialism, as in Germany, which currently has a Social Democratic government, and in England, where the British Labor Party is affiliated to the Second International, or it has abstained from the struggle. The main exceptions to this have been in Japan and New Zealand, where the Social Democrats have participated in organizing massive demonstrations against the war.

The Stalinists in both Moscow and Peking have done almost nothing to help the international antiwar movement. While doling out barely enough aid to the Vietnamese to stave off defeat by the U.S., they have steadfastly refused to submerge their differences and come to the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. The ruling bureaucracies in both Moscow and Peking have placed their own narrowly-conceived national interests ahead of the Vietnamese revolution.

Although Moscow deserves the primary blame for this default, since it occupies the strongest and most secure military position, the willingness of the Maoist leadership to sacrifice the Vietnamese revolution in return for a diplomatic deal with the U. S. was made clear in 1954 when it participated in the Geneva conference, favoring the compromise that led to the present war. That settlement was forced on the Vietnamese by the Soviet Union and China, despite the fact that the French had been militarily defeated.

The most recent diplomatic exchanges between the U. S. and China, including the secret talks between Kissinger and Chou En-Lai and the announcement of Nixon's upcoming trip to China, have again raised fears that China may be considering a deal with the U. S. at the expense of the Vietnamese. Certainly, the role of China would be a crucial factor in determining the ability of the U. S. to achieve the Korea-type settlement for which it hopes.

The refusal of the Soviet Union to offset in any way the step-by-step escalation of the war by increased aid to Vietnam or by increased support to revolutionary struggles in other parts of the world in order to relieve the pressure on the Vietnamese, has been matched by the refusal of the Communist Parties around the world to mobilize their memberships and those they influence in solidarity with the Vietnamese. Such actions would have had enormous impact, especially in such countries as France and Italy, where millions of workers look to the CP and where the CP leads major trade union federations.

The international struggle against the war in Vietnam has been a major factor in the development and spread of the worldwide youth radicalization. The most extensive and consistent international actions have been around the calls for worldwide demonstrations against the war. The abdication of the Stalinists and reformists has resulted in this new international movement largely bypassing them, opening up new opportunities for revolutionary socialists around the world. This has been reflected in the gains that the YSA and our cothinkers around the world have made over the last six years, and in the initiative and leadership in action that we have been able to provide.

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

The massive antiwar movement in which the YSA is so deeply involved is unique in American history. In all previous wars of this century, the capitalist rulers have been successful in at least gaining acceptance of their policies from the American people. In the case of Vietnam, however, we see not only overwhelming opposition to the war, but also the expression of this opposition in massive demonstrations in the streets. To realize the full significance of this development, it must be remembered that during the two world wars it was sufficient to make a speech against the war to risk winding up in jail. The cases of Debs during the First World War and of

the leaders of the SWP during the Second are among the most famous examples of the suppression of democratic rights during those wars. Mass demonstrations were unheard of.

At the time of the first actions against the Vietnam war the general attitude of the American people toward street demonstrations was one of profound distrust and scepticism. Many people who opposed the war were afraid to take part in the actions against it. The repeated public demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of people organized by the antiwar movement over the last six years have significantly weakened this McCarthyite atmosphere. People today not only accept social protest, they see it as something to be expected.

The exclusion of socialists because of their political ideas from the meetings and activities of the various mass movements has been largely discredited through the example of non-exclusion that has been set by the antiwar movement from its beginning. Yet this practice of exclusion was standard procedure in the old "peace" movement, prior to 1965 and the beginning of mass antiwar demonstrations.

In the country as a whole the attempts of the government to red-bait the opposition to the war have backfired, resulting in a general discrediting of such methods and a new willingness among broad layers of youth to discuss and consider socialist ideas. Moreover, the growth and continuation of the antiwar movement has served to directly inspire the antidraft and GI movements, and helped to create a favorable climate for the development of other anticapitalist movements, such as the feminist movement. The movements of the oppressed nationalities have also been strongly affected by the antiwar movement, as is shown by the Chicano Moratorium demonstrations that have occurred around the country. All of these developments have had a profound influence on the attitudes and thinking of the American people, including the organized working class.

The antiwar movement has been successful in convincing the great majority of Americans that the war is not in their interests, nor in the interests of the Vietnamese, and should be stopped. Nixon himself, in his interview with C. L. Sulzburger of The New York Times on March 8, was forced to admit that he was "certain a Gallup poll would show that the great majority of the people would want to pull out of Vietnam."

This massive popular opposition to the war has forced the U. S. government to detour from the most direct line of crushing the Vietnamese revolution by force of arms. Instead of sending 250,000 more troops, as Westmoreland requested in 1968, Johnson was forced to announce a halt to the bombing of North Vietnam and the beginning of the Paris peace talks, along with his decision not to run for reelection. Nixon's partial troop withdrawals have also been due to the massive pressure generated by the antiwar movement. A similar victory was won when the U. S. was forced to withdraw from Cambodia following the student strike of May 1970.

While giving an indication of the power of the antiwar movement, these partial victories indicate no change of heart on the part of the capitalist class. What they do indicate is that the antiwar movement is closer than ever before to achieving its aim of forcing the government to withdraw all U.S. forces from Indochina. In this sense the war is at a turning point, and the activities of the antiwar movement are more important than ever.

As it becomes ever more clear that those measures needed to preserve the capitalist system abroad, and particularly in Indochina, are precisely the policies that come into conflict with maintaining social peace at home, the divisions within the ruling class over what to do have gotten correspondingly deeper. This, in turn, has made it more difficult for the government to take any decisive action in Vietnam, while giving ever greater legitimacy to the antiwar movement in the eyes of the American people.

THE STRATEGY OF THE YSA IN THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

From the earliest days of the antiwar movement the YSA has been the consistent advocate of the strategy that has been responsible for the growing power and mass appeal of that movement.

The key to our approach to the antiwar movement, and to all other movements for social change, is mass action independent of the ruling class. We start from the understanding that the policies carried out by the capitalist government are not mistakes on the part of those in power or individual aberrations, but flow logically from the needs of capitalism. Therefore, we rely on the power of the masses of American people mobilized around democratic and transitional demands to change things, not on the good will or promises of liberal politicians or anybody else.

Mass mobilizations against the war have taken the form of rallies and street demonstrations; these have been the vehicle for massive antiwar propaganda, for involving new people in activity against the war while maintaining the involvement of others, and for maintaining the visibility of the movement. However, in the context of overwhelming opposition to the war its continuation over any long period of time raises the possibility of even more powerful mass actions--actions that would have the power to stop the war. The mass antiwar demonstrations that we have seen are transitional to such actions. They develop antiwar sentiment, educate people about their own power, and set the precedent of and normalize in people's minds the idea of massive dissent.

In addition to being the only strategy that can force an end to the war, the mass action approach is also central to the socialist revolution. The first prerequisite of any revolution is the politicization of the masses, their entry into political life. The mass antiwar movement has done pre-

cisely that. It has been instrumental in drawing a whole generation of American youth into political consciousness and activity, and promises to reach out even further.

The antiwar coalitions that we have helped establish represent a specific form of the united front, a tactic designed to unite the greatest forces possible around specific actions that are essential to the interests of the working class when there is no programmatic agreement between various groupings on other points.

Obviously, if each group and individual insisted on the others adopting its particular program there would be no basis for united actions against the atrocities of the ruling class. Participation in the antiwar movement has been based only on opposition to the war. While participating in united antiwar actions, of course, each political tendency or group retains its ideas and program and engages in independent activity on other questions.

The united front, in which masses of people are organized for battle around a specific problem, is distinct from the popular front. The popular front, an innovation of Stalinism, subordinates the independent organizations of the working class to the program and leadership of a section of the bourgeoisie. It was most often an electoral formation. Clearly, the antiwar movement has had the effect of driving a wedge between the capitalist parties and the masses of people who identify with it. It has mobilized people against these parties, not behind them.

The best example of a functioning antiwar coalition is the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC). By focusing on the war and the ways in which the war affects different sectors of the population, by maintaining a principled position on the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination and on the need for mass action and democracy in the movement, and by remaining independent of any political party or electoral campaign, NPAC has been able to mount the largest demonstrations in the history of the United States and has become the representative of the most diverse forces ever assembled in an antiwar coalition. The existence of such an antiwar coalition is instrumental in ensuring that the mobilization of masses of people against the war will continue until the U.S. is actually out of Vietnam.

The need for democracy within the movement and for a policy of non-exclusion follows from the strategy of mass action. If we want to involve masses of people in a movement, then we must make it clear that everybody is welcome. The dictation of what people can believe in order to join the struggle against the war is an obstacle to building a mass movement.

Similarly, it would be foolish to expect masses of people to carry out plans that they had no part in formulating and no say in approving. It has been the periodic conferences of the antiwar movement, open to all, that have enabled the

movement to democratically decide on its activities and that have given authority to its decisions. Such democratic decision making within the movement is essential to revolutionaries both as the means by which people are educated in and involved in politics through debate and discussion, and because undemocratic practices and exclusion of people for their ideas are invariably used first against revolutionaries.

The final thing that has characterized the antiwar movement, and that has been part of the YSA's strategy from the beginning, is the demand for the immediate withdrawal of the U.S. from Vietnam. The withdrawal demand is one that is consistent with the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination, and when expressed in the slogan of "bring all the troops home now" it has proved capable of mobilizing masses of American people against the government.

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

The war in Vietnam and the unfolding of the mass movement against that war have resulted in greater prominence for the various radical organizations and tendencies that seek to lead such movements. Over the past six years we have had the opportunity to measure one against another and judge them in the light of their actual performance in the class struggle.

There have been two basic strategies counterposed to that presented by the revolutionary socialists in the YSA and SWP. The first, and most significant, conforms to the dominant political ideology in the United States today. That is the strategy of reliance on the capitalist electoral process, and capitalist politicians, to end the war.

This approach, which is assuming increasing importance with the coming of the 1972 presidential election campaign, is advanced by the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL), which agrees with and supports the CP. In the interest of implementing this strategy; the CP and YWLL oppose the united front character of the antiwar movement and its principled stand on Vietnamese self-determination. They view mass demonstrations as an auxiliary tactic subordinate to their electoral strategy.

The CP opposes the united front character of the antiwar movement in two ways. First of all, it tries directly to establish a popular front-type formation by having the antiwar movement formally support liberal Democrats. Second, it advocates a "multi-issue" movement. That is, it favors the antiwar movement adopting positions and organizing actions on a whole series of questions, something which amounts to the adoption of a political program. Although the adoption of such a program would make it extremely difficult to consistently mobilize masses of people in action around a burning issue such as Vietnam, and in fact would split the antiwar movement, such a general program--against war, racism, and repression, for example--can readily find expression in the campaigns of liberal Democrats.

The demagogy of the CP about the antiwar movement ignoring other social issues is in reality only a cover for its desire to dissolve the antiwar movement into a support formation for some liberal "peace candidate."

The reformism of the CP is best illustrated by its recent campaign for the slogan of "set the date" instead of immediate withdrawal. The "set the date" demand is not consistent with the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination, since it concedes the right of the U.S. to occupy Vietnam up until a certain date. It substitutes a demand for a promise that the U.S. will get out of Vietnam for the demand for an accomplished fact, allowing Nixon additional time to maneuver just when he is being backed into an ever-tighter corner.

The CP has tried to justify its support to the "set the date" demand by the fact that it has been raised by the Vietnamese. But there is no doubt that the Vietnamese would prefer to see an immediate U.S. withdrawal if they had the choice. It is one thing for the Vietnamese, under pressure of military occupation and a merciless air war, to make concessions to American imperialism. It is another thing entirely for the U.S. antiwar movement to recognize and legitimize concessions wrung by force from the Vietnamese.

The CP supports this demand not out of any interest in the Vietnamese revolution or the mobilization of larger numbers of people against the U.S. aggression in Vietnam, but because it sees the "set the date" demand as something that could appeal to and be a basis for work with such liberal politicians as Bella Abzug, Senator McGovern, Senator Mansfield, etc. If the antiwar movement were to adopt the "set the date" demand, it would be one step closer to supporting their election campaigns in 1972.

The answer of the YSA to the reformist strategy has been to continue to support and lead the fight for the organization of independent mass actions during the elections, while educating on the need for independence from the capitalist parties and on the role these parties have played in the past. Finally, while opposing the endorsement of any electoral campaigns by antiwar organizations, we build support for the SWP election campaign among antiwar activists as the alternative to the Democrats and Republicans in the electoral field.

The second main strategy put forward in the antiwar movement against mass action has been that of individual actions and confrontations. Pacifist actions of moral witness and small scale civil disobedience or confrontation actions all fit into this category. They have been supported and organized by a number of pacifist and ultraleft groups.

This approach to ending the war is totally ineffectual. It cannot begin to mobilize the numbers necessary to force the U.S. out of Vietnam, and in fact those who indulge in it have more often than not given up on the perspective of

mobilizing the masses of the American people.

Recently in the antiwar movement we have seen the advent of "mass civil disobedience," particularly around the May actions in Washington. There is no question that the Mayday demonstrations in Washington were larger than any civil disobedience actions in the past. Although their size reflected the intense hatred of the war felt by millions of youth across the country, and the appeal of the idea of stopping the war by any means necessary, it was due mainly to the success of the April 24 demonstrations and the impetus which they gave to all antiwar activity. A great deal of anger against the methods of the police was aroused, and the illegal mass arrests made a deep impact around the country. The YSA rejects the concept of large-scale civil disobedience as a strategy for the antiwar movement.

The antiwar movement has before it the biggest opportunities in its history for involving in action millions of new people, including large sectors of the organized labor movement. People who have never participated in an antiwar demonstration, people who hold jobs, GIs who can be victimized--in short, the people the antiwar movement must draw into activity if it is to have the power to end the war--cannot be drawn into Mayday-type actions. Such actions serve as a diversion from the real task before the antiwar movement.

Because of their lack of a mass action perspective, the ultraleftists who organize such actions play into the hands of the liberals. This is seen in the support of the Mayday organizers to the idea of a multi-issue movement and to the "set the date" demand. In both cases radical-sounding verbiage is substituted for the need to involve the largest numbers of people in struggle against the government.

Their elitist conceptions act as a block to the involvement of masses of people in the struggle. The concept of the masses learning through their participation in the struggle is replaced by the idea that the exemplary actions of the vanguard will educate people. The result of this is that the masses are relegated to the role of spectators and kept from participation in the movement.

All of these varied groupings have in common their opposition to the mass antiwar movement as it is presently constituted. All of them have resorted to red-baiting and violations of democratic norms in their attempts to change the character of the antiwar movement. Their political outlook has distorted their ability to perceive what is happening around them, as we see when they deny the achievements of the antiwar movement.

THE STUDENT MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE

From its inception in December 1966 the SMC has been the only nationwide student organization devoted specifically to mobilizing students against the war. It has been and con-

tinues to be the organized left wing of the antiwar movement, throughout its existence consistently fighting for the principles of mass action, immediate withdrawal, non-exclusion, and democratic decision-making.

Today the role that the SMC can play within the antiwar movement is more important than ever before. First, as the organizer of students, who remain the backbone of the antiwar movement and provide most of its activists, the SMC is central to the ability of the antiwar movement to reach out to new sectors of the population. It is through struggling for the antiwar university and the antiwar high school that the SMC will be able to mobilize tens of thousands of young people to utilize these institutions as organizing centers for antiwar activity.

The increase in this type of activity means that we will also see an increase in the SMC's activities in defense of the democratic rights of students, particularly high school students. As early as 1968 the SMC was successful in involving 200,000 high school students in New York City alone in a student strike against the war. With the increase in antiwar sentiment since that time and the deepening of the radicalization in the high schools, it is clear that this area of work offers the potential of reaching literally millions of youth. This potential has been reflected in the growing number of high school SMC chapters around the country. In many cities the majority of the SMC activists are high school students.

The SMC's Student Bill of Rights includes demands that are relevant to high school students all across the country. Already many significant victories have been won that have extended the democratic rights of high school students, both by the SMC and by other groups that have waged struggles around the demands in the Student Bill of Rights. We see the struggles of high school students for their rights as part of the fight against the war. The denial to anybody of her or his right to hold political views and organize around those views is a threat to the existence of the antiwar movement.

Another area of activity for the SMC has been organization against the draft, which will again increase in importance with the abolition of student deferments. The YSA is opposed to the draft and supports the efforts of the SMC to organize massive demonstrations against the war and the draft. We see the most effective way of opposing the draft not as individual resistance to it, or as separating the question of the draft from the opposition to the war for which it is used, but as linking together the issues of the war and the draft, and organizing masses of people against both.

We see the SMC as being central to building the mass antiwar demonstrations, to bringing new forces into the antiwar movement, and to maintaining the character of the antiwar movement. As trade union officials and supporters of the Democratic party enter the antiwar movement in larger numbers, they will try to impose their political con-

cepts on the antiwar movement. These include the subordination of the antiwar movement to the Democratic Party and, stemming from this, bureaucratic and anti-democratic forms of organization. This will lead to challenges to all of the basic tenets of the antiwar movement, and the role of the SMC as a militant left wing will become ever more important. The YSA views the building of the SMC as central to its work in the antiwar movement.

THE APRIL 24 DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE INDEPENDENT CONTINGENTS

The antiwar demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on April 24, 1971, were the biggest political demonstrations in American history. Their success in mobilizing and making visible the massive opposition to the war in Indochina was matched by their success in drawing into action hundreds of thousands of people who had never been involved in the antiwar movement before. A theme that ran through all of the press coverage of the demonstrations was the degree to which they drew a cross-section of American society.

One of the most important reasons for this participation was the existence of the various independent contingents of women, African-Americans, Latinos, gays, etc. In every case those who are most oppressed by the general workings of the capitalist system have an additional interest in opposing the wars designed to maintain capitalism. The ideology of militarism and "patriotism" is also the ideology of racism and sexism. The costs of the war are used as a justification for the withholding of funds for welfare, child care projects, the construction of schools and hospitals, decent pay for public employees, etc. Finally, the same people who pay for the war are forced to kill and be killed in it.

The experience of April 24 confirmed the approach of relating the war to the specific problems and oppression of different sectors of society through the vehicle of independent contingents. These contingents put out their own literature, made their own decisions, and organized themselves to participate in the main demonstrations through their own building actions. At the same time, they were clearly antiwar formations. They did not organize themselves as feminist or nationalist groups with a program for the women's liberation or Black liberation movements, for example. Their purpose was to unite all of the different forces within these mass movements--and many that did not identify with those movements--around their opposition to the war.

GIs AND THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

One of the most significant effects of the antiwar movement and the current radicalization as a whole has been the development of the GI antiwar movement. The GIs represent a section with considerably more power than their numbers alone would indicate. The fact that the impact of the war and the

antiwar movement have broken through the conservatism and fear that is instilled by the authoritarian structure of the military, by the enforced isolation of the people in it from the rest of society, and by the general brutality and hostility to intellect and sensitivity instilled by military life, is a development that cannot be underestimated.

The YSA and the SWP were the first organizations of the left to realize the possibility of such a development and to explain it to the rest of the antiwar movement. From the time of the first efforts in this direction in 1966, to the present, the YSA has done more to work with and defend GIs, and has published more material on this question, than any other tendency in the radical movement.

In the course of this activity we have come to the following conclusions about how antiwar work with GIs should be conducted. First, although GI antiwar activities can have a bigger impact on the general population than others, the GI movement functions within the general political context of the country as a whole and cannot be seen as a replacement for the general antiwar movement. Its ability to function and to be effective depends upon the existence of a massive civilian antiwar movement.

Second, we view the men in the conscript army as citizen-soldiers. They should have all of the rights of citizens, and the struggle to establish and defend their democratic rights is essential to massive opposition to the war in the armed forces. Finally, we favor open, collective action against the war rather than underground organization or individual resistance, which more easily lead to victimization and which obscure the fact that the military is attempting to suppress all forms of dissent within itself, including those forms protected by the constitution.

We see the war as the main problem facing GIs and as the problem common to all of them. Revolutionary socialists within the armed forces focus their political activity on the assertion and defense of their constitutional right to express their views as citizens upon the war and other issues of government policy, using sound tactical judgment in exercising that right and avoiding penalties over routine military matters and orders.

LABOR AND THE WAR

From the earliest days of the war in Vietnam we have noticed the lack of enthusiasm for the war among the ranks of labor, most often expressed in the negative by the refusal of the trade union movement to sacrifice for the war and by the large numbers of militant economic strikes waged in the course of the war. The SMC has attempted to relate to these developments wherever possible, pointing out the relationship between the war and inflation.

The April 24 actions were successful in attracting un-

precedented support from trade unionists, including not only formal endorsement, but also organization of official trade union contingents. This trend has continued with the fall antiwar actions, and has been speeded up in particular by Nixon's wage freeze, as was shown most clearly by the Detroit rally against the war and the wage freeze called by the Wayne County AFL-CIO.

This rally represented in the most graphic way the beginning of the entry into the antiwar movement of new forces that actually have the power to end the war. The fact that the Wayne County AFL-CIO linked the war and inflation in its protest of the wage freeze was a concrete example of the impact the antiwar movement has had in the trade unions. Similarly, the appeal directed to the antiwar movement asking for its endorsement and help in building the demonstration showed that the antiwar movement is viewed as a real force in its own right.

In New York an antiwar rally scheduled for October 13 is being organized by a number of major trade unions. Endorsement and assistance for the November 6 actions have come from a wider section of the trade union movement than ever before. These developments can not only greatly increase the size of these antiwar actions and trade union participation in them, but can also open the door for greater antiwar activity within the unions themselves.

The logic of Nixon's war policies leads to the suppression of democratic rights, the slashing of social services, the refusal of even the most elementary demands of the oppressed nationalities, of women, and of gay people, and an attack on the living standards of the American people. Ever larger numbers of people are beginning to understand this fact, and as a result, the antiwar movement has before it the perspective of involving millions of people in a mass movement directed against the government during a time of war.

THE ROLE OF THE YSA IN THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

It has been the YSA and the SWP, alone out of all of the

American left, which have consistently built and defended the antiwar movement, and which have consistently fought for and maintained the perspective of mass action for immediate withdrawal. In the process of doing this we have become part of the leadership of the antiwar movement throughout the country and have recruited hundreds of the most dedicated antiwar activists to the ideas of revolutionary socialism and membership in the YSA.

We intend to continue building the actions called by the antiwar movement, along with the SMC and NPAC. At the same time, we will be explaining to the activists attracted to the antiwar movement why they should be socialists and join with us in fighting against this system. The main way in which we will do this during the coming year will be through the 1972 election campaign of the SWP, and the campaign newspaper, The Militant.

The candidates of the SWP are well-known antiwar activists; Linda Jenness has been active in the antiwar movement since 1965 and Andrew Pulley has the added distinction of his role in the GI antiwar movement. Every YSA member who is active in the antiwar movement is also a socialist campaigner who will be explaining the ideas of socialism and recruiting antiwar activists to Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley, while working to build the movement. Unlike the campaigns of the bourgeois parties, that of the SWP is not counterposed to the antiwar movement, but rather is intended to build it. The SWP candidates will be speaking all over the country, explaining why people should oppose the war and why they should participate in building the actions called by the antiwar movement.

The YSA has understood that the fight against the war and the struggle against the system as a whole are inseparable. In the course of the struggle against the war in Indochina, the YSA has not only been successful in transmitting a strategy for victory to the antiwar movement, but has also successfully assembled a growing cadre of revolutionary socialist youth, experienced in the mass movement, and looking with confidence to the future.

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