

Students for a Democratic Society!

1608 W. Madison

Chicago, Ill.

# sds new left notes



## inside National Convention Proposals

Vol. 4, no. 22 ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE June 1963

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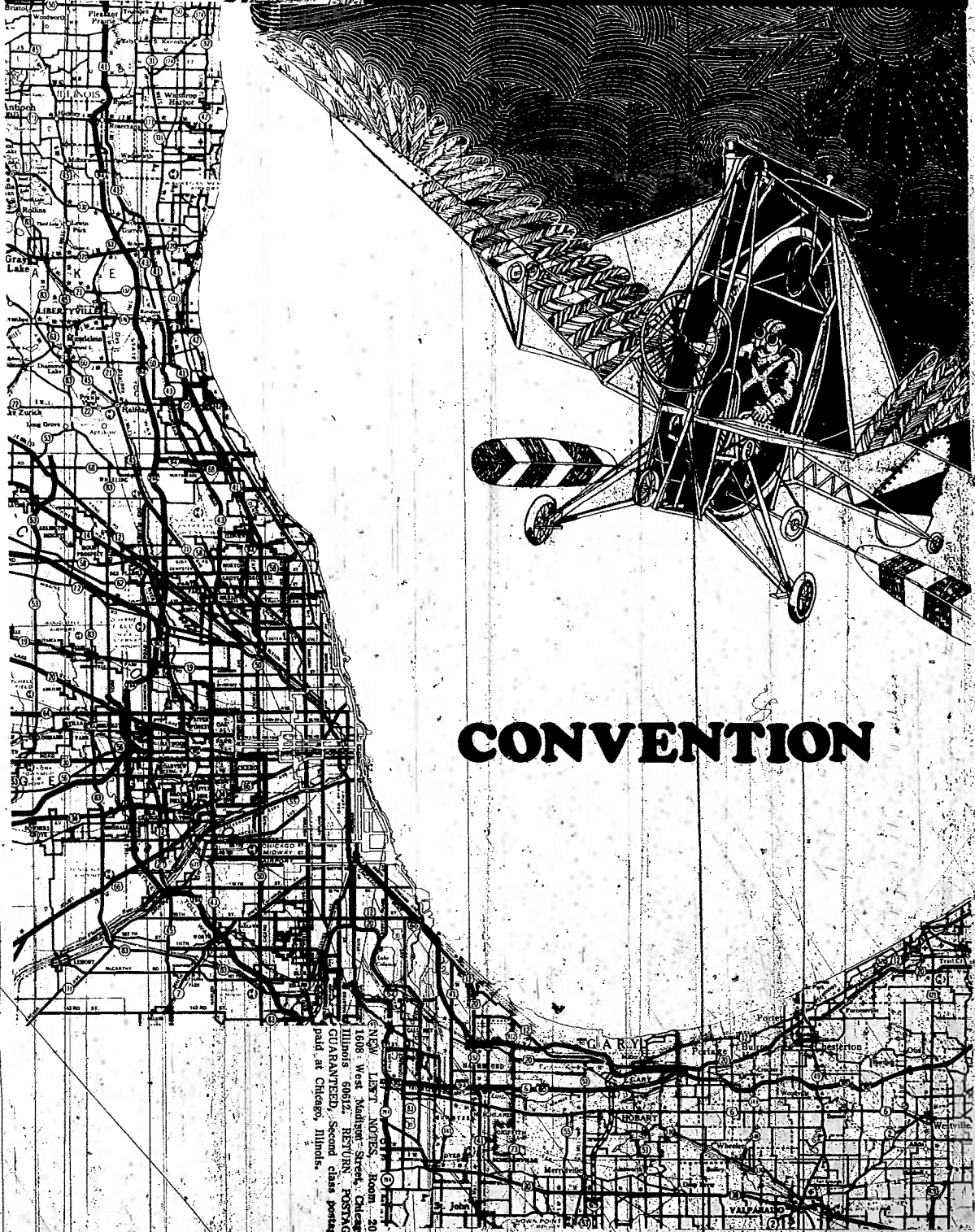
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## CONVENTION

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# \*\*\*\*\* THE CONSTITUTION \*\*\*\*\*

**PREAMBLE**

Students for a Democratic Society is an association of young people on the left. It seeks to create a sustained community of educational and political concern; one bringing together liberals and radicals; activists and scholars, students and faculty.

It maintains a vision of a democratic society, where at all levels the people have control of the decisions which affect them and the resources on which they are dependent. It seeks a relevance through the continual focus on realities and on the programs necessary to effect change at the most basic levels of economic, political, and social organization. It feels the urgency to put forth a radical, democratic program whose methods embody the democratic vision.

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of the organization shall be Students for a Democratic Society.

**ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1:** Membership is open to all who share the commitment of the organization to democracy as a means and as a social goal.

**Section 2:** SDS is an organization of and for democrats. It is civil libertarian in its treatment of those with whom it disagrees, but clear in its opposition to any anti-democratic principle as a basis for governmental, social, or political organization.

**Section 3: DUES:** The amount and period of national dues shall be determined by the National Council.

**Section 4: ASSOCIATES:** Individuals who do not wish to join SDS but who share the major concerns of the organization may become associates, with rights and responsibilities as defined by the National Council.

**ARTICLE III: CHAPTERS AND AFFILIATES**

**Section 1:** Any group of five or more members may apply to the National Office for charter as a chapter.

**Section 2:** A chapter may be chartered by the regional council of the area in which it is organized, or by the National Council. The chapter shall submit a membership list, a constitution or statement of principles, and notification of officers or regional representatives. Chapters may be provisionally recognized by the president or appropriate regional officer pending the meeting of the National Council or regional council respectively.

**Section 3:** Chapters are expected to operate within the broad terms of policy set by the national convention and the National Council. Points of conflict should be referred to the National Council and a procedure established to make the issue public to the organization. In matters judged to be detrimental to the organization, the National Council shall have the power to cease whatever activity has been brought into question. The matter shall be finally resolved by the National Council in meeting or referendum.

**Section 4: ASSOCIATED GROUPS:** Independent groups can affiliate as associates of SDS by vote of their membership and designation of a liaison representative to sit on the National Council with consultative vote. The representative shall be a member of SDS. Such association is provisional until the approval of the National Council. The form of the relationship shall be worked out in each case between the group and the National Council.

**Section 5: FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS:** National or regional organizations whose programs and purposes are consistent with the broad aims and purposes of SDS can be invited by the National Council to be fraternal with SDS and have a fraternal vote on the National Council. Such organizations shall appoint a liaison representative who shall be a member of SDS.

**Section 6:** SDS welcomes the opportunity to co-operate with other individuals and organizations in jointly sponsoring specific action programs and joint stands on specific issues. The National Council shall be empowered to determine specific co-operative activity. (Co-operation does not imply endorsement.)

**ARTICLE VII: NATIONAL INTERIM COMMITTEE**

The Secretaries shall have the power to call a meeting of a National Interim Committee, to be composed of all the national officers, on a regular basis and in emergencies. Decisions of this body shall be subject to National Council approval.

**ARTICLE VIII: NATIONAL OFFICERS AND STAFF**

**Section 1:** The national officers shall be: National Secretary, Education Secretary, Inter-Organizational Secretary and eight other officers, all to be elected at the convention and to serve as members of the National Council.

**Section 2:** The national officers must have been members of SDS at least two months prior to election.

**Section 3:** The eleven national officers are the spokesmen of SDS. They shall be responsible for seeing that organizational and political policies are carried out and shall convene the National Council. Political responsibility lies with the three Secretaries in consultation with the other officers. The three Secretaries shall work out of the national office. Important decisions in any one area which are made between meetings of the National Interim Council are to be made by the three national officers together. The officers shall be responsible to the convention and the National Council.

**Section 4:** The National Secretary shall have primary responsibility for the implementation of national programs approved by the convention or National Council.

**Section 5:** The Inter-Organizational Secretary shall have primary responsibility for liaison with other organizations, both national and international, and for informing the membership about these groups. He/she shall not attend congresses, accept money, or establish formal relationships with organizations without the approval of the convention, the National Council, or, in emergency, the National Interim Council.

**Section 6:** The Education Secretary shall have the primary responsibility for the functioning of the internal education program.

**Section 7:** The Secretaries shall appoint assistants as necessary, subject to approval of the National Council.

**Section 8:** The National Council shall elect administrative bodies to review

administrative decisions of the Secretaries. It shall also fill, for the duration of the term, positions vacated by the national officers.

**ARTICLE IX: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

In all cases not covered by this constitution, Robert's Rules of Order, Revised Edition, shall be the authority governing SDS business.

**ARTICLE X: POLICY AND DECISION**

**Section 1:** Any member of the organization, including the officers, may be expelled or relieved of duties by a two-thirds vote of the National Council. Due process shall be followed in all cases.

**Section 2:** Any two chapters, or one-third of the National Council, can initiate a national referendum on any question.

**Section 3:** All statements of organizational policy shall have the approval of the National Council.

**ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended by one of three procedures:

(a) by a two-thirds vote of the convention in session on amendments introduced at the convention, in which case the amendment will take effect at the following convention;

(b) by a two-thirds vote of the convention in session on amendments introduced by distribution to the membership at least a month before the convention, in which case the amendment will take effect immediately upon adoption;

(c) by a two-thirds vote of the membership on referendum, in which case the amendment will take effect immediately upon adoption;

**ARTICLE IV: REGIONAL ORGANIZATION**

**Section 1:** All or some of the chapters and/or members in a given geographical area may constitute themselves a region of SDS. New regions shall submit their constitutions and be recognized provisionally by the president pending the next regular National Council meeting. All disputes over regional boundaries shall be resolved by the National Council.

**Section 2:** Regions of SDS shall hold at least one membership convention each year and may establish regional officers as deemed necessary. Regional programs, staff, and offices shall be responsible to decisions arrived at by a democratically constituted regional council.

**Section 3:** While fundamentally responsible to their regional constituency, regions are expected to operate within the broad terms of policy set by the national convention and National Council. Any points of conflict shall be finally resolved by the National Council.

**Section 4:** If one-third of the duly chartered chapters in the geographical area of a region so petition, the National Council shall immediately consider whether to declare the regional organization defunct and to prohibit it from speaking or acting on behalf of SDS.

**ARTICLE V: CONVENTION**

**Section 1:** SDS shall meet in convention annually, at a time and a place fixed by the National Council, with at least three months prior notice being given to all members.

**Section 2:** The convention shall serve to debate major issues and orientation of the organization, to set program mandates to the national staff, and to elect national officers. The convention shall not be the policy-making body on specific resolutions.

**Section 3: REPRESENTATION:** Chapters shall elect convention delegates on the basis of one delegate for every five SDS members in the chapter, each delegate to have five votes at the convention. However, in order to be seated as a delegate with five votes, a written notice of the delegate's election must be received by the National Office prior to the convention. Delegates from associated and fraternal groups shall be elected by a procedure determined by the National Council. The National Council shall draft convention rules, accreditation procedures, and other requirements. (a, amendment pending)

**ARTICLE VI: NATIONAL COUNCIL**

**Section 1: (a)** The National Council shall be composed of (1) one representative from each chapter with from five to twenty-five members, and one additional representative for each additional twenty-five members or fraction thereof in that chapter; (2) the eleven national officers; (3) elected liaison representatives from associated groups (with consultative vote); (4) liaison representatives from fraternal organizations (with fraternal vote); and (5) national staff (without vote). In all cases, National Council members and liaison representatives must be members of SDS. No more than three members from one chapter or associated group may serve concurrently as national officers.

**Section 1: (b)** Five or more members residing in an area where there is no organized chapter may meet together to elect a delegate to the National Council or regional council, provided that (1) a certification of the meeting and election, bearing the signatures of at least five members, be sent to the national or regional office prior to the National Council or regional council meeting; and (2) evidence is offered that all SDS members in the area concerned received prior notice of the meeting and election.

**Section 2:** The National Council shall be the major policy-making and program body of the organization. It shall determine policy in the form of resolutions on specific views within the broad orientation of the organization; determine the program priorities and action undertaken by the organization consistent with the orientation and mandates set by the convention; charter chapters, associated groups, and fraternal organizations; and be empowered to suspend chapters, with the right of appeal to the convention. The National Council shall be responsible for the drafting of a budget, administration of the budget, and organization of fund raising; appointment of committee chairmen and representatives to other organizations; overseeing the functioning of the administrative committees; drafting an annual report; and making arrangements for the convention.

**Section 3:** The National Council shall have the power to appoint standing committees to carry on its work between its meetings.

**Section 4:** The National Council shall meet at least four times a year. A quorum shall be forty per cent of the voting members of whose election the National Council has been notified. National officers may designate specific alternates. Chapter and liaison representatives may be represented by designated alternates from their groups.

# You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows

(Submitted by Karin Ashley, Bill Ayers, Bernardine Dorn, John Jacobs, Jeff Jones, Gerry Long, Howie Machinger, Jim Meilen, Terry Robbins, Mark Rudd, and Steve Tappis)

## 1. INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTION

"The contradiction between the revolutionary peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the imperialists headed by the United States is the principal contradiction in the contemporary world. The development of this contradiction is promoting the struggle of the people of the whole world against US imperialism and its lackeys."

Lin Piao, Long Live the Victory of People's War!

People ask, what is the nature of the revolution that we talk about? Who will it be made by, and for, and what are its goals and strategy?

The overriding consideration in answering these questions is that the main struggle going on in the world today is between US imperialism and the national liberation struggles against it. This is essential in defining political matters in the whole world: because it is by far the most powerful, every other empire and petty dictator is in the long run dependent on US imperialism, which has unified, allied with, and defended all of the reactionary forces of the whole world. Thus, in considering every other force or phenomenon, from Soviet imperialism or Israeli imperialism to "workers struggle" in France or Czechoslovakia, we determine who are our friends and who are our enemies according to whether they help US imperialism or fight to defeat it.

So the very first question people in this country must ask in considering the question of revolution is where they stand in relation to the United States as an oppressor nation, and where they stand in relation to the masses of people throughout the world whom US imperialism is oppressing.

The primary task of revolutionary struggle is to solve this principal contradiction on the side of the people of the world. It is the oppressed peoples of the world who have created the wealth of this empire and it is to them that it belongs; the goal of the revolutionary struggle must be the control and use of this wealth in the interests of the oppressed peoples of the world.

It is in this context that we must examine the revolutionary struggles in the United States. We are within the heartland of a world-wide monster, a country so rich from its world-wide plunder that even the crumbs doled out to the enslaved masses within its borders provide for material existence very much above the conditions of the masses of people of the world. The US empire, as a world-wide system, channels wealth, based upon the labor and resources of the rest of the world, into the United States. The relative affluence existing in the United States is directly dependent upon the labor and natural resources of the Vietnamese, the Angolans, the Bolivians and the rest of the peoples of the Third World. All of the United Airlines Astrojets, all of the Holiday Inns, all of Hertz's automobiles, your television set, car and wardrobe already belong, to a large degree, to the people of the rest of the world.

Therefore, any conception of "socialist revolution" simply in terms of the working people of the United States, failing to recognize the full scope of interests of the most oppressed peoples of the world, is a conception of a fight for a particular privileged interest, and is a very dangerous ideology. While the control and use of the wealth of the Empire for the people of the whole world is also in the interests of the vast majority of the people in this country, if the goal is not clear from the start we will further the preservation of class society, oppression, war, genocide, and the complete emiseration of everyone, including the people of the US.

The goal is the destruction of US imperialism and the achievement of a classless world: world communism. Winning state power in the US will occur as a result of the military forces of the US overextending themselves around the world and being defeated piecemeal; struggle within the US will be a vital part of this process, but when the revolution triumphs in the US it will have been made by the people of the whole world. For socialism to be defined in national terms within so extreme and historical an oppressor nation as this is only imperialist national chauvinism on the part of the "movement."

## II. WHAT IS THE BLACK COLONY?

Not every colony of people oppressed by imperialism lies outside the boundaries of the US. Black people within North America, brought here 400 years ago as slaves and whose labor, as slaves, built this country, are an internal colony within the confines of the oppressor nation. What this means is that black people are oppressed as a whole people, in the institutions and social relations of the country, apart from simply the consideration of their class position, income, skill, etc. as individuals. What does this colony look like? What is the basis for its common oppression and why is it important?

One historically important position has been that the

Black colony only consists of the "black belt nation" in the south, whose fight for national liberation is based on a common land, culture, history and economic life. The rallying of this position is that black people in the rest of the country are a national minority but not actually part of the colony themselves; so the struggle for national liberation is for the black belt, and not all blacks; black people in the north, not actually part of the colony, are part of the working class of the white oppressor nation. In this formulation northern black workers have a "dual role"—one an interest in supporting the struggle in the South, and opposing racism, as members of the national minority, and as northern "white nation" workers whose class interest is in integrated socialism in the north. The consistent version of this line actually calls for integrated organizing of black and white workers in the north along what it calls "class" lines.

This position is wrong; in reality, the black colony does not exist simply as the "black belt nation", but exists in the country as a whole. The common oppression of black people and the common culture growing out of that history are not based historically or currently on their relation to the territory of the black belt, even though that has been a place of population concentration and has some very different characteristics than the north, particularly around the land question.

Rather, the common features of oppression, history and culture which unify black people as a colony (although originating historically in a common territory apart from the colonizers, i.e. Africa, not the South) have been based historically on their common position



as slaves, which since the nominal abolition of slavery has taken the form of caste oppression, and oppression of black people as a people everywhere that they exist. A new black nation, different from the nations of Africa from which it came, has been forged by the common historical experience of importation and slavery and caste oppression; to claim that to be a nation it must of necessity now be based on a common national territory apart from the colonizing nation is a mechanical application of criteria which were and are applicable to different situations.

What is specifically meant by the term "caste" is that all black people, on the basis of their common slave history, common culture and skin color are systematically denied access to particular job categories (or positions within job categories), social position etc. regardless of individual skills, talents, money or education. Within the working class, they are the most oppressed section; in the petit bourgeoisie, they are even more strictly confined to the lowest levels. Taken exceptions aside, the specific content of this caste oppression is to maintain black people in the most exploitative and oppressive jobs and conditions. Therefore, since the lowest class is the working class, the black caste is almost entirely a caste of the working class, or positions as oppressed as the lower working class positions (poor black petit bourgeoisie and farmers); it is a colonial labor caste, a colony whose common national character itself is defined by their common class position.

Thus, northern blacks do not have a "dual interest"—as blacks on the one hand and "US-nation workers" on the other. They have a single class interest, along with all other black people in the US, as members of the Black Proletarian Colony.

## III. THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALIST SELF-DETERMINATION

The struggle of black people—as a colony—is for self-determination, freedom, and liberation from US imperialism. Because blacks have been oppressed and held in an inferior social position as a people, they have a right to decide, organize and act on their common destiny as a people apart from white interference. Black self-determination does not simply apply to determination of their collective political destiny at some future time: it is directly tied to the fact that because all blacks experience oppression in a form that no whites do, no whites are in a position to fully understand and test from their own practice the real situation black people face and the necessary response to it. This is why it is necessary for black people to

organize separately and determine their actions separately at each stage of the struggle. It is important to understand the implications of this: it is not legitimate for whites to organizationally intervene in differences among revolutionary black nationalists. It would be arrogant for us to attack any black organization that defends black people and opposes imperialism in practice. But it is necessary to develop a correct understanding of the Black Liberation struggle within our own organization, where an incorrect one will further racist practice in our relations with the black movement.

In the history of some external colonies, such as China and Vietnam, the struggle for self-determination has had two stages: (1) a united front against imperialism and for New Democracy (which is a joint dictatorship of anti-colonial classes led by the proletariat, the content of which is a compromise between the interests of the proletariat and nationalist peasants, petit bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie); and (2) developing out of the new democratic stage, socialism.

However, the black liberation struggle in this country will have only one "stage"; the struggle for self-determination will embody within it the struggle for socialism.

As Huey P. Newton has said, "In order to be a revolutionary nationalist, you would of necessity have to be a socialist." This is because—given the caste quality of oppression—as a people through a common degree of exploitation—self-determination requires being free from white capitalist exploitation in the form of inferior (lower caste) jobs, housing, schools, hospitals, prisons. In addition, only what was or became in practice a socialist program for self-determination—one which addressed itself to reversing this exploitation—could win the necessary active mass support in the "proletarian colony."

The program of a united front for new democracy, on the other hand, would not be as thorough, and so would not win as active and determined support from the black masses. The only reason for having such a front would be where the independent petit bourgeois forces which it would bring in would add enough strength to balance the weakening of proletarian backing. This is not the case: first, because much of the black petit bourgeoisie is actually a "comprador" petit bourgeoisie (like so-called black capitalists: who are promoted by the power structure to seem independent but are really agents of white monopoly capital), who would never fight as a class for any real self-determination; and secondly, because many black petit bourgeois, perhaps most, while not having a class interest in socialist self-determination, are close enough to the black masses in the oppression and limitations on their conditions that they will support many kinds of self-determination issues, and especially when the movement is winning, can be won to support full (socialist) self-determination. For the black movement to work to maximize this support from the petit bourgeoisie is correct; but it is in no way a united front where it is clear that the Black Liberation Movement should not and does not modify the revolutionary socialist content of its stand to win that support.

## IV. BLACK LIBERATION MEANS REVOLUTION

What is the relationship of the struggle for black self-determination to the whole world-wide revolution to defeat US imperialism and internationalize its resources toward the goal of creating a classless world?

No black self-determination could be won which would not result in a victory for the international revolution as a whole. The black proletarian colony, being dispersed as such a large and exploited section of the world force, is essential to the survival of imperialism. Thus, even if the black liberation movement chose to try to attain self-determination in the form of a separate country (a legitimate part of the right to self-determination), existing side by side with the US imperialism could not survive if they won it—and so would never give up without being defeated. Thus, a revolutionary nationalist movement could not win without destroying the state power of the imperialists; and it is for this reason that the black liberation movement, as a revolutionary nationalist movement, for self-determination, is automatically in and of itself an inseparable part of the whole revolutionary struggle against US imperialism and for international socialism.

However, the fact that black liberation depends on winning the whole revolution does not mean that it depends on waiting for and joining with a mass white

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# Weatherman

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movement to do it. The social oppression of black people must be ended, and does not allow any leisure time to wait; if necessary, black people could win self-determination, abolishing the whole imperialist system and seizing state power to do it, without this white movement, although the cost among whites and blacks both would be high.

Blacks could do it alone if necessary, because of their centrality to the system, economically and geo-militarily, and because of the level of unity, commitment, and initiative which will be developed in waging a people's war for survival and national liberation. However, we do not expect that they will have to do it alone, not only because of the international situation, but also because the real interests of masses of oppressed whites in this country lie with the Black Liberation struggle, and the conditions for understanding and fighting for these interests grows with the deepening of the crises. Already, the black liberation movement has carried with it an upsurge of revolutionary consciousness among white youth; and while there are no guarantees, we can expect that this will extend and deepen among all oppressed whites.

To put aside the possibility of blacks winning alone leads to the racist position that blacks should wait for whites and are dependent on whites acting for them to win. Yet the possibility of blacks winning alone cannot in the least be a justification for whites falling to shoulder the burden of developing a revolutionary movement among whites. If the first error is racism by holding back black liberation, this would be equally racist by leaving blacks isolated to take on the whole fight—and the whole cost—for everyone.

It is necessary to defeat both racist tendencies: (1) that blacks shouldn't go ahead with making the revolution, and (2) that blacks should go ahead alone with making it. The only third path is to build a white movement which will support the blacks in moving as fast as they have to and are able to, and still itself keep up with that black movement enough so that white revolutionaries share the cost and the blacks don't have to do the whole thing alone. Any white who does not follow this third path is objectively following one of the other two (or both) and is objectively racist.

## V. ANTI-IMPERIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE UNITED FRONT

Since the strategy for defeating imperialism in semi-feudal colonies has two stages, the new-democratic stage of a united front to throw out imperialism and then the socialist stage, some people suggest two stages for the US too—one to stop imperialism, the anti-imperialist stage, and another to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat, the socialist stage. It is no accident that even the proponents of this idea can't tell you what it means. In reality, imperialism is a predatory international stage of capitalism. Defeating imperialism within the US couldn't possibly have the content which it could in a semi-feudal country, of replacing imperialism with capitalism or new democracy; when imperialism is defeated in the US, it will be replaced by socialism—nothing else. One revolution, one replacement process, one seizure of state power—the anti-imperialist revolution and the socialist revolution, one and the same stage. To talk of this as two separate stages, the struggle to overthrow imperialism and the struggle for socialist revolution, is as crazy as if Marx had talked about the proletarian socialist revolution as a revolution of two stages, one the overthrow of capitalist state power, and second the establishment of socialist state power.

Along with no two stages, there is no united front with the petit bourgeoisie, because its interests as a class aren't for replacing imperialism with socialism. As far as people within this country are concerned, the international war against imperialism is the same task as the socialist revolution, for one overthrow of power here. There is no "united front" for socialism here.

One reason people have considered the "united front" idea is the fear that if we were talking about a one-stage socialist revolution, then we would fall to organize maximum possible support among people, like some petit bourgeoisie, who would fight imperialism on a particular issue, but weren't for revolution. When the petit bourgeoisie's interest is for fighting imperialism of a particular issue, but not for overthrowing it and replacing it with socialism, it is still contributing to revolution to that extent—not to some intermediate thing which is not imperialism and not socialism. Someone not for revolution is not for actually defeating imperialism either, but we still can and should unite with them on particular issues. But this is not a united front (and we should not put forth some joint "united front" line with them to the exclusion of our own politics), because their class position isn't against imperialism as a system. In China, or Vietnam, the petit bourgeoisie's class interests could be for actually winning against imperialism; this was because their task was driving it out, not overthrowing its whole existence. For us here, "throwing it out" means not from one colony, but all of them, throwing it out of the world, the same thing as overthrowing it.

## VI. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY AND THE BLACK VANGUARD

What is the strategy of this international revolutionary movement? What are the strategic weaknesses of the imperialists which make it possible for us to win? Revolutionaries around the world are in general agreement on the answer, which Lin Piao describes in the following way:

"US imperialism is stronger, but also more vulnerable, than any imperialism of the past. It sets itself against the people of the whole world, including the people of the United States. Its human, military, material and financial resources are far from sufficient for the realization of its ambition of domination over the whole world. US imperialism has further weakened itself by occupying so many places in the world, over-reaching itself, stretching its fingers out wide and dispersing its strength, with its rear so far away and its supply lines so long."

— Lin Piao,  
Long Live the Victory of People's War.  
p. 122

The strategy which flows from this is that we called "creating two, three, many Vietnams"—to mobilize the struggle so sharply in so many places that the imperialists cannot possibly deal with it all. Since it is essential to their interests, they will try to deal with it all, and will be defeated and destroyed in the process.

In defining and implementing this strategy, it is clear that the vanguard (that is, the section of the people who are in the forefront of the struggle and whose class interests and needs define the terms and tasks of the revolution) of the "American Revolution" is the workers and oppressed peoples of the colonies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Because of the level of special oppression of black people as a colony they reflect the interests of the oppressed people of the world from within the borders of the United States; they are part of the Third World and part of the international



revolutionary vanguard.

The vanguard role of the Vietnamese and other Third World countries in defeating US imperialism has been clear to our movement for some time. What has not been so clear is the vanguard role black people have played, and continue to play, in the development of revolutionary consciousness and struggle within the United States. Critics of the black liberation struggle as being "reactionary" or of black organizations on campus as being "conservative" or "racist" very often express this lack of understanding. These ideas are incorrect and must be defeated if a revolutionary movement is going to be built among whites.

The black colony, due to its particular nature as a slave colony, never adopted a chauvinist identification with America as an imperialist power, either politically or culturally. Moreover, the history of black people in America has consistently been one of the greatest overall repudiation of and struggle against the state. From the slave ships from Africa to the slave revolts, the Civil War, etc., black people have been waging a struggle for survival and liberation. In the history of our own movement this has also been the case: the civil rights struggles, initiated and led by blacks in the South; the rebellions beginning with Harlem in 1964 and Watts in 1965 through Detroit and Newark in 1967; the campus struggles at all-black schools in the south and struggles led by blacks on campuses all across the country. As it is the blacks—along with the Vietnamese and other Third World people—who are most oppressed by US imperialism, their class interests are most solid, and resolutely committed to waging revolutionary struggle through to its completion. Therefore it is no surprise that time and again, in both political content and level of consciousness and militancy, it has been the black liberation movement which has upped the ante and defined the terms of the struggle.

What is the relationship of this "black vanguard" to the "many Vietnams" around the world? Obviously this is an example of our strategy that different fronts reinforce each other. The fact that the Vietnamese are winning weakens the enemy, advancing the possibilities for the black struggle, etc. But it is important for us to understand that the interrelationship is more than this: Black people do not simply "choose" to intensify their struggle because they want to help the Vietnamese, or because they see that Vietnam heightens the

possibilities for struggle here. The existence of any one Vietnam, especially a winning one, spurs on others not only through consciousness and choice, but through need, because it is a political and economic, as well as military, weakening of capitalism, and this means that to compensate, the imperialists are forced to intensify their oppression of other people.

Thus the loss of China and Cuba and the loss now of Vietnam not only encourages other oppressed peoples (such as the blacks) by showing what the alternative is and that it can be won, but also costs the imperialists billions of dollars which they then have to take out of the oppression of these other peoples. Within this country increased oppression falls heavier on the most oppressed sections of the population, so that the condition of all workers is worsened through rising taxes, inflation and the fall of real wages, and speedup. But this increased oppression falls heaviest on the most oppressed, such as poor white workers and, especially, the blacks, for example through the collapse of state services like schools, hospitals, and welfare, which is particularly hardest at those most dependent on them.

This deterioration pushes people to fight harder to even try to maintain their present level. The more the ruling class is hurt in Vietnam, the harder people will be pushed to rebel and to fight for reforms. Because there exist successful models of revolution in Cuba, Vietnam, etc., these reform struggles will provide a continually larger and stronger base for revolutionary ideas. Because it needs to maximize profits by denying the reforms, and is aware that these conditions and reform struggles will therefore lead to revolutionary consciousness, the ruling class will see it more and more necessary to come down on any motion at all, even where it is not yet highly organized or conscious. It will come down faster on black people, because their oppression is increasing fastest, and this makes their rebellion most thorough and most dangerous, and fastest growing. It is because of this that the vanguard character and role of the black liberation struggle will be increased and intensified, rather than being increasingly equal to and merged into the situation and rebellion of oppressed white working people and youth. The crises of imperialism (the existence of Vietnam and especially that it's winning) will therefore create a "black Vietnam" within the US.

Given that black self-determination would mean fully crushing the power of the imperialists, this "Vietnam" has certain different characteristics than the external colonial wars. The imperialists will never get out of the US until their total strength and every resource they can bring to bear has been smashed; so the Black Vietnam cannot win without bringing the whole thing down and winning for everyone. This means that this war of liberation will be the most protracted and hardest fought of all.

It is in this context that the question of the South must be dealt with again, not as a question of whether or not the black nation, black colony, exists there, as opposed to in the north as well, but rather as a practical question of strategy and tactics: Can the black liberation struggle—the struggle of all blacks in the country—gain advantage in the actual war of liberation by concentrating on building base areas in the South in territory with a concentration of black population?

This is very clearly a different question than that of "where the colony is," and to this question the "yes" answer is an important possibility. If the best potential for struggle in the South were realized, it is fully conceivable and legitimate that the struggle there could take on the character of a fight for separation; and any victories won in that direction would be important gains for the national liberation of the colony as a whole. However, because the colony is dispersed over the whole country, and not just located in the black belt, winning still means the power and liberation of blacks in the whole country.

Thus, even the winning of separate independence in the South would still be one step toward self-determination, and not equivalent to winning it; which, because of the economic position of the colony as a whole, would still require overthrowing the state power of the imperialists, taking over production and the whole economy and power, etc.

## VII. THE REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT: CLASS ANALYSIS

The revolutionary youth movement program was hailed as a transition strategy, which explained a lot of our past work and pointed to new directions for our movement. But as a transition to what? What was our overall strategy? Was the youth movement strategy just an organizational strategy because SDS is an organization of youth and we can move best with other young people?

We have pointed to the vanguard nature of the black struggle in this country as part of the international struggle against American imperialism and the impossibility of anything but an international strategy for winning. Any attempt to put forth a strategy which, despite internationalist rhetoric, assumes a purely internal development to the class struggle in this country, is incorrect. The Vietnamese (and the Uruguayans and the Rhodesians) and the blacks and Third World peoples in this country will continue to set the terms for class struggle in America.

In this context, why an emphasis on youth? Why should young people be willing to fight on the side of Third World peoples? Before dealing with this question about youth, however, there follows a brief sketch of the main class categories in the white mother country which we think are important, and indicate our present estimation of their respective class interests (bearing

in mind that the potential for various sections to understand and fight for the revolution will vary according to more than just their real class interests).

Most of the population is of the working class, by which we mean not simply industrial or production workers, nor those who are actually working, but the whole section of the population which doesn't own productive property and so lives off of the sale of its labor power. This is not a metaphysical category either in terms of its interests or the role it plays, even who is in it, which very often is difficult to determine.

As a whole, the long-range interests of the non-colonial sections of the working class lie with overthrowing imperialism, with supporting self-determination for the oppressed nations (including the black colony), with supporting and fighting for international socialism. However, virtually all of the white working class also has short-range privileges from imperialism, which are not false privileges but very real ones which give them an edge of vested interest and tie them to a certain extent to the imperialists, especially when the latter are in a relatively prosperous phase. When the imperialists are losing their empire, on the other hand, these short-ranged privileged interests are seen to be temporary (even though the privileges may be relatively greater over the faster increasing emiseration of the oppressed peoples). The long-range interests of workers in siding with the oppressed peoples are seen more clearly in the light of imperialism's impending defeat. Within the whole working class, the balance of anti-imperialist class interests with white mother country short-term privilege varies greatly.

First, the most oppressed sections of the mother country working class have interests most clearly and strongly anti-imperialist. Who are the most oppressed sections of the working class? Millions of whites who have as oppressive material conditions as the blacks, or almost so; especially, poor southern white workers; the unemployed or semi-employed, or those employed at very low wages for long hours and bad conditions, who are non-unionized or have weak unions; and extending up to include much of unionized labor which has it a little better off but still is heavily oppressed and exploited. This category covers a wide range and includes the most oppressed sections not only of production and service workers, but also some secretaries, clerks, etc. Much of this category gets some relative privileges (i.e. benefits) from imperialism, which constitute some material basis for being racist or pro-imperialist; but overall it is itself directly and heavily oppressed, so that in addition to its long-range class interest on the side of the people of the world, its immediate situation also constitutes a strong basis for sharpening the struggle against the state and fighting through to revolution.

Secondly, there is the upper strata of the working class. This is also an extremely broad category, including the upper strata of unionized skilled workers and also most of the "new working class" of proletarianized or semi-proletarianized "intellect workers." There is no clearly marked dividing line between the previous section and this one; our conclusions in dealing with "questionable" strata will in any event have to come from more thorough analysis of particular situations. The long-range class interests of this strata, like the previous section of more oppressed workers, are for the revolution and against imperialism. However, it is characterized by a higher level of privilege relative to the oppressed colonies, including the blacks, and relative to more oppressed workers in the mother country; so that there is a strong material basis for racism and loyalty to the system. In a revolutionary situation, where the people's forces were on the offensive and the ruling class was clearly losing, most of this upper strata of the working class will be winnable to the revolution, while at least some sections of it will probably identify their interests with imperialism till the end and oppose the revolution (which part of which will have to do with more variables than just the particular level of privilege). The further development of the situation will clarify where this section will go, although it is clear that either way we do not put any emphasis on reaching older employed workers from this strata at this time. The exception is where they are important to the black liberation struggle, the Third World, or the youth movement in particular situations, such as with teachers, hospital technicians, etc., in which cases we must fight particularly hard to organize them around a revolutionary line of full support for black liberation and the international revolution against US imperialism. This is crucial because the privilege of this section of the working class has provided and will provide a strong material basis for national chauvinist and social democratic ideology within the movement, such as anti-internationalist concepts of "student power" and "workers control." Another consideration in understanding the interests of this segment is that, because of the way it developed and how its skills and its privileges were "earned over time," the differential between the position of youth and older workers is in many ways greater for this section than any other in the population. We should continue to see it as important to build the revolutionary youth movement among the youth of this strata.

Thirdly, there are "middle strata" who are not petit bourgeoisie, who may even technically be upper working class, but who are so privileged and tightly tied to imperialism through their job roles that they are agents of imperialism. This section includes management personnel, corporate lawyers, higher civil servants, and other government agents, army officers, etc.

Because their job categories require and promote a close identification with the interests of the ruling class, these strata are enemies of the revolution.

Fourthly, and last among the categories we're going to deal with, is the petit bourgeoisie. This class is different from the middle level described above, in that it has independent class interest which is opposed to both monopoly power and to socialism. The petit bourgeoisie consists of small capital—both business and farms—and self-employed tradesmen and professionals (many professionals work for monopoly capital, and are either the upper level of the working class or in the agents-of-imperialism category). The content of its independent class interests—anti-monopoly capital but for capitalism rather than socialism—gives it a political character of some opposition to "big government," like its increased spending and taxes and its totalitarian extension of its control into every aspect of life, and to "big labor," which is at this time itself part of the monopoly capitalist power structure. The direction which this opposition takes can be reactionary or reformist. At this time the reformist side of it is very much mitigated by the extent to which the independence of the petit bourgeoisie is being undermined. Increasingly, small businesses are becoming extensions of big ones, while professionals and self-employed tradesmen less and less sell their skills on their own terms and become regular employees of big firms. This tendency does not mean that the reformist aspect is not still present; it is, and there are various issues, like withdrawing from a losing imperialist war, where we could get support from them. On the question of imperialism as a system, however, their class interests are generally more for it than for overthrowing it, and it will be the deserters from their class who stay with us.

VIII. WHY A REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT?

In terms of the above analysis, most young people in the US are part of the working class. Although not yet employed, young people whose parents sell their labor power for wages, and more important who themselves expect to do the same in the future—or go into the army or be unemployed—are undeniably members of the working class. Most kids are well aware of what class they are in, even though they may not be very scientific about it. So our analysis assumes from the beginning that youth struggles are, by and large, working class struggles. But why the focus now on the struggles of working class youth rather than on the working class as a whole?

The potential for revolutionary consciousness does not always always correspond to ultimate class interest, particularly when imperialism is relatively prosperous and the movement is in an early stage. At this stage, we see working class youth as those most open to a revolutionary movement which sides with the struggles of Third World people; the following is an attempt to explain a strategic focus on youth for SDS.

In general, young people have less stake in a society (no family, fewer debts, etc.) are more open to new ideas (they have not been brainwashed for so long or so well), and are therefore more able and willing to move in a revolutionary direction. Specifically in America, young people have grown up experiencing the crises in imperialism. They have grown up along with a developing black liberation movement, with the liberation of Cuba, the fight for independence in Africa, and the war in Vietnam. Older people grew up during the fight against Fascism, during the cold war, the smashing of the trade unions, McCarthy, and a period during which real wages consistently rose—since 1965 disposable real income has decreased slightly, particularly in urban areas where inflation and increased taxation have bitten heavily into wages. This crisis in imperialism affects all parts of the society. America has had to militarize to protect and expand its Empire; hence the high draft calls and the creation of a standing army of three and a half million, an army which still has been unable to win in Vietnam. Further, the huge defense expenditures—required for the defense of the empire and at the same time a way of making increasing profits for the defense industries—have gone hand in hand with the urban crisis around welfare, the hospitals, the schools, housing, air, and water pollution. The State cannot provide the services it has been forced to assume responsibility for, and needs to increase taxes and to pay its growing debts while it cuts services and uses the pigs to repress protest. The private sector of the economy can't provide jobs, particularly unskilled jobs. The expansion of the defense and education industries

by the State since World War II is in part an attempt to pick up the slack, though the inability to provide decent wages and working conditions for "public" jobs is more and more a problem.

As imperialism struggles to hold together this decaying social fabric, it inevitably resorts to brute force and authoritarian ideology. People, especially young people, more and more find themselves in the iron grip of authoritarian institutions. Reaction against the pigs or teachers in the schools, welfare pigs or the army is generalizable and extends beyond the particular repressive institution to the society and the State as a whole. The legitimacy of the State is called into question for the first time in at least 30 years, and the anti-authoritarianism which characterizes the youth rebellion turns into rejection of the State, a refusal to be socialized into American society. Kids used to try to beat the system from inside the army or from inside the schools; now they desert from the army and burn down the schools.

The crisis in imperialism has brought about a breakdown in bourgeois social forms, culture and ideology. The family falls apart, kids leave home, women begin to break out of traditional "female" and "mother" roles. There develops a "generation gap" and a "youth problem." Our heroes are no longer struggling businessmen, and we also begin to reject the ideal career of the professional and look to Mao, Che, the Panthers, the Third World, for our models, for motion. We reject the elitist, technocratic bullshit that tells us only experts can rule, and look instead to leadership from the people's war of the Vietnamese. Chuck Berry, Elvis, the Temptations brought us closer to the "people's culture" of Black America. The racist response to the civil rights movement revealed the depth of racism in America, as well as the impossibility of real change through American institutions. And the war against Vietnam is not "the heroic war against the Nazis"; it's the big lie, with napalm burning through everything we had heard this country stood for. Kids begin to ask questions: Where is the Free World? And who do the pigs protect at home?

The breakdown in bourgeois culture and concomitant anti-authoritarianism is fed by the crisis in imperialism, but also in turn feeds that crisis, exacerbates it, so that people no longer merely want the plastic '60s restored, but glimpse an alternative (like inside the Columbia buildings) and begin to fight for it. We don't want teachers to be more kindly cops; we want to smash cops, and build a new life.

The contradictions of a decaying imperialism fall hardest on youth in four distinct areas—the schools, jobs, the draft and the army, and the pigs and the courts. (A) In jail-like schools, kids are fed a mish-mash of racist, male chauvinist, anti-working class, anti-communist lies while being channeled into job and career paths set up according to the priorities of monopoly capital. At the same time, the State is becoming increasingly incapable of providing enough money to keep the schools going at all. (B) Youth unemployment is three times average unemployment. As more jobs are threatened by automation or the collapse of specific industries, unions act to secure jobs for those already employed. New people in the labor market can't find jobs; job stability is undermined (also because of increasing speed-up, and more intolerable safety conditions) and people are less and less going to work in the same shop for 40 years. And, of course, when they do find jobs, young people get the worst ones and have the least security. (C) There are now two and a half million soldiers under thirty who are forced to police the world, kill and be killed in wars of imperialist domination. And (D) as a "youth problem" develops out of all this, the pigs and courts enforce curfews, set up pot busts, keep people off the streets, and repress any youth motion whatsoever.

In all of this, it is not that life in America is toughest for youth or that they are the most oppressed. Rather, it is that young people are hurt directly—and severely—by imperialism. And, in being less tightly tied to the system, they are more "pushed" to join the black liberation struggle against US imperialism. Among young people there is less of a material base for racism—they have no seniority, have not spent 20 years securing a skilled job (the white monopoly of which is increasingly challenged by the black liberation movement), and aren't just about to pay off a 25-year mortgage on a house which is valuable because it's located in a white neighborhood.

While these contradictions of imperialism fall hard on all youth, they fall hardest on the youth of the most (continued on following page)



# Weatherman

(continued from previous page)  
oppressed (least privileged) sections of the working class. Clearly these youth have the greatest material base for struggle. They are the ones who most often get drafted, who get the worst jobs if they get any, who are most abused by the various institutions of social control from the army to detaching schools, to the pigs and the courts. And their day-to-day existence indicates a potential for militancy and toughness. They are the people whom we can reach who at this stage are most ready to engage in militant revolutionary struggle.

The point of the revolutionary youth movement strategy is to move from a predominant student elite base to more oppressed (less privileged) working class youth as a way of deepening and expanding the revolutionary youth movement—not of giving up what we have gained, not giving up our old car for a new Dodge. This is part of a strategy to reach the entire working class to engage in struggle against imperialism; moving from more privileged sections of white working class youth to more oppressed sections to the entire working class as a whole, including importantly what has classically been called the industrial proletariat. But this should not be taken to mean that there is a magic moment, after we reach a certain percentage of the working class, when all of a sudden we become a working class movement. We are already that if we put forward internationalist proletarian politics. We also don't have to wait to become a revolutionary force. We must be a self-conscious revolutionary force from the beginning, not as a movement which takes issues to some mystical group—"THE PEOPLE"—who will make the revolution. We must be a revolutionary movement of people understanding the necessity to reach more people, all working people, as we make the revolution.

The above arguments make it clear that it is both important and possible to reach young people wherever they are—not only in the shops, but also in the schools, in the army, and in the streets—so as to recruit them to fight on the side of the oppressed peoples of the world. Young people will be part of the International Liberation Army. The necessity to build this International Liberation Army in America leads to certain priorities in practice for the revolutionary youth movement which we should begin to apply this summer....

## IX. IMPERIALISM IS THE ISSUE

"The Communists are distinguished from the other working class parties by this only: 1. In the national struggles of the proletariat of different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality. 2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole." (Communist Manifesto)

How do we reach youth; what kinds of struggles do we build; how do we make a revolution? What we have tried to lay out so far is the political content of the consciousness which we want to extend and develop as a mass consciousness: the necessity to build our power as part of the whole international revolution to smash the state power of the imperialists and build socialism. Besides consciousness of this task, we must involve masses of people in accomplishing it. Yet we are faced with a situation in which almost all of the people whose interests are served by these goals, and who should be, or even are, sympathetic to revolution, neither understand the specific tasks involved in making a revolution nor participate in accomplishing them. On the whole, people don't join revolutions just because revolutionaries tell them to. The oppression of the system affects people in particular ways, and the development of political consciousness and participation begins with particular problems, which turn into issues and struggles. We must transform people's everyday problems, and the issues and struggles growing out of them, into revolutionary consciousness, active and conscious opposition to racism and imperialism.

This is directly counterposed to assuming that struggles around immediate issues will lead naturally over time to struggle against imperialism. It has been argued that since people's oppression is due to imperialism and racism, then any struggle against immediate oppression is "objectively anti-imperialist," and the development of the fight against imperialism is a succession of fights for reforms. [This error is classical economism.]

A variant of this argument admits that this position is often wrong, but suggests that since imperialism is collapsing at this time, fights for reforms become "objectively anti-imperialist." At this stage of imperialism there obviously will be more and more struggles for the improvement of material conditions, but that is no guarantee of increasing internationalist proletarian consciousness.

On the one hand, if we, as revolutionaries, are capable of understanding the necessity to smash imperialism and build socialism, then the masses of people who we want to fight along with us are capable of that understanding. On the other hand, people are brainwashed and at present don't understand it; if revolution is not raised at every opportunity, then how can we expect people to see it in their interests,

or to undertake the burdens of revolution? We need to make it clear from the very beginning that we are about revolution. But if we are so careful to avoid the dangers of reformism, how do we relate to particular reform struggles? We have to develop some sense of how to relate each particular issue to the revolution.

In every case, our aim is to raise anti-imperialist and anti-racist consciousness and the struggles of working class youth (and all working people) to the struggles of Third World people, rather than merely joining fights to improve material conditions even though these fights are certainly justified. This is not to say that we don't take immediate fights seriously, or fear hard in them, but that we are always up front with our politics, knowing that people in the course of struggle are open to a class line, ready to move beyond narrow self-interest.

It is in this sense that we point out that the particular issue is not the issue, is important insofar as it points to imperialism as an enemy that has to be destroyed. Imperialism is always the issue. Obviously, the issue cannot be a good illustration, or a powerful symbol, if it is not real to people, if it doesn't relate to the concrete oppression that imperialism causes. People have to be (and are being) hurt in some material way to understand the evils of imperialism, but what we must stress is the systematic nature of oppression and the way in which a single manifestation of imperialism makes clear its fundamental nature. At Columbia it was not the gym, in particular, which was important in the struggle, but the way in which the gym represented, to the people of Harlem and Columbia, Columbia's imperialist invasion of the black colony. Or at Berkeley, though people no doubt needed a park (as much, however, as man: other things?), what made the struggle so important was that people, at all levels of militancy, consciously saw themselves attacking private property and the power of the state. And the Richmond Oil Strike was exciting because the militant fight for improvement



of material conditions was part and parcel of an attack on international monopoly capital. The numbers and militancy of people mobilized for these struggles has consistently surprised the left, and pointed to the potential power of a class-conscious mass movement.

The masses will fight for socialism when they understand that reform fights, fights for improvement of material conditions, cannot be won under imperialism. With this understanding, revolutionaries should never put forth a line which fosters the illusion that imperialism will grant significant reforms. We must engage in struggles forcefully as revolutionaries, so that it will be clear to anyone we help to win gains that the revolution rather than imperialism is responsible for them. This is one of the strengths of the Black Panther Party Breakfast for Children Program. It is "socialism in practice" by revolutionaries with the "practice" of armed self-defense and a "line" which stresses the necessity of overthrowing imperialism and seizing state power. Probably the American Friends Service Committee serves more children breakfast, but it is the symbolic value of the program in demonstrating what socialism will do for people which makes it worthwhile.

What does it mean to organize around racism and imperialism in specific struggles? In the high schools (and colleges) at this time, it means putting forth a mass line to close down the schools, rather than to reform them so that they can serve the people. The reason for this line is not that under capitalism the schools cannot serve the people, and therefore it is silly or illusory to demand that. Rather it is that kids are ready for the full scope of militant struggle, and already demonstrate a consciousness of imperialism, such that struggles for a people-serving school would not raise the level of their struggle to its highest possible point. Thus, to tell a kid in New York that imperialism tracks him and thereby oppresses him is often small potatoes compared to his consciousness that imperialism oppresses him by jailing him, pigs and all, and the only thing to do is break out and tear up the jail. And even where high school kids are not yet engaged in such sharp struggle, it is crucial not to build consciousness only around specific issues such as tracking or ROTC or racist teachers, but to use these issues to build toward the general consciousness that the schools should be shut down. It may be important to present a conception of what schools should or could be like (this would include the abolition of the distinction between mental and physical work), but not offer this total conception as really possible to fight for in any way but through revolution.

A mass line to close down the schools or colleges

does not contradict demands for open admissions to college or any other good reform demand. Agitational demands for impossible, but reasonable, reforms are good way to make a revolutionary point. The demand for open admissions by asserting the alternative to the present (school) system exposes its fundamental nature—that it is racist, class-based, and closed—pointing to the only possible solution to the present situation: "shut it down!" The impossibility of real open admissions—all black and brown people admitted, no link-out, full scholarship, upper present conditions—is the best reason (that the schools show no possibility of real reform) to shut the schools down. We should not throw away the pieces of victories we gain from these struggles, for any kind of more open admissions means that the school is closer to closing down (it costs the schools more, there are more militant blacks and browns making more and more fundamental demands on the schools, and so on). Thus our line in the schools, in terms of pushing any good reforms should be, "open them up and shut them down!"

The spread of black caucuses in the shops and other workplaces throughout the country is an extension of the black liberation struggle. These groups have raised and will continue to raise anti-racist issues to white workers in a sharper fashion than any whites ever have or could raise them. Blacks leading struggles against racism has made the issue unavoidable, as the black student movement leadership did for white students. At the same time these black groups have led fights which traditional trade-union leaders have consistently refused to lead—fights against speed-up and for safety (issues which have become considerably more serious in the last few years), forcing white workers, particularly the more oppressed, to choose in another way between allegiance to the white mother country and black leadership. As white mother country radicals we should try to be in shops, hospitals, and companies where there are black caucuses, perhaps organizing solidarity groups, but at any rate pushing the importance of the black liberation struggle to whites, handing out Free Huey literature, bringing guys out to Panther rallies, and so on. Just one white guy could play a crucial role in countering UAW counter-insurgency.

We also need to relate to workplaces where there is no black motion but where there are still many young white workers. In the shops the crisis in imperialism has come down around speed-up, safety and wage squeeze—due to higher taxes and increased inflation, with the possibility of wage-price controls being instituted.

We must relate this exploitation back to imperialism. The best way to do this is probably not caucuses in the shops, but to take guys to city-wide demonstrations, Newsreels, even the latest administration building, to make the movement concrete to them and involve them in it. Further, we can effect consciousness and pick up people through agitational work at plants, train stops, etc., selling Movements, handing out leaflets about the war, the Panthers, the companies' holdings overseas or relations to defense industry, etc.

After the Richmond strike, people leafleted about demonstrations in support of the Cufacac Oil workers' Free Huey May Day, and People's Park.

SDS has not dealt in any adequate way with the women question; the resolution passed at Ann Arbor did not lead to much practice, nor has the need to fight male supremacy been given any programmatic direction within the RYM. As a result, we have a very limited understanding of the tie-up between imperialism and the women question, although we know that since World War II the differential between men's and women's wages has increased, and guess that the breakdown of the family is crucial to the women question. How do we organize women against racism and imperialism without submerging the principled revolutionary question of women's liberation? We have no real answer, but we recognize the real reactionary danger of women's groups that are not self-consciously revolutionary and anti-imperialist.

To become more relevant to the growing women's movement, SDS women should begin to see as a primary responsibility the self-conscious organizing of women. We will not be able to organize women unless we speak directly to their own oppression. This will become more and more critical as we work with more oppressed women. Women who are working and women who have families face male supremacy continuously in their day-to-day lives; that will have to be the starting point in their politicization. Women will never be able to undertake a full revolutionary role unless they break out of their woman's role. So a crucial task for revolutionaries is the creation of forms of organization in which women will be able to take on new and independent roles. Women's self-defense groups will be a step toward these organizational forms, as an effort to overcome women's isolation and build revolutionary self-reliance.

The cultural revolt of women against their "role" in imperialism (which is just beginning to happen in a mass way) should have the same sort of revolutionary potential that the RYM claimed for "youth culture." The role of the "wife-mother" is reactionary in most modern societies, and the disintegration of that role under imperialism should make women more sympathetic to revolution.

In all of our work we should try to formulate demands that not only reach out to more oppressed women, but ones which tie us to other ongoing struggles, in the way that a day-care center at U of C enabled us to tie the women's liberation struggle to the black liberation struggle.

There must be a strong revolutionary women's movement, for without one it will be impossible for

women's lib revolution. The full scope to smash racism

N. NEIGHBOURHOOD CITY-WIDE

One way to our tasks, we them together "multi-issue" and college workers, or to do this in a city-wide in one institution fronts.

This work by bringing fights to each welfare, shop-based multi- and demonstrators together in speakers and combine neighborhood concentrating are going on off of that.

The important organizing is practical so we don't know burning down relating to them our understanding practice der consciousness unwilling to as we did in reach the high in the school every-day black kids could be other institution movement as we will try in high school fights, strip reach up on storefronts. this work we in view, eight still be the same area, campus-oriented kid into it organizers of neighborhood sub-region, strong this to kids in a lot of kids and invol

The second into city-wide movements, fighting going various blow-is a lot of San Francisco makes organ. It makes organ, 'stronger, first and second by and advanced and set the are a basic in a way that from where they are more areas. The s where kids go the life, as people go the question of is a city-wide or felt in our mo

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women's liberation to be an important part of the revolution. Revolutionaries must be made to understand the full scope of women's oppression, and the necessity to smash male supremacy.

X. NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED CITY-WIDE YOUTH MOVEMENT

One way to make clear the nature of the system and our tasks working off of separate struggles is to tie them together with each other: to show that we're one "multi-issue" movement, not an alliance of high school and college students, or students and GI's, or youth and workers, or students and the black community. The way to do this is to build organic regional or subregional and city-wide movements, by regularly bringing people in one institution or area to fights going on on other fronts.

This works on two levels. Within a neighborhood, by bringing kids to different fights, and relating these fights to each other—high school stuff, colleges, housing, welfare, shops—we begin to build one neighborhood based multi-issue movement off of them. Besides actions and demonstrations, we also pull different people together in day-to-day film showings, rallies, for speakers and study groups, etc. On a second level, we combine neighborhood "bases" into a city-wide or region-wide movement by doing the same kind of thing; concentrating our forces at whatever important struggles are going on and building more ongoing interrelationships off of that.

The importance of specifically neighborhood-based organizing is illustrated by our greatest failing in RYM practice so far—high school organizing. In most cities we don't know the kids who have been tearing up and burning down the schools. Our approach has been elitist, relating to often baseless city-wide groups by bringing them our line, or picking up kids with a false understanding of "politics" rather than those whose practice demonstrates their concrete anti-imperialist consciousness that schools are prisons. We've been unwilling to work continuously with high school kids as we did in building up college chapters. We will only reach the high school kids who are in motion by being in the schoolyards, hangouts and on the streets on an every-day basis. From a neighborhood base high school kids could be effectively tied in to struggles around other institutions and issues, and to the anti-imperialist movement as a whole.

We will try to involve neighborhood kids who aren't in high schools too; take them to anti-war or anti-racism fights; stuff in the schools, etc.; and at the same time reach out more broadly through newspapers, films, storefronts. Activists and cadres who are recruited in this work will help expand and deepen the movement in new neighborhoods and high schools. Mostly we will still be tied in to the college-based movement in the same area, be influencing its direction away from campus-oriented provincialism, be recruiting high school kids into it where it is real enough and be recruiting organizers out of it. In its most developed form, this neighborhood-based movement would be a kind of sub-region. In places where the movement wasn't so strong, this would be an important form for being close to kids in a day-to-day way and yet be relating heavily to a lot of issues and political fronts which the same kids are involved with.

The second level is combining these neighborhoods into city-wide and regional movements. This would mean doing the same thing—bringing people to other fights going on—only on a larger scale relating to various blow-ups and regional mobilizations. An example is how a lot of people from different places went to San Francisco State, the Richmond Oil Strike, and now Berkeley. The existence of this kind of cross-motion makes ongoing organizing in other places go faster and stronger, first by creating a pervasive politicization, and second by relating everything to the most militant and advanced struggles going on so that they influence and set the pace for a lot more people. Further, cities are a basic unit of organization of the whole society in a way that neighborhoods aren't. For example, one front where we should be doing stuff is the courts; they are mostly organized city-wide, not by smaller areas. The same for the city government itself. Schools, where kids go are in different neighborhoods from where they live, especially colleges; the same for hospitals, people go to, and where they work. As a practical question of staying with people we pick up, the need for a city-wide or area-wide kind of orientation is already felt in our movement.

Another failure of this year was making clear what the RYM meant for chapter members and students who weren't organizers about to leave their campus for a community college, high school, GI organizing, shops or neighborhoods. One thing it means for them is relating heavily to off-campus activities and struggles, as part of the city-wide motion. Not leaving the campus movement like people did for ERAP stuff; rather, people still organized on the campus participating in off-campus struggles, the way they have in the past for national actions. Like the national actions, the city-wide ones will build the on-campus movement, not compete with it.

Because the movement will be defining itself in relation to many issues and groups, not just schools (and the war and racism as they hit at the schools), it will create a political context that non-students can relate to better, and be more useful to organizing among high school students, neighborhood kids, the mass of people. In the process, it will change the consciousness of the students too; if the issues are right and the movement fights them, people will develop a commitment

to the struggle as a whole, and an understanding of the need to be revolutionaries rather than a "student movement." Building a revolutionary youth movement will depend on organizing in a lot of places where we haven't been, and just tying the student movement to other issues and struggles isn't a substitute for that. But given our limited resources we must also lead the on-campus motion into a RYM direction, and we can make great gains toward city-wide youth movements by doing it.

Three principles underly this multi-issue, "cross-institutional" movement, on the neighborhood and city-wide levels, as to why it creates greater revolutionary consciousness and active participation in the revolution:

(1) Mixing different issues, struggles and groups demonstrates our analysis to people in a material way. We claim there is one system and so all these different problems have the same solution, revolution. If they are the same struggle in the end, we should make that clear from the beginning. On this basis we must aggressively smash the notion that there can be outside agitators on a question pertaining to the imperialists.

(2) "Relating to Motion": the struggle activity, the action, of the movement demonstrates our existence and strength to people in a material way. Seeing it happen, people give it more weight in their thinking. For the participants, involvement in struggle is the best education about the movement, the enemy and the class struggle. In a neighborhood or whole city the existence of some struggle is a catalyst for other struggles—it pushes people to see the movement as more important and urgent, and as an example and precedent makes it easier for them to follow. If the participants in a struggle are based in different institutions or parts of the city, these effects are multiplied. Varied participation helps the movement be seen as political (wholly subversive) rather than as separate grievance fights. As people in one section of the movement fight beside and identify closer with other sections, the mutual catalytic effect of their struggles will be greater.

(3) We must build a movement oriented toward power. Revolution is a power struggle, and we must develop that understanding among people from the beginning. Pooling our resources area-wide and city-wide really does increase our power in particular fights, as well as push a mutual aid-in-struggle consciousness.

XI. THE RYM AND THE PIGS

A major focus in our neighborhood and city-wide work is the pigs, because they tie together the various struggles around the state as the enemy, and thus point to the need for a movement oriented toward power to defeat it.

The pigs are the capitalist state, and as such define the limits of all political struggles; to the extent that a revolutionary struggle shows signs of success, they come in and mark the point it can't go beyond. In the early stages of struggle, the ruling class lets parents come down on high school kids, or jocks attack college chapters. When the struggle escalates the pigs come in, at Columbia the left was afraid its struggle would be co-opted to anti-police brutality, cops off campus, and said pigs weren't the issue. But pigs really are the issue and people will understand this, one way or another. They can have a liberal understanding that pigs are sweaty working-class barbarians who over-react and commit "police brutality" and so shouldn't be on campus. Or they can understand pigs as the repressive imperialist state doing its job. Our job is not to avoid the issue of the pigs as "diverting" from anti-imperialist struggle, but to emphasize that they are our real enemy if we fight that struggle to win.

Even when there is no organized political struggle, the pigs come down on people in everyday life in enforcing capitalist property relations, bourgeois laws, and bourgeois morality; they guard stores and factories and the rich and enforce credit and rent against the poor. The overwhelming majority of arrests in America are for crimes against property. The pigs will be coming down on the kids we're working with in the schools,

on the streets; around dope; we should focus on them, point them out all the time, like the Panthers do. We should relate the daily oppression by the pig to their role in political repression, and develop a class understanding of political power and armed force among the kids we're with.

As we develop a base these two aspects of the pig role increasingly come together. In the schools, pig is part of daily oppression—keeping order in halls and lunch rooms, controlling smoking—while at the same time pigs prevent kids from handing out leaflets, and bust "outside agitators." The presence of youth, or youth with long hair, becomes defined as organized political struggle and the pigs react to it as such. More and more every-day activity is politically threatening, so pigs are suddenly more in evidence; this in turn generates political organization and opposition, and so on. Our task will be to catalyze this development, pushing out the conflict with the pig so as to define every struggle—schools (pigs out, pig institutes out), welfare (invading pig-protected office), the streets, (curfew and turf fights)—as a struggle against the needs of capitalism and the force of the state.

Pigs don't represent state power as an abstract principle; they are a power that we will have to overcome in the course of struggle or become irrelevant, revisionist, or dead. We must prepare concretely to meet their power because our job is to defeat the pigs and the army, and organize on that basis. Our beginnings should stress self-defense—building defense groups around karate classes, learning how to move on the street and around the neighborhood, medical training, popularizing and moving toward (according to necessity) armed self-defense, all the time honoring and putting forth the principle that "political power comes out of the barrel of a gun." These self-defense groups would initiate pig surveillance patrols, visits to the pig station and courts when someone is busted, etc.

Obviously the issues around the pig will not come down by neighborhood alone; it will take at least city-wide groups able to coordinate activities against a unified enemy—in the early stages, for legal and ball resources and turning people out for demonstrations, adding the power of the city-wide movement to what may be initially only a tenuous base in a neighborhood. Struggles in one part of the city will not only provide lessons for but materially aid similar motion in the rest of it.

Thus the pigs are ultimately the glue—the necessity—that holds the neighborhood-based and city-wide movement together; all of our concrete needs lead to pushing the pigs to the fore as a political focus:

- (1) making institutionally oriented reform struggles deal with state power, by pushing out struggle till either winning or getting pigged.
- (2) using the city-wide inter-relation of fights to raise the level of struggle and further large-scale anti-pig movement-power consciousness.
- (3) developing spontaneous anti-pig consciousness in our neighborhoods to an understanding of imperialism, class struggle and the state.
- (4) and using the city-wide movement as a platform for reinforcing and extending this politicization work, like talking about getting together a city-wide neighborhood-based mutual aid anti-pig self-defense network.

All of this can be done through city-wide agitation and propaganda and picking certain issues—to have as the central regional focus for the whole movement.

XII. REPRESSION AND REVOLUTION

As institutional fights and anti-pig self-defense off of them intensify, so will the ruling class's repression. Their escalation of repression will inevitably continue according to how threatening the movement is to their power. Our task is not to avoid or end repression; that can always be done by pulling back, so we're not dangerous enough to require crushing. Sometimes it is correct to do that as a tactical retreat, to survive to fight again.

To defeat repression however, is not to stop it. (continued on following page)



# Weatherman

(Continued from previous page)

but to go on building the movement to be more diverse—to them, in which case, defeated at one level, repression will escalate even more. To succeed in defending the government, did not just ourselves at its expense, we will have to successfully meet and overcome these greater and greater levels of repression.

To be winning will thus necessarily, as imperialists' lesser efforts fail, bring about a phase of all-out military repression. To survive and grow in the face of that will require more than a larger base of supporters; it will require the invincible strength of a mass base at a high level of active participation and consciousness, and can only come from mobilizing the self-conscious creativity, will and determination of the people.

Each new escalation of the struggle in response to new levels of repression, each protracted struggle around self-defense which becomes a material fighting force, are part of the international strategy of solidarity with Vietnam and the blacks through spending up other fronts. They are anti-war, anti-imperialist and pro-black liberation. If they involve fighting the enemy, these struggles are part of the revolution!

Therefore, clearly the organization and active conscious participating mass base needed to survive repression are also the same needed for winning the revolution. The Revolutionary Youth Movement speaks to the need for this kind of active mass-based movement by being city-wide motion back to community youth bases, because this brings us close enough to kids in their day-to-day lives to organize their "maximum active participation" around enough different kinds of fights to push the "highest level of consciousness" about imperialism, the black vanguard, the state, and the need for armed struggle.

## XIII. THE NEED FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The RYM must also lead to the effective organization needed to survive and to create another battlefield of the revolution. A revolution is a war; when the movement in this country can defend itself militarily against total repression it will be part of the revolutionary war.

This will require a cadre organization, effective secrecy, self reliance among the cadres, and an integrated relationship with the active mass-based movement. To win a war with an enemy as highly organized and centralized as the imperialists will require a clandestine organization of revolutionaries, having also a unified "general staff"; that is, combined at some point with discipline under one centralized leadership. Because war is political, political tasks—the international communist revolution—must guide it. Therefore the centralized organization of revolutionaries must be a political organization as well as military, what is generally called a "Marxist-Leninist" party.

How will we accomplish the building of this kind of organization? It is clear that we couldn't somehow form such a party at this time, because its conditions for it do not exist in this country outside the black nation.

What are these conditions? One is that to have a unified centralized organization it is necessary to have a common revolutionary theory which explains, at least generally, the nature of our revolutionary tasks and how to accomplish them. It must be a set of ideas which have been tested and developed in the practice of resolving the important contradictions in our work.

A second condition is the existence of revolutionary leadership tested in practice. To have a centralized party under illegal and repressive conditions requires a centralized leadership, specific individuals with the understanding and the ability to unify and guide the movement in the face of new problems and be right most of the time.

Thirdly, and most important, there must be the same revolutionary mass base mentioned earlier, or (better) revolutionary mass movement. It is clear that without this there can't be the practical experience to know whether or not a theory or a leader, is any good at all.

Without practical revolutionary activity on a mass scale, the party could not test and develop new ideas and draw conclusions with enough surety behind them to consistently base its survival on them. Especially, no revolutionary party could possibly survive without relying on the active support and participation of masses of people.

These conditions for the development of a revolutionary party in this country are the main "conditions" for winning. There are two kinds of tasks for us.

One is the organization of revolutionary collectives within the movement. Our theory must come from practice, but it can't be developed in isolation. Only a collective pooling of our experiences can develop a thorough understanding of the complex conditions in this country. In the same way, our collective energies toward a common plan can adequately test the ideas we develop. The development of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist-Maoist collective formations which undertake this concrete evaluation and application of the lessons of our work is not just the task of specialists or leaders, but the responsibility of every revolutionary. Just as a collective is necessary to sum up experiences and apply them locally, equally the collective inter-relationship of groups all over this country is necessary to get an accurate view of the whole movement and to apply that in the whole country. Over time, those collectives which prove themselves, in practice to have the correct understanding for the results they get, will contribute toward the creation of a unified revolutionary party.

The most important task for us toward making the revolution, and the work our collectives should engage in, is the creation of a mass revolutionary movement, without which a clandestine revolutionary party will be impossible. A revolutionary mass movement is different from the traditional revisionist mass base of "sympathizers." Rather it is akin to the Red Guard in China, based on the full participation and involvement of masses of people in the practice of making revolution; a movement with a full willingness to participate in the violent and illegal struggle. It is a movement diametrically opposed to the elitist idea that only leaders are smart enough or interested enough to accept full revolutionary conclusions. It is a movement built on the basis of faith in the masses of people.

The task of collectives is to create this kind of movement. (The party is not a substitute for it and in fact is totally dependent on it.) This will be done at this stage principally among youth, through implementing the Revolutionary Youth Movement strategy discussed in this paper. It is practice at this, and not political "teachings" in the abstract, which will determine the relevance of the political collectives which are formed.

The strategy of the RYM for developing an active mass base, tying the city-wide fights to community and city-wide anti-pig movement, and for building a party, even if out of this motion, fits with the world strategy for winning the revolution, builds a movement oriented toward power, and will become one division of the International Liberation Army, while its battalions are added to the many Vietnams which will ultimately dispose of US imperialism. Long live the victory of People's War!

## NATIONAL ACTIONS

(Resolution submitted to the National Convention by Bill Ayers, Michigan; Peazer Clapp, Columbia; Bernardine Dohrn, Inter-Organizational Secretary; and Howie MacIntyre)

SIS calls for three days of demonstrations and actions beginning September 24 in Chicago to demand:

- (1) Immediate withdrawal of all troops and US presence from Vietnam.
- (2) Immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces (including pigs) from communities and schools in America. The community must control the pigs.
- (3) Free all political prisoners, Free Huey P. Newton, Free all Panthers. Free the Conspiracy 8.

SOS's consistent failure, since the spring of 1965, to assume initiative and political leadership of national anti-war actions has been a major abdication. We have lived the liberal leadership of these actions as a justification for non-action or last-minute action. We know that militant national actions with clear revolutionary politics: (1) reach masses of working-class youth, whom we do not reach as students; (2) bring participation in actions, and through interpretation of our struggles and the world-wide struggles, the anti-war national focus the demands for immediate withdrawal, etc; (3) strengthen and reinforce local, organizing and break down the local parochialism which has historically posed local vs. national work; (4) set a new and higher tone of tactical and political aggressiveness. This is particularly necessary at a time of attempts to isolate and destroy the movement. The imperial aggression in Vietnam and the black colony must be ended immediately. This action is not simply agitation and propaganda. It is a demonstration to end the continuation of the war and to support the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam in a real and material way. It will be followed by local actions, strikes, and an end to the functioning of ROTC and military research and supplies, and resistance from within the army.

We will use the summer programs to build an anti-imperialist movement among working-class youth on the streets, in school, and on the job. It is the moral-crass who pay on the greatest price in the mother country for the attempt to hold on to the empire, and who will fight the hardest to destroy it. By building these struggles to destroy imperialism during the summer and focusing on the national action in September, we lay the basis for city-wide meetings in the fall which will break down the isolation on the campus.

The current struggle of the Vietnamese people for self-determination is the vanguard struggle against US imperialism. Recent events in Vietnam indicate that the National Liberation Front is now opening a major political offensive to isolate the US-imperialists and their puppets in Saigon from the masses of people in South Vietnam and throughout the world. SIS as part of the international movement against US imperialism, has the historic task of making it politically impossible for the US-imperialists to be able to carry out its oppressions in Vietnam and throughout the Third World. In order to carry out this task it will be necessary to build a united front against imperialism involving millions of people throughout the country. During the past years SIS has basically failed to build such a united front, at least partially because of a basic error in our approach to the millions of people who now favor immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. We tended to dismiss people who are not being "fully anti-imperialist" while failing to see that by calling for U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam one is being objectively anti-imperialist. Clearly, we must correct our past errors and launch our own POLITICAL OFFENSIVE in the United States, in order to isolate the imperialist warmakers from the masses of the people who have to pay the price of imperialism in terms of lives and money. During this summer we must take the issue of the war to the people on the job and on the streets to expand the base of active anti-war feelings into the non-student population. Starting now, we should openly declare that if the US Government has not begun the withdrawal of all troops by the fall, then we will launch a week of major anti-war actions throughout the country. This week should include a wide range of activities to suit the local conditions, including anti-ROTC fights, but the important focus should be on an escalation in terms of numbers and commitment of the participants. Strong, broad-based anti-war committees should be built on a local basis for the purpose of carrying the struggle on past that one week.

### Implementation

1. The national officers of SIS should hold a press conference immediately after the convention to declare that if the U.S. does not accept the anti-ROTC peace plan of the National Liberation Front, then we will take the issue of the war back into the streets this fall.
2. We should set the date of November 9 as the day to commence one week of massive anti-war actions. Supporters should be kept in the headlines throughout the summer; a deadline set by the people. Activities about November 8 should be produced or a massive scale both locally and nationally starting now. This literature should be distributed in the factories and the communities as part of our summer program. SIS should initiate a November 8th Committee in all our local areas. These committees should be open to all who call for a U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam NOW!
3. We should build the November 8th movement around broad based slogans and demands such as: Get Out of Vietnam Now, Bring the Troops Home Now, Vietnam for the Vietnamese, Our Fight Is at Home, Troops Out of the Cities and Campuses, End U.S. Imperialism, Tax the War Corporations—Not the People, Stop the War Tax.

—Joe Hill Caucus of SIS at San Francisco State







# TAKE THE WAR TO THE PEOPLE AND BRING IT HOME!

(This resolution has been submitted to the National Convention by Mike Kline, National Secretary, Marilyn Katz, Chicago, Mary Treiger, Bay Area, CA, and others)

The revolution of the American revolutionary movement has been closely linked with the heroic struggles of the Vietnamese people fighting against US imperialism for national liberation. This struggle has been like a beacon to all the oppressed peoples of the world, showing them that the power of the people is invincible in the end. The Vietnamese fight has served to heighten the consciousness and level of struggle here within the heart of the monster. The youth movement can trace its heightened development directly to the early resistance to the war on the part of youth who were the first to recognize the contradictions and gain the understanding that the war in Vietnam served no one but the rich.

We must understand the dialectical relationship that exists between the struggle in Vietnam and the class struggle in the US. Each blow we strike against US monopoly capitalism is of multiple benefit not only to the Vietnamese but to all other oppressed people as well. Just as the Vietnamese have been kicking ass despite seemingly insurmountable odds, we too have been advancing our struggle to win the masses of the American people to the fight against imperialism. Our task now is to convert mass sentiment against the war into mass action capable of ending the war.

If we are going to succeed in defeating imperialism on a world-wide scale, we must see as our main task the building of a united front movement which unites all those people oppressed by imperialism and fighting to build proletarian leadership that can play an independent role within that united front.

The proletariat is the key force in the fight against imperialism and is the class that is hit hardest by the developing crisis in the system. It is working people who pay for the wars of oppression with their lives and their labor. The crisis in imperialism has meant: falling wages, cuts in safety, speed-up, taxes, and death on the front lines to working people, Black and brown workers have been hit the hardest and black people have led in the resistance movement against the war. The rebellions in Detroit, Watts, and elsewhere have been like a beacon to all the oppressed peoples of the world, showing them that the power of the people is invincible in the end. The Vietnamese fight has served to heighten the consciousness and level of struggle here within the heart of the monster. The youth movement can trace its heightened development directly to the early resistance to the war on the part of youth who were the first to recognize the contradictions and gain the understanding that the war in Vietnam served no one but the rich.

The imperialist system is increasingly vulnerable. Inflation is running wild and the international monetary system is approaching crisis. This situation, as well as the mass work of the anti-war movement, has already won a majority of working people to opposition to the war. However, we are at a point now, primarily due to the tremendous victories of the Vietnamese and the over extension of manpower and resources of the imperialists, where the demand "Get out of Vietnam Now" takes on a new aspect. The Vietnamese are taking the war to the people of the world by way of their heroic action. We have won the support of the masses of people throughout the world. Our rebuilding of a militant class-conscious movement against the war, here in the mother country, can be the straw that breaks the camel's back and makes "GET OUT OF VIETNAM" a reality. In practice, this means a revival of the mass movement against the war, elevated to a higher level of militancy which will be powerful because of the working class base and leadership. Some people might think that by winning large numbers of working people to our

be elevated. A full action could be coordinated, for example around the trial in Chicago of the Conspiracy 8, making it clear to the people that will not be scared off by repression and fascist attacks.

The Vietnamese, through the formation of the new revolutionary government, have shown us what internationalism means. They have a program of support for the struggles of oppressed peoples in Africa, Asia, Latin America and black people in the US. Our response must be to win the masses of Americans to support of the national chauvinism. This is the primary self-determination. This is the primary way in which we can break the chains that tie them to capitalism.

Up until now, the lack of international solidarity on the part of US white workers has meant that they were objectively scabbing on the rest of the world proletariat.

One of the ways in which we build this solidarity is by attacking white supremacy. We should see that white supremacy and national chauvinism are not reserved for the war in Vietnam and that the war is a white supremacist war. By attacks on white supremacy we can also connect the war in Vietnam to the war in the black colony in the minds of the people.

Therefore, we must develop program for the summer and fall which: (1) builds a broad based attack against imperialism; (2) drives that movement into the proletariat and fights for proletarian leadership within the anti-imperialist movement; (3) raises the level of militancy of this movement as a response to repression; (4) makes the demand "IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM" an operative rather than simply an agitational demand.

PROGRAM: (1) SDS should call for a mass-canon against the war for Sept. 26-28 in Chicago. This should be a broad based action that attempts to involve the most people possible in militant struggle. The demands should include: IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM AND EVERYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD

SUPPORT FOR BLACK LIBERATION FREE HUAC NEWTON AND ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS NO MORE SURTAX INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO SUPPORT FOR CIS' RIGHTS AND GI REBELLIONS

(2) The NO should produce literature which explains the implications of the crisis in world imperialism and can show working people how they are being screwed by imperialism in Vietnam and throughout the world, including her at home.

(3) We should build a program over the summer that builds toward the action by taking the issues to the masses of working people. This can be done through a program of work in factories and in working class communities by taking our anti-imperialist politics with us. We should attempt to influence ordinary collectives wherever we work that can study revolutionary theory, apply it to practice and do criticism and self-criticism while developing a program in a collective way. This is also an important step to building unity of the proletariat, which is necessary if victory against imperialism is to be

- The national officers of SDS should hold a press conference immediately after the convention to declare that if the U.S. does not accept the generous 10-point peace plan of the National Liberation Front, then we will take the issue of the war back into the streets this fall.
- We should set the date of November 8 as the day to commence one week of massive anti-war actions. November 8 should be built as a deadline throughout the summer, a deadline set by the people. Literature about November 8 should be produced on a massive scale both locally and nationally starting now. This literature should be distributed in the factories and the communities as part of our summer program. SDS should initiate November 8th Committees in all our local areas. These committees should be open to all who call for a U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam NOW!
- We should build the November 8th movement around broad based slogans and demands such as: Get Out of Vietnam Now, Bring the Troops Home Now, Vietnam for the Vietnamese, Our Fleet Is at Home, Troops Out of the Cities, and Campuses, End U.S. Imperialism, Tax the War Corporations—Not the People, Stop the War Tax. —Joe Hill Caucus of SDS at San Francisco State

achieve. We should build toward stoppages and strikes and mobilizations of workers who are won to the fight.

(4) We should call on soldiers in this army to hold demonstrations during the period. We must work to develop programs within the Army that raise anti-imperialist consciousness and avoid such existing programs. We should avoid the mistake of economism in GI organizing, which limits organizing to GI rights issues. We must attack the notion that anti-imperialism and support for black liberation cannot be raised in the military because of the repression. We should support the fight for basic rights of GIs and fight to inject anti-imperialist consciousness into those struggles. In the past, there have been tremendous struggles fought within the military which have been mostly black-led and which have struck at the heart of imperialism.

One of the best examples of proletarian internationalism was the revolt of the black GIs at Fort Hood during the Democratic Convention who refused to march on their class brothers through the streets of Chicago.

(5) A student strike should be called for the week of the demonstrations, making it clear that students will not sit by with their noses stuck in textbooks while imperialism is plundering the peoples of the world. Through mass struggle and militant action we can turn the imperialism in their gear. Mao says that "all reactionaries attempt to snuff out the revolution by mass murder, and they think that the more people they massacre, the weaker the revolution will become. But contrary to this, a wishful thinking of reaction, the facts are that the more people the revolutionaries massacre, the greater the strength of the revolution becomes, the nearer the reactionaries are to their doom. This is an irresistible law."

# A Proposal on the Cuban Revolution

(The following resolution has been submitted to the National Convention by Karin Ashles, Gerry Long, and Julie Nichamin)

Shortly before his death in battle, Jose Marti (leader of the Cuban independence movement) wrote that he embraced the chance to give his life in the struggle, and with the independence of Cuba, to prevent the United States' extending itself throughout the Antilles and descending with this added force upon the countries of our America. Marti died, and his hopes for true Cuban independence remained unfulfilled for sixty years, as United States imperialism relentlessly carried out Marti's prophecy in Cuba and the entire Latin American continent. The United States rapidly became the center of world-wide imperialism, all the while increasing its economic penetration and domination of Third World countries, particularly those in Latin America. Cuba is the first Latin American country to break out of US domination and control. Since our movement to destroy American imperialism from the inside is inextricably linked with Third World liberation movements, we should understand in what ways the Cuban Revolution serves as an example for these struggles, and we should be prepared to offer it the most concrete support possible. This proposal contains a position on the Cuban Revolution, a call to support a North American brigade to cut sugarcane in the 1970 Ten Million Ton harvest as a means of demonstrating our solidarity, and a call for a national educational program on the Cuban Revolution.

## 1. Description: Political Background

North American intervention in the Cuban War of Independence against Spain (sometimes called the "Spanish-American War") formed the political domain of Spanish imperialism in Cuba as a virtual neo-colony of the United States. The United States Latin American intervention so carried on the independence struggle in Cuba, behind which a new social order was imposed. The United States Latin American intervention was that of "servile administrators of the native bourgeoisie" mere puppets of imperialism, who were accomplices in the formation of Cuba as a virtual economic possession of the United States.

Under the protection of the Platt Amendment, tariff agreements, and the sugar quota arrangement, the US imperialists systematically carried out their domination of Cuba society. No other Latin American country had its economy penetrated so quickly and so thoroughly. The imperialists controlled the best land, all the mines, the greater part of the sugar industry, public services, the most efficient industries, the electric power system, the telephone service, the railroads, the most important businesses, and the banks.

This period of American domination of Cuba (1902-1958) corresponded to the phase of development of monopoly capitalism in the United States, and the mechanisms of exploitation and control of Cuba were an expression of this process. Cuba was a potential market for US surplus capital and manufactured goods, as well as a source of raw materials. As Boorstein put it: "It was the (American) monopolies that geared the Cuban economy to sugar, dominated its resources, suffocated its industry with the goods they pumped in, and drained out its foreign exchange for luxuries." The North American economic domination of Cuba had its political expression in the "pseudo-republic" with its neo-colonial bourgeois parliamentary system, while the pseudo-republican government helped to stabilize and reinforce economic domination. The roots of the Cuban revolutionary struggle can be traced to this economic domination and political control, and the logic of the Cuban revolutionary process grew directly out of these relations of forces.

## The Cuban Guerrilla War and the Lessons for Latin America

In order to be politically and economically independent, the first task of the Cuban revolutionaries was to seize power through armed struggle and the defeat of Batista's army. In this first phase of the revolutionary process, the strategy developed by the guerrillas for taking power represented a sharp break from the strategies that had been traditionally used in Latin America. It contained the premises (outlined by Che in Guerrilla Warfare) that "popular forces can win a war against the army; (that) it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolutions exist—the insurrection can create them; (and) that in underdeveloped America the countryside is the basic area for armed fighting." In his speech to the OAS (Latin American Solidarity Organization) Conference, Fidel stressed the difficulties which Cuban revolutionaries had experienced in getting the people to accept the idea that they could fight against a modern professional army and win. But it would have been a tragic error to let the people believe that Batista could be overthrown by peaceful means or limited armed struggles; all other means for taking power had failed (electoral campaigns, the attack on Moncada barracks combined with popular uprising, general strikes, assassination attempt on Batista). The role of the guerrilla was to move the masses

by carrying out exemplary actions and defeating the forces of Batista's army, thereby demonstrating that the repressive forces of the State were not all-powerful. People's political consciousness grew out of confrontation and struggle. "What distinguishes the true revolutionary from the false revolutionary is precisely this: one acts to move the masses, the other waits for the masses to have a consciousness already before starting to act."

In discussing the applicability of guerrilla struggle as the road to power in the rest of Latin America, Fidel said that Cuba is part of a "much wider movement on the continent than the movement constituted simply by the Communist Parties of Latin America" and that Cuba will "judge the content of organizations not by what they say they are but by what they prove they are...." It is an illusion to believe that the Latin American revolutionary movement can succeed without armed struggle. And the guerrilla is the vanguard of that struggle; the nucleus of the revolutionary movement. "This does not mean," Fidel continued, "that the guerrilla movement can rise without its previous work; it does not mean that the guerrilla movement is something that can exist without political direction.... The guerrilla is organized by a political movement, by a political organization." What is unacceptable is the separation of military and political command and the idea that guerrillas can be directed from the cities. The success of the Cuban guerrilla war was based on the opposite principle: unity of political and military command in the guerrilla force.

This organizational form must be combined with a strategy of opening up many fronts against imperialism in Latin America. "The correlation of forces of the imperialists on this continent, the proximity of its metropolitan territory, the zeal with which they will defend their dominions in this part of the world, require a different strategy on this continent, more than anywhere else: a simultaneous and simultaneous struggle."

The Cuban revolution took power, it began a number of basic reforms (for example the agrarian reform and urban reform laws) which did not constitute a socialist program. However, these reforms were immediately opposed by the comprador bourgeoisie, and as class lines sharpened, the reformist program was necessarily converted into a socialist program. The anti-imperialist alliance became an anti-capitalist socialist alliance of the working class and peasants. So that within the context of the imperialist system, pursuing national goals of economic development, meant overthrowing American domination and the chief instrument of that domination, the comprador bourgeoisie and its accomplices. The Cuban anti-imperialist revolution became a socialist revolution, and as Fidel said, speaking of Cuba's historical position in Latin America:

"We are the first people of this continent to abolish the exploitation of man by man! It is true that we were the last to begin to gain independence and free slaves, but it is also true that we have gone further than anybody else. We have eradicated the capitalist system of exploitation; we have made the people the true owners of their future and their wealth. WE WERE THE LAST TO BREAK THE CHAINS OF THE COLONY, BUT WE

HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO THROW OFF THE CHAINS OF IMPERIALISM."

In the early years of the Revolution, power was consolidated and guaranteed by the arming of the people (in people's militias) and the enlargement of the Rebel Army. The armed force of the Revolutionary Government was their chief class weapon against internal enemies (counter-revolutionaries) and foreign enemies (imperialists and their agents).

At the same time, efforts were begun to develop the Cuban economy. Speaking to workers at a May Day rally, Fidel said:

"How many were there who could understand that a revolution did not mean that the people would simply enter an area of wealth, but that it meant that they would begin to create that wealth...? There wasn't even a political organization that represented the will and effort of all of the people. That is why we speak of the triumph of the rebellion instead of the revolution."

The Cubans see work as the battle of their new war—the war of a Revolution in power against underdevelopment, and they see the Party as the vanguard of that struggle. During the Revolutionary War the guerrillas were the vanguard which, through the process of armed struggle, created the subjective conditions necessary for victory (the consciousness that victory was possible by violent means), and developed the strategies which led to that victory. The socialist revolution changed the objective relations of production in Cuban society; the Party is the vanguard which is creating the subjective conditions necessary for the development of a communist society, and developing the policies for the economic changes leading to an economy of abundance. The change in consciousness comes from participation in the struggle to develop the economy, and from an understanding of that process. As Che said:

"Every worker, on every level, becomes a soldier for the economy.... their vanguard is the party, composed of the most advanced workers, of the advanced men who move along bound to the masses and in close communion with them.... To build communism, a new man must be created simultaneously with the material base."

The selection of party members in Cuba, is unique in the socialist world. All potential party members must be nominated from the base; in every work-place there is a committee of workers which nominates each nominee for the party. The party committee evaluates each nominee's qualifications, and upon his admission, and upon his assignment to a work-place or rejection, the committee must report to the development of the vanguard, that is, when they are educated for communism. Our work is aimed at providing that education. The party is the living example;... with their acts they must lead the masses to the end of the revolutionary task, which means years of struggle against the difficulties of construction, the class enemies, the defects of the past, imperialism."

## Internationalism

"What is the history of Cuba if not the history of Latin America? And what is the history of Latin America if not the history of Asia, Africa, and Oceania? And what is the history of these peoples but the history of the most merciless and cruel exploitation by imperialism in the entire world."

## Second Declaration of Havana

"Create two, three, many Viet-nams, that is the watchword."

## Che, Message to Tricontinental

Internationalism is fundamental to the Cuban revolution. The Cubans understand that imperialism must be destroyed before communism can really exist in any country. "Humanity comes before one's own country," says Fidel, and "communism cannot be built in one country in the midst of an underdeveloped world." The imperialists' weapons against Cuba include the blockade, armed aggression, and mercenary invasion, sabotage, infiltration of spies and pirate raids, provocations from the US military base (Guantanamo) illegally occupying Cuban soil, and slander and lies (especially through the OAS, the "Yankee Ministry of Colonies"). "For the Cuban revolutionaries," Fidel told Tricontinental delegates, "the battlefield against imperialism covers the whole globe.... (The Cuban people realize) that the enemy who attacks our own coasts and our land (is) the same who attacks others. And because of that, we state and proclaim that revolutionary movements in any corner of the globe can count on Cuban combatants."

The First Tricontinental Conference, held in Havana in January 1967, was an attempt to materialize solidarity, to deepen and solidify revolutionary movements of Third World peoples in their struggle against imperialism. Preparations for this conference

began as early as 1961, the Council of Solidarity held in Bandung, which observed the first of a American continent. A antecedents and objective Solidarity of the People America outlined the

"For the first time, del anti-colonialist militant cohorts meet.... to imperialism and of the continents; to accelerate to assure their economic development;... and to the linking and coordinating to achieve or to make

And one of the conclusions of the Conference states:

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## Economic Strategy

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## II. Position on the Cub

As participants in an movement, we fully support the following:

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- 2. Cuba is among revitalize socialism a



began as early as 1961, during the Fourth Session of the Council of Solidarity of the Afro-Asian Peoples held in Hanoi, which was attended by a Cuban observer, the first of such observers from the Latin American continent. A statement explaining the antecedents and objectives of the Conference for the Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America outlined the importance of the meetings:

"For the first time, delegates of the anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist militant organizations of the three continents met...to frustrate the aggressions of imperialism and of the reactionary forces of the continents; to accelerate liberation of the peoples; to assure their economic, social and cultural development;...and to maintain active and permanent the linking and coordination of all countries struggling to achieve or to maintain their independence...."

And one of the conclusions in the General Declaration of the Conference states:

"(There) is evidence that the liberation of Asia, Africa and Latin America will hasten the struggle of the working class and other oppressed sectors of the population in the United States...against the rule of monopolist capital.... In its turn, the development of this proletarian class struggle and that of all workers in capitalist countries, will contribute to the advance of the struggle for national liberation of Asia, Africa and Latin America; and thus, THE COMMON EFFORTS WILL DEFEAT THE COMMON ENEMY OF ALL PEOPLES: IMPERIALISM, AND PARTICULARLY YANKEE IMPERIALISM, THE MOST FEROCIOUS AND OPPRESSING OF THEM ALL."

The Cubans stress the importance of a revolution from within the heart of imperialism. Che's call for two, three, many Viet-nams includes a call for the creation of a Viet-nam within the very boundaries of the imperialist Mother Country: the United States.

Economic Strategy

Economic policy in the early years of the revolution was based on the conviction that readjusting economic priorities and releasing idle labor and resources gave unlimited opportunities for economic growth, and that to break out of the condition of neo-colonialism meant to industrialize and to diversify agriculture. Therefore, the first two important goals were seen as import substitution and the development of a heavy industrial base. These policies required heavy investment of foreign reserves in raw materials, factories, the building of an economic infrastructure, the training of skilled personnel, and construction, which placed a severe strain on the Cuban economy. Pressure on reserves (foreign exchange as well as labor and resources) forced the Cubans to re-evaluate their policies. According to Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, their conclusions were that strong dependence on foreign trade could not be ended in a short period. Further, as a tropical country, Cuba had many agricultural products (sugar, dairy and meat products, citrus fruit, coffee, tobacco) which she could offer to other socialist countries) who in turn were capable of providing a stabilized market with good prices. This meant that sugar, primarily, meat and dairy products, and citrus fruits would provide the bulk of foreign exchange making industrial development possible. In addition to solidifying their own subsistence base, this focus on agriculture aims at a mechanized agriculture, which will produce capital for re-investment, while at the same time freeing labor for other activities. The early stages of industrial development are viewed as deriving from the focus on agriculture: industries fed by a technologically advanced agricultural development (fertilizer, cement, electricity, agricultural equipment), and industries which agriculture generates (based on agricultural by-products and processing).

The Ten Million Ton Harvest of 1970 is thus crucial in Cuba's economic development; it will be the turning point on the road toward sustained economic growth. The revenue from this harvest will enable Cuba to pay back a good portion of her loans; it will give her at least a half million tons of sugar in reserve and improve her international credit rating, thus enabling her to purchase machinery necessary for the mechanization and improvement of the agricultural sector, and finally, it will provide funds for the purchase of certain consumer goods which are in short supply at the present time.

Politically, the harvest is also critical; it will take total mobilization of the people to complete the goal of 10 million tons. The Party has made great efforts to build people's consciousness and their understanding of the objectives and importance of the task. And during the harvest, the organizational capacity of the Party itself will be supremely tested. As Fidel has put it, "The Ten Million Ton Harvest is the biggest battle so far in Cuba's war against underdevelopment."

II. Position on the Cuban Revolution

As participants in an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movement, we fully support the Cuban revolution on the basis of the following:

1. The Cuban socialist revolution has brought about a re-distribution of wealth and created an economic policy aimed at creating the economic basis (abundance) for a communist society.

2. Cuba is among the vanguard of an effort to revitalize socialism and create a new socialist man,

having clearly learned a great deal from the shortcomings of socialism as practiced in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The gradual elimination of money, the use of moral incentives, mass-participation in the military and political processes, the building of mass consciousness, authentic measures to destroy class differences and to prevent the emergence of a new bureaucratic class—all are part of Cuba's experiment in the creation of a new socialism.

3. Cuba has developed a new concept of internationalism expressed in the Second Declaration of Havana: "the duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution." Che's call for "two, three, many Viet-nams" is a strategy for the defeat of imperialism, and the guiding concept for a new international center in the Third World and linked to the black liberation struggle as well as struggles in all advanced capitalist countries.

4. Since Cuba is the first liberated territory in the Americas, it is under constant attack by the US government. As North Americans dedicated to the destruction of imperialism, it is our obligation to oppose our government's policies in the most effective and concrete way possible.

III. Support of a North American Brigade to Cut Cane in the 1970 Sugar Harvest

A brigade of 300 Americans (called the Venceremos brigade) is being organized to go down to Cuba and cut cane for the 1970 sugar harvest. The brigade will be divided into two sections; one will leave in late November, the other in late January, and each group will stay in Cuba for a two-month period. Members of the brigade will be recruited from activists in the revolutionary movement in this country: blacks, Latinos, white working class youth, students and dropout GI's.

Political Purposes of the Brigade

1. To politically, morally and materially support Cuba in the critical sugar harvest of 1970 with its goal of 10 million tons.

2. To educate people about imperialism and about the international revolution against imperialism. This will be accomplished through a well-developed education and propaganda program. The program will aim at developing an understanding of US imperialism, not only in its most blatant militaristic aspects (as in Vietnam), but also its role in distorting and impeding economic development throughout the Third World.

3. To gain a practical understanding of the creative application of communist principles on a day-to-day basis. The New Left in the advanced capitalist countries has in the last decade clearly defined itself within the tradition of socialist and communist struggle begun a century ago. The American mass media and educational system have made the word communism into anathema; this experience will help us to develop ways of combating anti-communism.

IV. Breaking the Cultural Blockade

Chapters should be encouraged to collect badly needed technical and scientific books and journals to be sent down to Cuba.

V. Support for a National Educational Program

The NO, REP and the NEFP should be encouraged to print educational material on the Cuban revolution and chapters should be encouraged to organize educational projects using these materials.



# VIETNAM WILL WIN!

(Submitted by Terry Robbins, Ohio, Steve Fitch, Michigan, Howie Emmer, Kent, and Bernardine Dohrn, Inter-Organizational Secretary)

Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called the 'cities of the world,' then Asia, Africa, and Latin America constitute the 'rural areas of the world.' Since World War II, the proletarian revolutionary movement has, for various reasons, been temporarily held back in the North American and Western European capitalist countries, while the people's revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America has been growing vigorously. In a sense, contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of encirclement of cities by the rural areas. In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population,

— Lin Biao  
Long Live the Victory of People's War!

For almost 100 years, the people of Vietnam have been fighting for their liberation from foreign domination. First the French, then the Japanese, then the French again, and finally the United States have attempted to dominate Vietnam's economy, exploit her resources and enslave her people.

But the efforts of these super-powers to control Vietnam in the past have all ultimately failed. And the attempt by the United States to maintain Vietnam as a colony or turn it into a graveyard will fail as well. It will fail because machines cannot defeat a people; and the thirst for profit by the imperialists will never defeat the people's need for freedom.

The struggle for national liberation and self-determination by the Vietnamese people occurs today in the context of world monopoly capitalism. Driven by its need to expand, capitalism must find new markets and resources in all parts of the Third World. Thus, capitalism has become—through the extension of its economy, culture and military throughout the neo-socialist world—an international system of world imperialism. This system of world imperialism has altered the class struggle and the historical development of the colonized nations, making the struggle for national liberation the primary class struggle in the world. Vietnam is in the vanguard of that struggle.

The people's war in Vietnam will surely win; moreover, it is winning today and will continue to win until the US is driven out and domination of the country is ended. This is important not only because of the specific liberation of the Vietnamese people themselves, but also because their victory will make it possible—as their struggle has made it possible—for movements of national liberation to emerge and intensify in other

Third World countries, and further the destruction of the entire imperialist system itself.

The victory of the Vietnamese people will be a victory for the oppressed peoples of the whole world.

## History

The people of Vietnam first wrested their independence from the Chinese feudal invaders in 939. They defended themselves against Chinese feudal lords for centuries—only to be invaded by French colonialism around 1850.

The French set up a colonial administration with direct French control over most parts of Vietnam. The French stole the lands formerly worked by peasant families and created rubber and rice plantations in which peasants worked as tenant farmers.

Open, armed resistance against the French continued from the late 1850's until 1917. By that time, French repression was so heavy against any open political activity—even aimed at reform through the colonial administration—that any group which hoped to have anti-French impact was forced to go underground.

In 1930, Ho Chi Minh organized the Indochinese Communist Party. ICP cadres provided leadership in a series of peasant rebellions in 1931 which were brutally crushed by the French. Throughout the 1930's, communists maintained strength and organization despite severe repression.

In 1940 and 1941, the Japanese handed the French an ultimatum to give up to the Japanese economic and military hegemony over Indochina. The French were forced to concede.

In May, 1941, Ho Chi Minh met with the remnants of the central committee of the Indochinese Communist party, and the Vietnam Independence League was formed. The Vietminh, an anti-colonial coalition led by communists, fought against the Japanese during World War II, eyeing a possible future struggle with the French. In August, 1945, Vietminh forces marched into Hanoi, declaring a Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, as the Japanese surrendered to the Allies. On September 2, 1945, Ho formally proclaimed Vietnam's independence.

In the armistice negotiations, the French recognized the newly proclaimed Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and agreed to provisions for free elections in southern-most Vietnam. But the hopes of the Vietnamese people for freedom and independence were short-lived. With the creation of a French puppet government and the French naval bombardment of Haiphong on November 23, 1946, it became clear that the French were determined to colonize Vietnam all over again.

Thus began the "First Resistance War," waged from 1946-1954, that involved increasing US military aid to the French (the US was paying 80% of the cost of the war in 1953). Nonetheless, the war ended in the complete defeat of the French and the Vietnamese victory at Dien-bien-phu.

As provided for in the Geneva agreement, signed in 1954, the Vietminh left the areas under its control in the south, in expectation of elections which were to be held in 1956. Surely the whole of Vietnam would have been united under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh had the elections been held.

But they were not. Once again, the Vietnamese were tricked—and their independence robbed. The US puppet, Diem, terrified by the great success of socialism in North Vietnam, set up a fascist style dictatorship in the south, refused to hold elections, and effectively declared Vietnam two countries.

In 1960, after several years of spontaneous, violent uprisings by the people of South Vietnam, former resistance fighters gathered together and created the South Vietnam Liberation Front—to wage the war against imperialism, to the end.

## II. The National Liberation Front

The National Liberation Front of South Vietnam is a coalition of all political, religious, and social forces committed to fighting US imperialist aggression. The political aims of the NLF have consistently revolved around five main points: Independence, democracy, neutrality, and peace for South Vietnam with a view towards the peaceful reunification of North and South Vietnam.

Victory for the Front, which is sure to come, will represent the second historical phase in fulfilling the goal for which the Vietnamese people have struggled and suffered throughout this century—a free and peaceful Vietnam. Victory for the Vietminh against the French, which resulted in the creation of an independent and socialist North Vietnam, was the first phase. Victory for the NLF in the South will be the second; reunification of North and South will represent the third and final victory. After final victory they will continue to struggle in the building of a strong homeland and in aiding the cause of national liberation throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

## III. The War in the Countryside

From 1960 to 1967, the war in the jungles, mountains, and plains of South Vietnam has shown concretely the methods and results of people's war.

In the beginning stages of armed struggle small and generally isolated groups of former Vietminh fighters staged uprisings to get arms for self-defense of the local population. These attacks followed a pattern for many to come: political discussion beforehand, contact with the troops inside the target area, enlisting support of the local population to carry off casualties and booty, so that the attacking force was always 100% combatant; more men than arms at the outset, more arms than men at the finish; sudden speedy night attack, and swift retreat.

These earlier struggles soon gave way to battles of



In a liberated village

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a more advanced variety, NLF guerrillas would attack a Saigon command post in order to provoke a battle. When reinforcements would arrive, NLF regional troops would surround the reinforcements and decimate them. By the end of 1964, often reinforcements simply were not sent in to retake a position or rescue the wounded. It was the victory at Binh Gia, fought in this way, that marked the final defeat of US "Special War," in which Asians were used as cannon fodder and imperialist commanders called the shots. The defeat of "Special War" in Vietnam was a significant victory for all the peoples of the Third World, since special war has been tested as a method of counter-insurgency against revolutionary guerrilla movements throughout the world.

By 1965, the NLF claimed control of over 80% of the territory and the allegiance of 2/3 of the people of South Vietnam. In the beginning of 1965 the decision was made by the United States to bomb the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and US ground troops entered into the war on a massive scale. "Limited war" began.

The process since 1965 has been one of NLF strategists and fighters learning how to defeat large units of US troops as well as evading and finding protection against air firepower, and pushing a deteriorating US-Saigon Command offensive into a "passive defensive posture."

The US tried desperately in the two dry-season offensives of 1965-66 and 1966-67 to capture key areas of the countryside and gain some freedom to maneuver. Each offensive was aimed at destroying NLF regular units, and in both years US troops were unable to even find regular units. By 1967-68 the initiative of the war had passed completely into the hands of the NLF.

#### IV. The War in the Cities

The Tet offensive, launched in Jan.-Feb. of 1968, began a new phase of the Vietnam war. The struggle moved from the countryside to in and around the cities and American bases, in keeping with the overall NLF strategy for victory in the South. Important military and political advances were made which set the stage for the Paris Talks, the present military situation, and the present political situation in Vietnam.

NLF fighters were able to penetrate 140 towns and 11 of the 14 major US airfields with the aid of hundreds of thousands of the local populace who fed the fighters, hid ammunition, and carried supplies for days before the attacks were launched. This support, carried on in complete secrecy, was the decisive factor in the success of the Tet Offensive and represented a glorious example of people's war.

During Tet, an urban armed force was created. NLF communiques began to speak of the "Revolutionary Armed Forces," which was a force of urban youth, students, workers, and deserters from the puppet army. Their units were identified by the city districts in which they were based. They were key in guiding NLF fighters in seizing scores of thousands of arms and strategic points.

200,000 soldiers in the Saigon puppet army deserted during Tet, including one unit which deserted in their tanks. Seldom before had the puppet forces deserted in whole units.

#### V. Present Military Situation

Before Tet the US-Saigon Command considered the cities their "safe rear" from which to attack Liberation Army bases in the countryside. The NLF had a hard time approaching the cities, and attacks were night raids in which the NLF attackers had to make it back to countryside bases undetected.

With the great victories of the Tet offensive, the creation of "fixed bases" around the cities, the NLF can now fire rockets and mortars into airbases, communication centers, and oil depots. Munitions can be seized almost at will, and the NLF can flee through the spider-web maze of tunnels and trenches in and around the cities.

The "fixed bases" on the outskirts of the cities represent an organic link connecting the bases in the jungles and mountains with the urban population. The US-Saigon Command can no longer consider the cities a "safe rear." The cities have become the front-line area, with the Liberation Army constantly pounding US bases and installations.

Although this year's offensive was not marked by the intense troop fighting of last year, NLF rockets and mortars have inflicted a degree of damage similar to that of Tet. Over 2,000 helicopters and planes were destroyed on the ground this year—just as in last year's offensive.

This year's offensive struck at US bases throughout South Vietnam, concentrating on the large airfields around the cities and the extensive technological and natural (rivers and roadways) US-Saigon communications systems.

Including the successful defense of newly liberated areas in and around the cities, and the continually successful camouflage used to protect the Liberation Army's fixed bases, the level of armed struggle has reached an incredibly high stage in the NLF's strategy for this phase of the struggle.

#### VI. Present Political Situation

In the countryside:

The political results of Tet are clear: major advances for the NLF, collapse for the US-Saigon administration. The last vestiges of Saigon administration control in the "priority pacification areas" fell apart. US troops were drawn from the cities, which left them stretched in a

defensive position—trying to re-occupy what were considered "occupied areas" in the countryside only a month before. After Tet, the US-Saigon Command had to concentrate its efforts on trying to rebuild river and road communications and clearing the areas around bases, as well as trying to retake prestige targets.

The destruction of the pacification program represented a major political defeat for the United States. As long as pacification existed, the so-called "political war" for the hearts and minds of the peasants, the myth of Saigon control and the myth of growing Saigon power could all be perpetuated.

Following Tet, and to this day, restoring Saigon political presence in the countryside—much less the building and consolidating of power—is out of the question.

In the cities:

Whatever grip the Saigon quillings had over the cities was destroyed during Tet. This was apparent when Ky and Thieu clung to power by going along with the US policy of "destroying the cities to save them." The urban population, if formerly untouched by the atrocities in the countryside, now know the fascist ferocity of their homes being bombed and their streets being turned to rubble.

With the destruction of the Saigon puppets' hold on the cities, new urban political groups and forms have evolved. The NLF has extended its underground work with students and self-management committees. The administrative basis for the building of a new life in liberated zones has been created in working-class areas in the cities. The self-management committees take care of day-to-day needs, like public health and food distribution. Armed urban youth act as self-defense units, and the NLF holds cultural events in these areas. NLF fighters have free access to those neighborhoods if they need to make an emergency escape. Strategic parts of the cities, then, are effectively liberated.

A new force called the Alliance of National, Peace, and Democratic Forces, based in Saigon and Hue, emerged after Tet. The Alliance included urban intellectuals, former members of the Ky-Thieu regime, and petit-bourgeois elements. The NLF and the DRV support the political program of the Alliance, which calls for overthrow of the Ky-Thieu regime, setting up

a coalition government with the NLF, and peace based on local independence.

The emergence of the Alliance is clear evidence of the political strength and the political threat the NLF represents through the massive support of peasants and workers, the overwhelming majority of oppressed Vietnamese people. Nobody wants to be on the losing side. It represents the final political isolation of the Ky-Thieu clique from the broad masses of Vietnamese of all social strata.

#### VII. The Paris Peace Talks and the NLF Peace Plan

It is in light of NLF political-military hegemony of the soil of Vietnam that we must view the Paris Talks. Let us be very clear: the National Liberation Front is not negotiating from a position of weakness; nor are they, by any stretch of the imagination, "selling out the people of Vietnam." Rather, the Front comes to Paris in a position of great strength, after eight years of war that has stopped the possibility of a US military victory, won increasing allegiance from the masses of people in Vietnam, and, within the liberated zones, allowed for the creation of the beginnings of a new society that only binds the NLF and the people closer together. Further, the NLF knows better than anyone else that the only way the South Vietnamese can truly gain their independence is not through talking, but through the struggle that makes it militarily and politically impossible for the United States to continue its genocidal presence in Vietnam. Thus, even while negotiating in Paris, the NLF has intensified the fighting in the South—and reduced US strategy to an almost exclusively defensive holding operation. While the talks go on in Paris—it should be clear to everyone but the blind—the Front unceasingly continues the people's war in South Vietnam.

The Paris Talks, then, must be viewed as one more front from which to carry on the battle for Vietnamese freedom. And, in this context, the NLF has won significant victories in Paris. First, it has established itself as an independent and representative spokesman for the people of South Vietnam. Second, there has been complete unity within the NLF-DRV ranks, an important show of power and propaganda which put alongside the bitter distrust between the US and their "allies," whose sole existence depends on US aid, and Nixon's having to convince Thieu to "negotiate seriously" with the NLF.

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# VIETNAM

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while the Front makes it clear they have no intention of including the puppets in their plan for a coalition government. Third, the NLF has had an international platform from which to win support, clarify their position, and further weaken support for US aggression around the world.

The NLF peace plan for the Paris Talks consists of ten points. This ten-point program outlines the NLF position on Vietnam's future; and provides the basis for a fair peace. The main principles of the plan include:

- unilateral withdrawal of all US troops and their allies.
- destruction of all US military bases and removal of all US war materials from South Vietnam.
- the resolving of the question of Vietnamese armed forces within Vietnam by the people themselves.
- the creation of a provisional coalition government to consist of all political forces committed to peace, independence, and neutrality.
- free and democratic elections throughout South Vietnam.
- a foreign policy of peace and neutrality.
- reunification of Vietnam through peaceful means.

## VIII. The New Democratic Stage

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has pointed out that in the epoch since the October Revolution, anti-imperialist revolution in any colonial or semi-colonial country is no longer part of the old bourgeois or capitalist world revolution, but is part of the new world revolution, the proletarian world revolution.

— Lin Piao

The struggle for self-determination and liberation of the Vietnamese people from US imperialism will inevitably culminate in a united, socialist Vietnam. The character of the Vietnamese revolution in the present stage, however, is based entirely on the fact that the most immediate enemy facing the people is imperialism and foreign domination, and the absolute need to unite all progressive elements within Vietnam in order to defeat imperialism.

The culmination of this revolutionary stage in Vietnam's history will be the establishment of a "national democratic union", including all revolutionary classes. Unlike the "old bourgeois revolutions," however, which culminated in the rule of local capitalists, the Vietnamese revolutionary victory will be a major step toward the building of socialism in Vietnam.

This is due, in part, to the fact that world-wide monopoly capitalism is no longer a possible road for industrialization or progress in any Third World country. Instead, it prevents the development of an authentic local bourgeoisie and enforces a backward and colonial status on Third World nations. No capitalist country in the Third World can avoid being penetrated and controlled, and eventually reduced to complete colonial status, by monopoly capital. Imperialism and capitalism are thus inherently tied together, as is the struggle for national self-determination dependent upon the victory of socialism. In this epoch of world imperialism, national self-determination is possible only with socialism. Thus, national liberation movements must lead to socialism for any degree of success.

In order to maintain its domination of Third World countries, imperialism has made an alliance with the most reactionary elements within its colonies—the landlords, the military, and certain sections of the bourgeoisie most dependent upon imperialism for survival. This alliance is based on the preservation of feudalism, fascism and colonialism.

In order to defeat imperialism, then, the masses must be mobilized to fight imperialism: the peasants, the workers, and the nation as a whole. This requires the formation of a broad liberation front, with its goal the defeat of imperialism and the establishment of the "new democracy stage." Chairman Mao Tse-tung calls this a "new democratic revolution." Mao says, "The new democratic revolution is part of the world proletarian socialist revolution for it resolutely opposes imperialism, i.e., international capitalism."

What are the political aims of the new democratic revolution? Mao says, "Politically, it strives for the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary masses over the imperialists, traitors, and reactionaries, and opposes the transformation of Chinese society into a society under bourgeois dictatorship." In section 5 of the 10-point peace plan, when speaking of the creation of a provisional coalition government preceding the holding of general elections, the NLF states, "The political forces representing the various social strata, and political tendencies in South Vietnam that stand for peace, independence, and neutrality..." One of the tasks of the provisional coalition government will be "to achieve national concord, and a broad union of all social strata, political forces, nationalities, religious communities, and all persons, no matter what their

political beliefs and their past may be, provided that they stand for peace, independence and neutrality."

Clearly, the NLF 10-point peace plan reflects the political aims of the new democratic revolution.

What are the economic aims of the new democratic revolution? Mao says, "Economically, it aims at the nationalization of all the big enterprises and capital of the imperialists, traitors, and the distribution among the peasants of the land held by the landlords, while preserving private capitalist enterprise in general and not eliminating the peasant economy. Thus, the new type of democratic revolution clears the way for capitalism on the one hand and creates the prerequisite for socialism on the other." The NLF political program adopted at the Extraordinary Congress of 1967 includes the stipulations:

- to confiscate the property of the US imperialists and their die-hard cruel agents and turn it into state property.
- to set up a State bank.
- the State will encourage capitalist industry and trade to help develop industry, small industries, and handicrafts.
- to enact the land policy, to carry out the slogan "land to the tiller."

In addition, the 10-point peace plan specifically includes the stipulation, "Improve the living conditions of the laboring people."

The new democratic revolution as expressed by Mao also includes the notion of building up a strong national democratic culture to replace the depraved culture of the imperialists and feudal landlords. The NLF political program includes the stipulations:

- to fight against the American-type enslaving and depraved culture, and education now adversely affecting our people's fine, long-standing cultural traditions.
- to build a national democratic culture education.
- to develop science and technology in the service of national construction and defense.
- to educate the people in Vietnam's tradition of struggle against foreign invasion and its heroic history.
- to preserve and develop the fine customs and good habits of our nation.

The NLF, led by the proletariat, has been enacting the notion of the new democratic revolution in the liberated zone for eight years. The national democratic union will be led by the proletariat after the US withdrawal and will proceed through the stage of New Democracy to socialism. This is clear in view of the fact that in struggling against imperialism, i.e., international capitalism, the Vietnamese people have understood that they must not give monopoly capitalism

even a toehold in their country; it is clear in view of the desire of the Vietnamese for reunification with the North; and finally it is clear because of the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party, which has been essential for the victory of the Vietnamese people.

Vietnam is the Dien-bien-phu of US imperialism. Just as Dien-bien-phu represented the turn toward victory in the "first resistance" war against the French, Vietnam represents the turn toward victory of the oppressed people of the world against imperialism.

Understanding that the key class contradiction in capitalism today is between US imperialism and the oppressed nations within and outside the US, and understanding that the struggle of the Vietnamese people represents the vanguard struggle of the international proletariat, we must aid the NLF by bringing the war home to the mother country!

We must consistently assert our support for the struggle of the people of Vietnam, for the National Liberation Front, and for the Ten Point Program for Peace presented in Paris.

We must build increasingly sharp struggles, not only because that is the only way we can build a fighting movement at home, but because it is the most concrete way we can aid the NLF.

We must consciously invoke anti-imperialist and communist consciousness in all our work and through all our demands and struggles, alongside the Vietnamese Liberation Army, and make concrete our international duty.

## IX. Implementation

1. All chapters should intensify and escalate struggles against ROTC, military research, and other aspects of the military on campus, as a concrete way of aiding the Vietnamese struggle.

2. The solidarity of SDS with the Vietnamese people, and people's movements throughout the world, as well as the demand for immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all US troops from Vietnam, should be raised in any national or regional demonstrations planned for the future.

3. SDS should conduct an intensive campaign of education and action next December to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the founding of the NLF.

4. Literature suitable for mass distribution should be published by the National Office—such as excerpts from Burchett's books, the 10 Point Peace Plan, etc. The general line of this literature must be: "Solidarity with the Vietnamese people, complete victory for the NLF!"

5. This resolution should be reproduced by the National Office as a basic history and SDS position on the great struggle of the Vietnamese people.

6. SDS must implement the building of a revolutionary youth movement as the only long-range strategy possible for SDS in the international struggle against imperialism.



Cooperative farm in North Vietnam

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## Proposal Two

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# On NLN

The function of the internal organ of a political organization should be to report to the members the activities of their comrades in various areas, and to promote discussion which can flow from the experiences of those activities and in which all members can participate. This enables the organization to choose its political direction in a democratic and self-conscious manner through selection among various theoretical and strategic alternatives which are fully presented to the membership through the paper. Such a paper can also serve a valuable function as a vehicle for internal education insofar as it offers materials and study guides which enable the members to undertake their own critical study of historical and political theory, particularly revolutionary Marxism, but not if it attempts to present large chunks of this theory in a packaged, digested form. It is on the basis of these principles that the internal newspaper of SDS should be organized. The purpose of this resolution is to note several problems and shortcomings of New Left Notes at present and to propose specific measures to make NLN a more democratic and more useful force in the life of SDS.

## PROBLEMS

(A) Politically, the most disturbing trend has developed in the discussion of major, especially international, questions. Instead of substantive and open debate on such issues (for example the character of the leadership of the Vietnamese, Cuban, and Chinese revolutions), we find increasingly both direct and indirect efforts by the leadership in the National Office to represent certain positions as authoritative and beyond challenge. With respect to Vietnam, for example, the large majority of recent articles have been written by national officers who take the position that (1) every political position and tactical maneuver of the National Liberation Front is clearly correct, because the NLF is the leader of the anti-imperialist struggle in South Vietnam, and (2) critical political analysis of the NLF (in particular by revolutionary socialists who point out its anti-democratic mode of organization and its contradictory and non-socialist

program, or by PLers who attack the NLF for negotiating with the imperialists over the objections of the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party) is the work of "counter-revolutionary traitors" to the working-class movement. Short articles presenting opposition viewpoints have been printed as letters, so that a description of NLN as a "monolithic" factional organ would be unjustified at this point; but these have appeared only after pressure was exerted on the N.O. staff by charges that NLN was not printing opposition articles.

(B) A related issue is the reportage of internal life in SDS, which has been disturbingly one-sided at certain key points. The outstanding example of this development was the coverage of the split in Ann Arbor SDS, in which the portion of one side was fully presented in NLN, while the article written by the opposition "Radical Caucus" was never printed at all. The reason given for not printing this article before the December NC, which decided which faction to recognize as the official chapter was that the article was too long to be printed, while after the NC the Radical Caucus position had of course been defeated, and so the issue was dead. Comment on this argument will be deferred to the next paragraph.

(C) Considerable space is devoted to lengthy and strategically chosen quotations from personalities in the international revolutionary movement, most often Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara. In the issue preceding the December NC, for example, space was given to articles by Mao, Che, and Julius Lester. It was sufficiently bad that the selections from the writings of these revolutionary authority figures were evidently chosen to bolster the position of the N.O. In issues to be debated at the NC, what makes it much worse is that the deletion of these articles would have created more than enough space for the Ann Arbor Radical Caucus document which was suppressed on the basis of insufficient space in NLN. This illustrates at the very least an unhealthy conception of priorities in selecting material. To give a more recent example, the N.O. position of uncritical glorification of Vietnamese leadership has been pushed by printing an interview with a North Vietnamese Minister of Education, in which we learn that the Party "ensures democracy" through carrying out its "principal task," which "is to regulate the relations

between man and man in society and the college," and by a lengthy excerpt from the NLF claiming total success in scores of military operations. Likewise, even more else in SDS, we would be delighted if we could believe these claims of massive military success to be completely true. It must be stated frankly, however, that there are factional reasons for wanting SDSers to believe these claims in 1969. If one is convinced to believe fully in the military self-image projected by the NLF, then it becomes easier to extend this credence to the NLF's political self-image as well, which is precisely what would make it possible for SDS to adopt officially the position that any criticism of the NLF is a reactionary tendency.

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE that the National Convention establish, and explicitly mandate the editorial staff to carry out, the following policy regarding the operation of NLN:

- (A) On major political issues where disagreements exist in SDS, systematic and open internal discussion of these issues should be actively organized and carried out in NLN. This would mean, for example, that on a given international question (such as the new constitution of the Chinese Communist Party, or the meaning of Fidel's critical support for the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia) there would be a period of several weeks when space would be reserved in each issue for articles and debate that would be actively solicited from SDS. These discussions should be announced in advance so that serious factual and political arguments can be prepared by all tendencies. This would be in addition to the usual ongoing discussions of revolutionary theory and of practical strategic perspective for SDS, these being discussions which cannot generally be formalized and carefully structured. Obviously, the extent to which this idea can be carried out at any given time will depend on a number of factors, especially the amount of space needed to cover in full the activities and struggles carried on by SDS chapters, the reporting of which is obviously the most important function of NLN.
- (B) The views of the national officers should be stated regularly, in a clearly delineated and limited space. This will enable the membership to understand

what those views are and crystallize discussion. As part of this reorganization, there should be an end to the presentation of excerpts from the writings of revolutionary figures in a manner that is superficially "educational" but in fact designed to artificially support one or another factional viewpoint (this is not to suggest that the study of revolutionary theory should be ignored; in fact it would be an excellent idea to present a series of articles designed to familiarize the readers of NLN with the general literature of all varieties of revolutionary socialist thought; and to help them develop serious study programs for themselves).

(C) Political developments within chapters should be fully reported. It has been the case that chapters have been very backward in reporting their activities and direction of development. It is also true that, as in the Ann Arbor split, such developments are not properly presented. It should be seen as a responsibility both for political tendencies in chapters to formulate positions and submit them for publication, and of the national staff to print these positions in NLN.

(D) In short, NLN must be made an open publication. Its purpose is to present to the membership of SDS the views of all political tendencies in the organization, particularly those organizing at the rank-and-file chapter level. This purpose cannot be accomplished through a verbal commitment to it, nor simply by the formal passage of a resolution such as this one. No resolution can possibly solve in a meaningful way the problem of which tendencies are "significant" ones: at a given time, or in what proportions space in NLN should be allotted to various kinds of articles. The establishment of a newspaper which actually serves the needs of SDS people, which both presents the views and programs of majority tendencies and at the same time enables minorities to offer their positions and attempt to win majority support for themselves, is possible only if the internal life of SDS itself is vigorous and democratic; and if the editorial staff of NLN is consciously devoted to the publication of such a newspaper.

(E) The above resolution has been submitted to the National Convention, by the Revolutionary Socialist Caucus of the University of Chicago (SDS)

# Internal Democracy in SDS

(The following resolution has been submitted to the National Convention by the University of Pittsburgh chapter of SDS.)

We are opposed to the principle of a leadership trying to "radicalize the consciousness" of a rank-and-file membership from the top down. We feel that the election of officers in SDS has become an annual scramble of certain groupings to impose their own particular theories and strategies on the organization as a whole, to "radicalize" our consciousness for us (from the particular viewpoint of those aspiring to leadership). The major contending groupings in the organization at present seem to have no qualms about this elitist practice. Their main concern seems to be to make their own ideological viewpoint that which represents the organization as a whole. We call on all members who are disgusted with this practice to reject all factions and groupings seeking to perpetuate it.

We also feel that the chaos and confusion of national conventions and National Council meetings have come to be detrimental to the meaningful participation of the membership of SDS in organizational decision-making. The programs and statements flowing from such gatherings are not representative of large segments of the membership, and are accordingly irrelevant to and ignored by the same.

## Proposal One

Election of national officers should be held by national referendum after full discussion of relevant questions has been carried on by the candidates in New Left Notes for at least four consecutive issues. Committees to supervise such elections shall be established by the National Council at the first National Council meeting of each year. (This proposal shall become effective no later than the first National Council meeting of 1970. Delegates to the SDS National Convention of 1970 shall be instructed to incorporate this proposal into the organization's constitution, making whatever modifications are deemed necessary on the basis of this practical experience. The decision of the National Convention of 1970 shall be subject to ratification of the entire membership by national referendum.)

## Proposal Two

Any SDS regional structure should be established throughout the country to ensure democracy and unity within the organization. (We wish to emphasize that our goal here is not "decentralization," but democracy and unity.) Regions should be established on the basis of geographical area and population. Each region should have a minimum of one full-time staff worker to service chapters within the region (to be approved by and paid by those chapters). A regional council, composed of one representative elected from each chapter in the region, would help supervise regional programs.

The regional structure would serve to do the following:

1. Make national referendums a more practical (and thus more frequently used) decision-making tool, ensuring greater democracy and membership participation in national decision-making than exists at present. Regional staff workers and council members would be responsible for seeing that full discussion and voting took place.
  2. Create a more stable financial base. Regions should be responsible for paying their regional staff workers and for providing for a percentage of the national budget. The regional structure would greatly facilitate dues collection and fund raising.
  3. Establish a workable framework for a serious membership education program. Such a program should ensure a standard minimum level of knowledge throughout the organization of (a) analyses of basic problems facing American society, (b) history of movements for social change, and (c) various major theories of social change.
  4. Facilitate greater inter-organizational communication and interaction. National conventions, National Council meetings, and (in its present form) New Left Notes are simply inadequate for this purpose. Regular, detailed reports on regional activity should be sent to the National Office and reprinted in New Left Notes. Regional conferences and inter-regional conferences—free from the tasks of elections and decision-making and from the chaos of factional maneuvering—could be a positive tool for communicating ideas and experiences (and establishing truly comradely relationships) in a relatively unpressured and open atmosphere.
- The National Council should be instructed to establish a committee to develop a program for the concrete implementation of this proposal, to be voted upon by the National Council no later than December, 1969. Steps should be taken to carry out this program immediately thereafter. Delegates to the SDS National Convention of 1970 shall be instructed to incorporate this program into the organization's constitution, making whatever modifications are deemed necessary on the basis of practical experience. The decision of the National Convention of 1970 shall be subject to ratification by the entire membership by national referendum.

# New Left Notes

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# YEAR OF STRUGGLE

## 1968-69



*San Francisco State*



*Cornell University*



*Richmond oil strike*