



# discussion bulletin

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## N O T E

With the exception of the "Memorandum on the Principled Groundwork of Our Tactics and Slogans in the Struggle Against Imperialist War," the material in this bulletin was presented to the Political Committee for its information as part of the discussion on the question of our antiwar policy.

The committee voted to approve the general line of the "Memorandum on the Principled Groundwork of Our Tactics and Slogans in the Struggle Against Imperialist War," with one vote recorded against by Tim Wohlforth. The statement following the memorandum was submitted in explanation of the nay vote.

Because of the importance of the questions raised in this discussion the Political Committee voted to submit this material in discussion bulletin form to the membership and invite contributions to a further literary discussion of the question. The discussion will continue in literary form for the time being, pending further decision by the next plenum of the National Committee.

Tom Kerry  
Organizational Secretary

## MEMORANDUM ON OUR TACTICS IN THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

### Introduction

We have received requests for a clarification of our line in relation to the antiwar groups, marches, demonstrations, etc., from a number of areas including New York City, Boston and Los Angeles. Such requests themselves are a reflection of the growth of the antiwar sentiments on campus as well as our at least partial involvement in these. It also expresses a certain confusion -- or at least lack of complete confidence -- over our tactics when working in antiwar groups whose leaderships have considerable differences with us. This memorandum aims to clarify this situation.

### The New Mood

All the comrades have been aware of the startling change of mood on the American campus that has come to a head this Spring. This has found expression in a series of student actions whose scope and militancy go quite beyond anything the campus has seen since the immediate postwar period. Our deepest experience with this mood has been in the Northern supporting movement to the sit-ins in the South. However, this mood has also found expression in the civil-liberties field with the unprecedented anti-HAUC demonstrations in San Francisco which reached its peak in a mobilization of 5,000 students. Just as important -- possibly of increasing importance in the future -- has been the antiwar actions. These include the anti-ROTC movements which have spread to up-to-now unpolitical campuses and are largely made up of raw students; the civil defense protest movement which in New York City mobilized 2,000 students; the Student SANE and Student Peace Union groups which this Spring have started to again become active; the Canadian antimissile base demonstrations initiated by our people; and a scattering of other "Peace Marches," and the like, organized by pacifists and in some cases the Stalinists.

Many of our comrades have observed that the same faces show up at each of the different actions in these fields and this is a reflection of the growth of a substantial body of students throughout the country who have reached a level of consciousness of themselves as rebels against the injustice in capitalist society (though many are not yet socialist in ideology).

It is our task in the coming period to recruit the best of this new layer of student rebels to the revolutionary movement.

### The Nature of the Leadership

At the present time the leadership of the antiwar movement is in the hands of some of the worst petty-bourgeois elements on the current scene. In general the program of the movement reflects this and is more distant from ours than is the case of the program of the Negro leadership or the leadership of the civil-liberties groupings. We should enter these movements with a clear understanding of this -- but enter we must!

The most important antiwar groupings are either in control of the liberals (SANE) or in control of the pacifist-social democratic gang (Civil Defense Protest Committee, Action for Peace, etc.). The SANE

grouping is the most political of the two and is largely a Democratic party outfit. Its program is little different from Eisenhower's putting its emphasis on negotiated test cessation and disarmament (see attached report). The pacifist-social democratic gang has a better program in many ways (unilateral disarmament, etc.) than the SANE group looking upon itself as the "left wing" of the peace movement. However, its doctrinaire pacifist program is at least as dangerous -- possibly more dangerous because of its attractiveness to good militants -- than the SANE liberal program.

The Stalinists occasionally carry on "peace" activity under their own leadership through front groups whose programs are as bad as the above mentioned groups. However, it is much more common to see them working in other groups carrying out a line of capitulation to the leadership of the group and sometimes even vying with the YPSL to be the policemen of the left.

The YPSL has been quite active in the past in SANE. Presently it does not seem to be active in SANE but is one of the initiators of the Student Peace Union which is organized on a few campuses in the mid-west. The current line of the SP-SDF of opposition to unilateral disarmament should do the YPSL a lot of harm though the "left wingers" in the organization may in fact increase their action in the antiwar field to spite their leadership.

All these organizations have been able to attract students who are seeking some way to oppose America's war policies. These students are neither doctrinaire liberals or doctrinaire pacifists. They are attracted to those organizations because they are the only ones in the field that oppose -- in some fashion -- the prowar orthodoxy in this country.

In addition many students have acted outside of these organizations especially on the anti-ROTC issue. It is our task to reach the students both inside these organizations and those who are acting in these independently organized movements.

### The Crisis in SANE

As can be seen by the accompanying detailed report on SANE, there is presently raging a deep crisis in that organization brought to a head by the recent failure of the summit and the concomitant cold war tensions. The liberals are caving into witch-hunting attacks and are trying to force out of the organization allegedly radical elements. The Student SANE has so far stood up to this and in the course of opposition is showing signs of leftward movement.

This immediate crisis in SANE adds to the general picture a certain sense of urgency which should compel our comrades to pay special attention to Student SANE in the immediate period.

### Our Tactics

Our first task is the most important: DESPITE PROGRAMMATIC DIFFERENCES OF THE MOST SERIOUS NATURE WE MUST ENTER EVERY ORGANIZA-

TION AND PARTICIPATE IN EVERY ACTION WHICH OBJECTIVELY OPPOSES THE PROWAR POLICIES OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS. Unless we carry through this task there is no sense in working out tactics for they cannot be implemented. Our present contact with the antiwar movement is spotty at best. It can be likened to our contact with the Negro movement two years ago. Our task is to do in the antiwar movement in a few months what we did in the Negro movement in two years! Hard as it may seem the current turmoil among youth makes this task quite possible.

We enter the antiwar movement with a full understanding of the treacherous program the present leadership has foisted on to the students. We therefore enter as revolutionary socialists -- as YSA members and act accordingly.

We cannot prescribe any formula here that will fit every situation and the comrades will have to use their own judgment in feeling their way in this type of movement. When we can do so, marching under our own signs in "Peace Marches" is quite effective. Selling the YS at all such occasions should be a matter of course. Participation on committees set up to organize such events by official YS representatives is the best. But under some conditions we may not be able to do any of these for fear of being forced out of the organization or action. But even under these extreme conditions we can openly talk to other participants about our views and gain contacts for the YSA.

### Our Line

It is quite important that we operate in these organizations on the basis of a realistic political line which will make it possible for us to coalesce a broad left wing of militants in these organizations. We should therefore emphasize those points which can make possible the differentiation with the organization of a left wing.

Our goal should be the creation of an independent student action movement of militant opposition to the U.S. military establishment and the war policies of our government. The minimum program for such an organization would include: abolition of compulsory and finally voluntary ROTC; end to conscription; permanent cessation of nuclear tests by our government unilaterally; end to civil-defense tests; end to witch-hunting of dissident views as the aim of the witch-hunt is to prepare the population ideologically for war. Additional points of a more transitional nature (that is, only a socialist government could implement them though those advocating them may not yet realize this) such as: abandon all foreign bases, unilateral disarmament, and a peaceful foreign policy should also be advocated though not insisted on in a minimum program.

Such a group would be open to all who agreed on these concrete issues whether or not they are pacifists and whether or not they are socialists. In this sense we would be proposing in the antiwar field what we have partially achieved in the integration field -- a united front of militants around an action program.

Concretely when functioning in Student SANE groups we should urge them not to fear expulsion by the adult SANE and to look upon

their organization as a possible rallying point for a regrouped, broadened antiwar action organization of students. When participating in a civil-defense protest or a "Peace March" (yes, comrades, we should participate in all such events!) we should suggest that this action is not enough -- an organization of antiwar militants is needed.

Of course we should also discuss issues such as socialism and the class-struggle road to peace; peaceful coexistence; the U.N., etc. However, we should not raise these as programmatic issues upon which there must be agreement before there can be common action. Rather we seek within a common action organization to discuss informally with others about such issues.

And finally

All the above is so much wind unless we get into these "peace" groups. Further, our tactic in relation to all sections of the student protest movement will be hindered unless we develop deeper roots on the campuses. Every effort must be made by local areas to build effective campus fractions. Nothing is more urgent than this in the present period.

By Tim Wohlforth

June 6, 1960

NOTES ON THE "MEMORANDUM ON THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT"

by Tim Wohlforth

A much needed discussion on our tactics in the antiwar movement has begun in both the YSA and in the party. That the original impetus for the discussion should be a YSA memorandum on the question is in itself significant, for it is only on the American campus that we find any new forces that have come into being around this question. For this reason I will confine myself largely to tactics related to the youth movement though recognizing that the political questions involved are important to both party and youth.

The basic aim of the memorandum was to develop a tactic for our intervention into this field. It had become increasingly clear by late spring that significant new forces were becoming involved in various antiwar activities. It was no longer simply a matter of a few pacifists or some worn out Stalinists pretending to be pacifists. The new generation of campus radicals who had played such an important part in the northern demonstrations in support of the southern sit-ins and in the anti-HUAC demonstrations in San Francisco was also becoming active in various antiwar actions.

This can be seen most clearly in the civil-defense protests in New York City. Last year only a handful of pacifists took part in a protest demonstration. This year some 2,000 students were involved. I personally was caught unawares by this development and had originally taken a slightly cautious attitude on our participation in this demonstration, fearing that we would become involved in a pacifist individual protest type of deal. It so happened that the quantitative change in turnout changed qualitatively the nature of the event from a pacifist to a nonpacifist demonstration. This the pacifists themselves have recognized. For instance, the Peacemaker comments: "It appeared that about two or three score might be pacifists, a similar number were mothers and most of the remainder college students. This demonstration, although 'anti-war,' was not organized on a pacifist basis, and there was a certain amount of kicking and thrashing against the police during the arrests."

There have been many other antiwar actions during the school year including widespread anti-ROTC agitation, various peace marches (some attracting far larger numbers than previously for these events) and similar activities. All those demonstrations were aimed in one fashion or another at the cold-war policies of the U.S. government. While there was a wide range of ideological understanding among the participants all were at least to some degree disenchanted with the prowar direction of the U.S. government. Further, they had resolved to do something about it and were not to be frightened by the "communist menace" from taking action against the policies of their own government.

True, there were pacifist illusions among some of the students. Others held liberal biases, and still another small but active group was influenced by Stalinist views. But the movement was and is a fresh and new movement -- not a conglomeration of pacifist and Stalinist hacks as it had tended to be just a short while ago. The presence of confused ideology makes it all the more important for revolutionaries to intervene.

Our Immediate Tasks

The task which these events placed before the YSA was not a simple one. We did not have much contact with this milieu and our small forces were tied up in many other projects. But it seemed imperative to awaken our members to this new

development and to work out a tactic for intervention -- a tactic aimed at wresting from the pacifists and cohorts their control over the antiwar forces in the country.

We felt that only revolutionists could lead the fight against war -- not only to its successful conclusion, but even to the winning of a few of its partial demands. For revolutionists to turn their backs on this new movement for fear of a taint on their purity would be in effect to hand this new generation of antiwar fighters over to an alien social class. Such an act would be a disservice to revolutionary socialism comparable to what the Ohlerites attempted (and the Marcyites after them).

It was clearly impossible to implement any antiwar policy as long as we remained isolated from the actual movement we were trying to influence. This is why the memorandum puts such stress on entry. It is important to swing our people around and to get them into contact with the actual antiwar movement as it is presently constituted before we can ever hope to have any influence on its future direction. In addition to gaining contact with the ranks of the antiwar movement we must build a reputation in their eyes as active fighters for peace -- just as we have done in the integration field.

The proposal to enter Student SANE must be taken in this light. I was not proposing any exclusive orientation toward Student SANE as I am not at all convinced that the future development of the antiwar movement will necessarily confine itself to this organization. But it was important for us to get into every antiwar organization -- civil-defense protest groups, ad hoc anti-ROTC groupings, etc. Student SANE groups are found on many campuses and entrance into them is quite easy. I do not feel such an entry is in principle excluded. But it should be clear that in any entry we enter as revolutionists, keeping our criticisms and in fact intensifying them in our press, and in every other way bringing to the fore our revolutionary critique of liberalism and pacifism.

#### Towards A Student Antiwar Movement

We must do more than enter these organizations. If our entry is to be effective we must carry it through on the basis of a general strategic orientation which deals with our basic task -- to win the leadership of the antiwar movement away from the pacifists and cohorts. Any antiwar policy which does not offer a way to do this is doomed to failure and would be an abdication of our revolutionary responsibility.

The section of the memorandum which formulates a program of immediate and transitional demands for the antiwar movement and which projects the conception of a student antiwar movement founded on the basis of them is an attempt to grapple with this problem.

There are basically two ways we can intervene in this movement. One is to enter with our full program only and carry on agitation to win recruits directly to the Trotskyist position.

This is the most ineffective way to intervene into any movement. Missing is the whole conception of transitional forms and transitional demands. No attempt is made to form bridges from the present level of consciousness in the movement to our full revolutionary program. Such an approach is characteristic of the SLP but has been repudiated by our movement. In every field of work,



whether it be the trade unions, the Negro struggle, the student milieu, we operate on the basis of another approach. We seek to find ways to coalesce a militant left wing around the more immediate aspects of our program so as to bring the largest section of the ranks of that movement into conflict with its false leadership. While doing this we also press our full program in an educational way on the militants we are working in common with. It was this approach that gained for us such successes in our recent integration work.

I propose that we apply this approach to the antiwar movement. We enter the movement seeking not only to win adherents directly to our full program, we also seek to coalesce a broad militant left wing in opposition to the false leadership of the pacifist-liberal-Stalinist complex. The issues around which such a left wing could be formed cannot be outlined in detail ahead of time. Perhaps the section of the memorandum where I attempt to do this is too rigidly constructed. The basic concept, though, is quite valid.

It is likely that the differentiation between the militants and the present leadership will occur around two closely related axes. First, the concept of unilateral disarmament -- that is, aiming the antiwar movement at our own capitalist class rather than "at all governments." This issue has already played a prominent role in the antiwar movement even without our intervention. Second, the failure of the pacifists to effectively carry out the fight for even those immediate demands that they are in agreement with us on. Just as in the Negro struggle the pacifists will fear really effective struggle against capitalism.

Some question has been raised as to whether it would be proper for us, after successfully conducting such a struggle as outlined above, to assume the leadership of the antiwar movement on less than a full Trotskyist program. The question is posed incorrectly, for as formulated the answer is simply -- NO, we cannot assume full leadership of anything on less than the full Trotskyist program. But that is not what is at issue. The real question is: can we assume the leadership of an antiwar movement in coalition with militants who agree with us on an immediate and possibly even transitional program but are not as yet Trotskyist? I am not referring here to isolated individuals but to leaders who represent significant forces. My answer is, YES, just as we have done in the integration field and will do many, many times again in different fields. No front groups formed by us on less than our full program, but real coalitions, yes.

Will such an independent student antiwar movement come to pass? I do not know. The antiwar sentiments of students will take some independent form, possibly only through scattered groups devoted to specific antiwar issues; possibly through a federation of such groups; then again it may occur through a general student organization, most of whose main planks and activities relate to the antiwar struggle. Whichever form it takes it does not matter for the political content and our tasks remain the same. There is no principled differences between a student antiwar organization and a general student organization whose main work is in the antiwar field.

Can such an antiwar student movement achieve its goal on its own -- i.e., bring peace? Obviously not! Peace can come only through the socialist revolution. Such a movement can, however, win on some of its immediate demands (such as abolish compulsory ROTC, stop nuclear testing and even end conscription)

but to win the long range goal it must ally itself with the working class and its struggle for power. Our task in the antiwar movement is to make this clear. Under no circumstance can we subscribe to a program which implies that peace can be achieved other than through the above way. But we can support a program for the achievement of the lesser antiwar goals through the militant action of the students and through our alliance with the working class.

### And What About the Proletarian Military Policy?

Quite naturally this memorandum did not deal with the "Proletarian Military Policy" question. The YSA is an independent youth movement. While in basic agreement with the SWP and looking to the SWP for political leadership it does not subscribe to any position of the SWP unless that position is introduced into the YSA, discussed there, and decided on by the youth themselves. We have never had occasion to treat the Proletarian Military Policy in such a fashion, for this policy has never been brought up by anyone in the YSA. Furthermore during the period of my association with the SWP, the SWP has not activated this policy, and one hears of it only by reference to a position once held during World War II.

However, now that we are entering a period of increased activity in the antiwar field it is quite proper that we consciously bring this policy up once more, discuss it thoroughly, and see to what extent and through what concrete slogans it is applicable in the present period.

Perhaps the greatest danger in the present attitude current in the party on this question is that some comrades have allowed themselves to fall into a rather bad political formulation. On the one hand they reject raising the slogan "End Conscription, End ROTC" for fear that such a position will contradict our traditional position on Proletarian Military Policy. But on the other hand, they do not raise as an alternative to capitalist conscription the slogan of conscription under trade-union control because such a slogan has no basis in the present reality. Such a position creates the impression that we favor capitalist militarism and can thereby severely damage us in the eyes of young antiwar militants on the campus who we might otherwise be able to win to our program.

Should there be any doubt as to our opposition to capitalist militarism and therefore our opposition to capitalist conscription let me quote from the 1940 Resolution on Proletarian Military Policy: "The imperialist war is not our war and the militarism of the capitalist state is not our militarism. We do not support the war and militarism of the imperialists any more than we support the capitalist exploitation of workers in the factories. We are against the war as a whole just as we are against the rule of the class that conducts it and never under any circumstances vote to give them any confidence in their conduct of the war or preparation for it -- not a man, not a cent, not a gun with our support. Our war is the war of the working class against the capitalist order."

The current 1960 election platform of the party makes this position explicit so that there should be no doubt that we support wholeheartedly the struggle of American youth against being yanked out of their civilian lives, put under the control of reactionary elements and martialled into support of American imperialism. It is now the duty of the YSA to utilize the SWP election campaign as a way of intervening on this question.

The question still arises as to the relevance of the Proletarian Military Policy to our antiwar work today. It is first necessary to distinguish between the essence of this policy and the particular slogan form it took in 1940. The particular agitational slogan of trade-union control of the army was never utilized by Lenin, to my knowledge, and was only worked out by Trotsky during the last year or two of his life. This only goes to prove that the slogan was a tactical formulation of a traditional Leninist view on militarism which distinguishes the revolutionary movement from the pacifist movement.

It is clear to me at least that the agitational slogan "Trade Union control of the Army" is not a relevant one today. A trade-union movement which can barely conduct a strike and in which there no longer exists any really organized rank-and-file movement is not likely to respond to a demand that it take over the army. The concept of an army run by Meany and Hoffa is not likely to inspire anyone! Nor does there exist a sentiment within the working class with which we can at least partially solidarize ourselves as was the case of the antifascist sentiment in 1940. "This militarization has wide support among the workers. They bear a sentimental hatred of Hitler mixed with confused class sentiments. They have a hatred against the victorious brigands" (Discussion with Lund, August 1940). It will be difficult for us to solidarize ourselves with the prowar sentiments among the workers today which is motivated by the "fight communism" propaganda.

If this slogan has no relevance today how then do we apply our Proletarian Military Policy concepts so as to differentiate ourselves from the pacifists? As Trotsky pointed out in 1940, basing himself on the whole tradition of Leninism, the essential difference between us and the pacifists is that we are serious about revolution and that they are not. Their antiwar policy is an antiwar policy designed only for peacetime and leads to either capitulation in time of war or useless individual martyrdom. Our antiwar policy is most effective precisely on the eve of and during war.

For instance we reject wholeheartedly at all times and in all periods the pacifist concept of "conscientious objection." While we oppose the draft as an instrument of capitalist militarism the revolutionist does not separate himself from his fellow workers. Just as in the factory the revolutionist strives to be the best worker so in the army he strives to be the best soldier.

Within the army the revolutionist seeks to convince his fellow soldiers of his views but he does not separate himself from them. He also supports the desires of the soldiers to democratically control their officers and to have some influence over policies that may mean the soldier's life or death.

The essence of the Proletarian Military Policy -- and the only form it ever took in Lenin's writings -- can be seen most clearly in the actual unfolding of the Russian Revolution. It was the ability of the Bolsheviks to neutralize or win over the army which made the Russian Revolution possible. A pacifist policy of abstention would have been disastrous.

Thus we can see the following general approach to this question on our propaganda. During a period of relative international stability as at the present time our slogans calling for an end to conscription come to the fore and dominate our agitational work. Our understanding of the necessity to grapple

with the existence of the army in a revolutionary way becomes an important part of our propaganda work. As the crisis deepens and war becomes imminent we shift the emphasis on the agitational level from an anticonscription campaign to demands for the democratization of the army and any other particular slogan which will help to give a working-class orientation to the armed forces. While doing this we do not throw out our opposition to capitalist conscription but it tends to play a more propagandistic role than an agitational one.

### The Pacifist Menace

A lot of the resistance to my memorandum was motivated by some sort of suspicion that somehow the YSA was coming under pacifist influence. This is absurd. If anything our comrades have a reputation for being rather bellicose. It takes effort to get them to try to convince a pacifist first and slug him later rather than the other way around.

But in all seriousness, we have carried and will continue to carry on a propaganda offensive against the pacifists. There is no question on this. However, no matter how fine our propaganda campaign is it will not amount to a hill of beans unless we actually get it to the pacifists and those influenced by them and carry on a struggle with them for control of the antiwar movement. Those who abstain from that struggle are the ones who aid and abet pacifism.

The incorrectness of those who launch a full propaganda offensive on the war question but isolate themselves from the real antiwar movement was epitomized for me by a single issue of the old Young Spartacus. In the issue that was published following the first nationwide peace strike during which 25,000 students went out on strike, Young Spartacus devoted over a full page to a general propaganda article on war. It heralded this momentous strike with a small box on page four! This is one "tradition" we could do well not to emulate!

June 1960

A CRITICISM OF THE "MERCULUM OF THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT"

Jim Lambrecht

How We Control Movements

Something should be said, at the start of our discussion, about the meaning of the word "control" in relations between revolutionary socialists and other movements. To revolutionary socialists, only programs control movements -- organizational influence within movements flows from this. Any other conception of the word is alien, or should be made alien, to our movement.

In the horrible miasma that passes for revolutionary science among the Stalinists there is a discernable example of another conception of control. That is, that the chief goal of the revolutionist should be the attainment of organizational posts, and after that is the time to bring forward your program, providing of course that such a step will not lead to losing office, which is the chief goal. On what program do you win office? Why, the program that will win -- within certain limits (these limits shift, with the Stalinists, for reasons not germane to this document; but it is germane to note that the overall direction of shift over the past forty years has been to the right).

The view that underlies this subordination of program to the fight for posts -- in the case of both the Social Democrats and the Stalinists -- is that the mechanism of social change is the apparatus, the machine. Whoever has more seats in Parliament, or controls more posts in the unions, peace organizations, war organizations, etc., etc. -- can change history.

Revolutionary socialists take a different view altogether. For us, it is the psychology and consciousness of the masses that changes history. As this consciousness changes, so finally all organizations change including the organization of society as a whole. A small but very important example of this process has been the development of the YSA itself. It would have been impossible to arbitrarily impose our present organizational forms on the early IBM clubs, or even on the later YS Supporter groups until the membership had gone through several stages of a process of study, discussion and experience that increased our consciousness of revolutionary socialism. At this point we need and want the present organization of the YSA, and would find anything less to be intolerable.

Therefore we put our emphasis on program and not on the capture of posts. Our task is to teach the revolutionary program to the masses. To fulfill it we may be forced to do many things -- in order to reach the masses at their present level of consciousness -- but one thing we do not do is fight for someone else's program or fail to fight for our own. If we do not falter in this task we will ultimately "control" the youth in the antiwar movement, because they will be solidly behind the program of revolutionary socialism.

Antiwar Programs: transitional or minimum?

The antiwar program of revolutionary socialists has a transitional character. It includes concrete demands that sections of the antiwar movement are already conscious enough to act on -- demands aimed at the government and its war preparations, such as unilateral disarmament, no war treaties with other capitalist nations, cessation of nuclear tests, etc. In the struggle for these demands the antiwar movement learns the "worthiness" of its pacifist, bourgeois-liberal or reformist leadership; it learns something of the nature of the bourgeois state. Revolutionary socialists participate in these struggles alongside the antiwar militants -- in the course of the struggle they raise further demands based on the increased consciousness of these militants, pushing forward the struggle and heightening the consciousness of the movement at the same time. There is no limit to this process, from the revolutionary socialist point of view. At each stage of the struggle, and at each stage of the mass learning process that flows from the experience of the struggle, revolutionary socialists press for programmatic advance -- at all times basing themselves on the current level of consciousness of the antiwar movement, but at all times seeking to propel the movement into struggles that will raise that level. Since the cause of war is the continued rule of the capitalist class, the ultimate demands of our transitional antiwar program cross over to the socialist program itself -- for a labor party, a workers' government and finally for the overthrow of the capitalist class. The program is transitional for this reason.

But the program called for by the "Memorandum" has a minimum character, that is, it posits a series of concrete demands as our minimum program in the antiwar movement. This is a schematic and false way to approach the problem of the learning process of the masses -- both inside and outside the antiwar movement. It cuts off not just the transitional aspect of the antiwar program in a formal sense, but also ignores the transitional character of the mass learning process. The New York Student Peace Union, for example, already calls for unilateral disarmament. What, then, should a YSA fraction in SPU do to increase the consciousness of its membership? Even assuming that the presently existing peace movement is not yet capable of our minimum program, and that it will therefore be of some use to us in educating people through discussion and struggle, it is wrong for us to assume that that learning process will proceed at an even tempo nationally, that some areas will not leap out ahead of others because of previous experiences or a thousand other factors, and that therefore the YSA fractions or units will not need to have the full freedom of our transitional antiwar program, including very advanced programmatic demands, in order to do their job of raising consciousness.

Finally, by falling short of, or cutting off, our full transitional antiwar program, our minimum antiwar program is implicitly pacifist in character, that is, it implies by omission of our more advanced political and class demands that a program of "immediate" demands aimed at armaments and war preparations can halt war.

Pacifism holds that peace is a question "above classes", achievable at a point short of the destruction of the rule of the capitalist class. Their program, logically, consists of nothing but action demands in opposition to all war preparations with the ultimate enemy being War itself, ie, an abstract evil that "all men" can be brought to repudiate.

I think that this error was made in the "Memorandum" because of an overly formal distinction between propaganda, agitation and action slogans. Our transitional program may contain only a few points that match the consciousness of the antiwar movement at present, only a few points that right now can be taken up as action slogans. But the transition between those slogans that we only include in our propaganda work -- to slogans of agitation and action, can be very swift. They must be included in our transitional antiwar program as the YSA cadre understand it. Otherwise we simply repeat the experience of the Social Democrats and Stalinists who "enter" the peace movement only to fight "on the issues" -- they therefore have no way to develop an educational struggle against the program of pacifism, within the antiwar movement, they confuse and miseducate their own people about the nature of the antiwar struggle and often lose them to the pacifists or bourgeois liberals.

### Programs and Organizations

We do not see an "independent" antiwar organization -- independent of the revolutionary socialist organization -- as a desirable goal for YSA cadres to struggle for in their work with the antiwar militants. Our attitude toward organizations flows from our attitude toward programs. If we refuse to struggle for an antiwar program independent of our antiwar program, then we must also reject the idea of an antiwar organization independent of our organization. Again, our antiwar program has a transitional character, allowing us to link ourselves to the antiwar militants at their present level of consciousness -- but we do this in order to introduce new demands to raise this consciousness to a higher level, and we see no "cutting off" of this process short of the revolutionary socialist program to end capitalist rule.

Does this mean that we do not participate in antiwar organizations that do not accept our full program? Of course not -- we participate and raise those sections of our transitional program that are appropriate. If we are successful in our work inside of and in united fronts with these organizations, however, then that means we have successfully raised the consciousness of the antiwar movement to a level equal to our own -- at this point there is no programmatic purpose in the "independence" of the antiwar movement from our own. Short of this point, we obviously cannot accept the antiwar program as adequate, we must continue to apply our transitional program in an effort to heighten consciousness. We do not have any sort of minimum program to halt war, but a transitional one. If we constitute the majority in such an "independent" antiwar organization we would do far better to conduct concrete actions against war preparations in our own name, as the YSA, and make use of the united front tactic, in all its forms, in order to continue the education process of the antiwar militants on our transitional antiwar program.

### Entry, Opponents Work and The United Front

The "Memorandum" does not define our formal relations to the existing bourgeois-liberal and pacifist peace organizations, beyond the repeated and undefined use of the word "entry". At best this term is used imprecisely; at worst its use -- in conjunction with the political errors already noted -- tends to build up a logic that badly confuses our approach to the peace movement.

"Entry" has a definite meaning in the history of relations between revolutionary socialists and other organizations. It is, in a sense, synonymous with the meaning of the word "fusion." There is an assumption in a call for "entry" that the other organization is beginning to develop toward revolutionary socialism and that, consequently, revolutionary socialists should not allow their own organization to get in the way of unity, or the "entry." Subordination of the needs of their own organization to the needs of the entry is justified by the judgment that the result of the entry will be a new and larger revolutionary socialist organization, program and all.

For this reason, a necessary condition for entry has always been that the other organization already be within the working class camp, and that it already be a political movement. Once that point is assured the question of entry and the form of entry can be settled by an estimation of more concrete circumstances. In the past revolutionary socialists have entered many organizations of this type -- the S.P., labor parties, etc.

But there has never been a call for entry into liberal bourgeois or pacifist peace organizations. This is excluded by the non-class character of their programs, the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois character of the organizations and tendencies themselves, and by their stated or implicit antagonism to politics. Just as we do not bypass our transitional antiwar program for their program of "immediate action demands", so we do not ignore the needs of our own organization for the sake of building theirs.

A different concept altogether is that of "fraction" work. YSA fractions a part of the whole -- can be sent into particular locals of Sane, Student Peace Union, etc., where the quantity of potential contacts justifies it. In deciding to launch such fractional work it goes without saying that the independent socialist activity of the parent YSA unit must continue as the focal point of the energy of its members. Otherwise the fraction itself will be hampered, forced to raise only those points with the organization that will not lead to its immediate expulsion, with no external arm to raise further demands, criticisms, etc.

Implicit in the concept of fractional work, as opposed to the concept of "entry", is the idea that these existing peace organizations are opponent organizations, from our viewpoint. Although we work with the antiwar militants that presently accept their leadership, we begin to develop our transitional antiwar program in order to expose that leadership and heighten the consciousness of the militants through struggle -- with the ultimate perspective of replacing that leadership and organization with our own, and their program with our program. From the point of view of "entry" as opposed to "fractional work", the logic of our opposition to "independent" antiwar organizations is again made clear. All antiwar organizations that are not revolutionary socialist organizations are our opponents.

#### The United Front and The Current Stage of The Student Movement

In addition to the errors noted so far, there is another error implicit in the stress that the "Memorandum" lays on getting into the various peace organizations on and around the campus. The error is in misestimation of the current stage of the student movement as a whole. It is not true that the young militants that went into action on civil rights, civil liberties and antiwar protests last semester have already reached the stage of organizational



membership in any of the standing organizations that focus on these questions, including peace organizations. That is certainly not true on a national scale, but even locale by locale the overwhelming evidence is that the various actions had a somewhat spontaneous character. Hundreds or thousands would mobilize for a single action or series of actions without affiliating themselves to the organizations that called for the actions.

The error derived from this misestimation -- sending YSA fractions into the peace organizations, conceived of as a national tactic -- would lead to many dull meetings with really not very young people, in many cases. As a national tactic, based on a more realistic estimation of the level of consciousness of the young student militants, the united front is far more suitable. This would allow the YSA to participate in the struggles of the antiwar movement as well as other struggles, without tying up its slim forces in a national "entry" in the -- in many cases -- stale, memberless, letter-head peace organizations. The movement so far shows up for actions, not meetings. That observation should guide our organizational approach to it. In some cities -- N.Y. Student Day, for example -- there actually is a reason for sending in YSA fractions, ie, several hundred youth belong to it. But even in N.Y. the emphasis should be on the united front rather than fraction work -- much bigger than anything done by N.Y. Student Day was the demonstration of over 1,000 in City Hall park, called by the Committee to Protest Civil Defense -- an ad hoc committee that had many of the essential features of the united front. And the several thousand youth that protested civil defense alerts in high schools and colleges all over the city were led, often, by no organization at all. The united front should also be one of the points that our fractions should demand within the peace movement, therefore, on the ground that no single organization, or even collection of organizations, as yet controls the antiwar movement. And the YSA should emphasize this tactic above all others, in the current period.

July 24, 1960

MEMORANDUM ON THE PRINCIPLED GROUNDWORK OF OUR TACTICS  
AND SLOGANS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST  
IMPERIALIST WAR

By Murry Weiss

During the past few years a number of branches of the party and the YSA have actively intervened in marches and demonstrations initiated by pacifist organizations. In almost all of these cases they were confronted with the need to clarify our tactics and slogans in relation to these specific actions as well as in relation to the pacifist organizations. The need for clarification has acquired greater current importance in view of the emergence of a new layer of high school and college youth inclined to radical action.

The campaign launched by the YSA to mobilize Northern students to support the Negro students and to picket Woolworth stores also brought the revolutionary socialist youth into struggle with the pacifists and their Stalinist, Social-Democratic and labor-official allies. The YSA, through a timely and effective application of the united-front tactic, accumulated a body of experience that will undoubtedly prove invaluable in all phases of the work of building a revolutionary youth movement, and particularly in further struggle to win the awakening radical youth from the program and leadership of the pacifist, Stalinist and Social-Democratic bloc.

The memorandum introduced by Comrade Wohlforth to the National Executive Committee of the YSA and now under discussion in that body as well as in the Political Committee, was submitted, as he has explained, in response to requests for clarification of our policy on the antiwar struggle from a number of areas. The PC has also received such requests from party branches. Thus the discussion in the leading bodies of the party and youth has the task of providing a greater degree of consciousness and direction to the work of the movement in the anti-imperialist war struggle and clarifying our line in relation to the multitude of peace organizations and actions.

We cannot succeed in this task, in my opinion, if we confine the discussion to questions of tactics and maneuvers. The merit of Comrade Wohlforth's memorandum lies in its attempt to meet the request for clarification in the youth branches and to grapple with some of the really new features of the current situation. At the same time it must be understood that the formulation of a guiding line for the party and the youth in the struggle against the war drive in the current situation is still in its first stages.

I say this not because I believe we must hastily improvise a program for the struggle against imperialist war. Quite the opposite. Our main task, it appears to me, is to bring into focus the basic program of the party on war and peace, familiarize the newer and younger party members with it, and apply it to the current situation. It is a job of principled clarification, pedagogy and propaganda as well as active engagement in struggle and intervention in the new and awakening milieu of student radicalism. This has always been the case with each new forward push of the movement. The basic program, which in periods of stagnation tends to gather dust on the shelves, must be renewed and revived in the struggle to pass it on to new layers of the working class and youth and in the struggle against the reformist, Stalinist and pacifist betrayers.

We cannot move forward without the continuity of program. This means that we must see the continuity of programmatic struggle as the first line of our struggle against the imperialist war drive. It would be a real blunder for us to view the special actions organized by the pacifists, no matter how popular they might be, out of the context of this programmatic struggle.

The marches and demonstrations and "peace movements" organized by the pacifists are too often loosely referred to in our discussions as the antiwar movement. To be sure, specific mass actions against the war drive of the imperialist governments have profound significance in the revolutionary struggle against war. The anti-U.S. treaty demonstrations in Japan are a fresh example. These actions should be carefully distinguished from the pacifist masquerade conferences, petitions and praying sessions that "bow to the summit." Nevertheless, we must imbue our movement with the concept that every class-struggle action, every movement that raises the independence, self-confidence and fighting capacity of the working class, the students and the Negro people against their class enemies is an integral part of the anti-imperialist war struggle.

It may be said that, yes, a major strike battle is linked to the struggle against imperialist war, but only indirectly so, while a militant "ban the bomb" march grapples directly with questions of war and peace. Actually, even a stormy "ban the bomb" demonstration affects the struggle for peace only indirectly. It takes the struggle for workers' power to resolve the question of war and peace. Every partial class-struggle action is an approach to the political showdown between the classes -- but only an approach. Furthermore, the ruling class can be rendered just as wary and can be compelled to slow down the war drive just as much, for example, by major economic strike battles as by successful "ban the bomb" demonstrations. The big-business policy-makers know that a working class that has won on the economic front is prone to become more class conscious and more apt to intervene up and down the line in all problems affecting society. Hence the need for big business to begin tacking and veering.

Basing themselves on the interrelationship of all phases of the anticapitalist struggle, revolutionary socialists insist that the antiwar struggle is identical with the class struggle in all its other forms. This is the main point that distinguishes revolutionary socialism from all rival tendencies in the working class -- from Stalinism, pacifism and social democracy.

The Negro student sit-in actions in the South and the supporting movement among Northern students and workers, were from our viewpoint a major blow at the cold war. Although it was not conscious of this, the movement was in diametric opposition to the Stalinist and pacifist peaceful coexistence line, just as were the movements of far greater scope in South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and Japan. And by the same token the campaign conducted by the party and youth organization to help build this movement and find links with it North and South was in this basic sense part of our revolutionary antiwar activity.

I say this with the deliberate intent of combatting a tendency to regard the party and the youth as "isolated" from the "real"

antiwar movement and to thresh around somewhat nervously to find some device to "enter" it. That this is not the real situation becomes clear if we examine the main content of the party's struggles over the last few years. Such an examination will show that the SWP and the revolutionary socialist youth, now organized in the YSA, have fought for the revolutionary position on war for many years and with notably redoubled energy since the crisis in the radical movement opened in 1956.

Throughout the period of the active regroupment crisis, the SWP sought to utilize the concrete form of the struggle for a socialist electoral policy to rearm the radical workers and youth with the Leninist approach to the war question as against the Stalinist class-collaborationist and pacifist approach.

At the same time the left wing of the Young Socialist League conducted its struggle against the right-wing Shachtmanites on the question of revolutionary socialist opposition to American imperialism, defense of the colonial revolution and class-struggle politics as against the line of capitulation to the State Department socialists. This struggle culminated in the fusion of the left wing with the SWP youth and the formation of a revolutionary youth movement that immediately set to work to win the radical youth from the programs of Stalinism, reformism and pacifism.

The Independent-Socialist ticket in 1958 was a body blow at the Stalinist peaceful coexistence policy spelled out concretely in their support of capitalist parties.

The two issues in dispute at the June 1958 Conference were:  
(a) A genuine opposition to the capitalist bipartisan war parties;  
(b) A socialist platform, not a pacifist platform. We won a victory on these two questions. But we had to continue the struggle against the Stalinist-pacifist line throughout the campaign. Lamont in co-operation with the CP reintroduced the misnamed "peace" platform through the back door in his ten-point "peace" program and we had to wage a struggle publicly against this.

During the period of the Khrushchev visit, at the height of the peaceful coexistence euphoria, we organized a full-dress debate between the SWP and the CP on electoral policy for 1960 at the September 1959 ISP conference. The ISP split on the question of peaceful coexistence and its application to the policy in the 1960 elections.

Against this background the party made its big decision to continue its consistent programmatic struggle and once again undertake the colossal job of waging an independent campaign for its own candidates. This decision must be viewed as the most important action in the struggle against the war drive the party has undertaken.

The manner in which the campaign was opened illustrates our conception on the struggle against imperialist war. Our presidential candidate Farrell Dobbs went to Cuba with our campaign manager Joseph Hansen. The vice-presidential candidate, Myra Tanner Weiss, and the National Secretary of the YSA, James Lambrecht, toured some of the hot spots in the Southern Negro students' struggle. Thus we began the campaign by an effort to dramatize the fact that we see the

struggle against imperialist war as directly linked with the revolutionary mass actions of the colonial people against American imperialism and independent mass struggles at home, in this case the Negro youth. Our candidates then followed up this opening with TV and radio speeches, national tours and speeches to mass meetings, student and union groups.

This sketchy reminder of the programmatic quality and the scope of the action around our election campaign should include the enormous efforts we have already devoted to the struggle to attain ballot status in different parts of the country and the even greater and more trying efforts that lie ahead. All of this is a major part of the SWP's and the YSA's revolutionary antiwar struggle. All tactical proposals and projects that do not take this election campaign into account are politically wrong and practically unrealistic.

We faced this same kind of problem in 1948, only to a far greater extent. At that time we were confronted with a mass pacifist movement around the Progressive party and the "Wallace for President" campaign. Thousands of workers, Negroes and students were turning to this movement in all parts of the country. The Stalinists had committed all their forces in the unions and their entire apparatus to this movement and were recruiting freshly radicalized student-veterans to their ranks.

There were any number of tactical schemes that could be devised for "entering" this movement or conducting fraction work within it, etc. And such schemes were indeed advanced with a great sense of urgency. In the debate on how to approach the Wallace movement tactical schemas crowded out principled considerations for many comrades in the first stage. However, we had to and we did take our point of departure from basic principles. The proposal to give critical support to the Wallace candidacy and to enter the movement was defeated on principled grounds. Next it was decided, on the same grounds, that our line must be expressed, under the circumstances, in a party presidential ticket. And we launched for the first time in our history the bold venture of a national presidential campaign.

I recall vividly how torn I was between my agreement with the main principled line of opposing the Wallace pacifist candidacy and launching an SWP campaign, and the tactical opportunities I saw for the party in carrying on work within the Progressive party and youth formations. For a time I tried to reconcile the main line we decided upon with an elaborate tactical project of working in PP clubs all over the country.

Nobody in the central party leadership at the time was opposed to conducting work in the Progressive party on our principled line. As a matter of fact the Political Committee approved a highly complex and sustained tactical move we made in California to make an impact on this movement in its formative stage. All the party leadership insisted upon was that work in the Progressive party milieu be conducted on our principled line and that it take into account, insofar as the allocation of forces and energy was concerned, our main decision to conduct an independent presidential campaign. I was forced to agree with this even though it appeared that it would mean foregoing some very exciting opportunities to win some of the radicalized workers and youth attracted to the Wallace campaign.

Subsequently I came to realize that the majority decision in 1948 represented a crucial test of the party's capacity to withstand the pressure of a Stalinist-pacifist formation with all the attractions of a larger arena and a means for reaching thousands of industrial workers, Negroes and youth who were deeply involved in that movement. Had we failed to meet that test with a firm principled line and a firm course of action, the SWP would never have survived and its capacity to make a real impact on the radical working class would have been lost in the consequent demoralization of the movement.

The 1948 experience is well worth studying today.

The fact that we are conducting such a large-scale action as the presidential election campaign does not mean we turn our backs on the workers and youth who are grouping themselves around pacifist organizations. On the contrary, our campaign is designed to appeal to these strata who are manifesting a sincere desire to struggle against the war drive. There shouldn't be a trace of sectarian aloofness in our attitude towards the rank-and-file workers and youth drawn into such movements. While we must cut to the realities in allocation of forces, even a small group of comrades, strategically placed and utilizing to the fullest extent the advantages of the SWP election campaign, can do extremely effective work.

In the pacifist movement today we should take note of the fact that the Stalinists and Social Democrats are carrying out their line with consequences that offer exceptional opportunities for us to advance our programmatic struggle. Over the recent years the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) concentrated its efforts on the single demand for the U.S. to stop nuclear tests. SANE took the position that all governments should halt these tests but its main job was to demand that the U.S. government do so. With the turn in the international diplomatic situation towards a summit meeting and the State Department's switch towards a policy of "controlled" cessation of tests, the Eleanor Roosevelt-ADA-Democrats, some trade-union officials, the Social Democrats and the Stalinists all combined to channelize the policy of SANE into the State Department's formula.

In the atmosphere of the pre-summit period the Stalinists seemed to be achieving their cherished popular front in favor of peaceful coexistence, the Social Democrats in cahoots with the ADA and the Reutherite labor officials were achieving their aim of exposing Republican "ineptness" and "ineffectiveness" in foreign policy, and the traditional pacifists were running true to form in starting out to oppose the war policy of the imperialist government and ending up trapped in a State Department official policy.

All this culminated in the bizarre Madison Square Garden rally, organized to "bow to the summit." The summit blew up just before the meeting took place at the Garden. And with this blow-up the patched-together popular front began to show all the signs of splitting at the seams. Even before the Garden meeting the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee had moved in to put pressure on SANE with regard to the "infiltration of Communists" into their midst. Henry Abrams was pointed out as a well known "Communist" who was Chairman of the Committee to organize the Garden rally. The leaders of SANE buckled. In return for a promise from the Senate committee not to publicly attack them for red infiltration, they promised to attack themselves

and cleanse themselves. Subsequently all the Social Democrats, including the Shachtmanites, and the bourgeois pacifists, defended this action. The Stalinists for their part played the game of kissing the foot that kicked them, barely mentioned the red-baiting attacks in the Worker, while trying desperately to restore harmony.

Meanwhile the summit fiasco left the whole SANE organization, and particularly its growing and more restive student section, in utter confusion. What now were the main demands of SANE in the absence of a summit agreement? And what attitude should be taken towards the witch hunt against reds opened by the leadership? The more militant rank-and-file youth showed a considerable rebelliousness towards the adult organization. They became open to discussions with us. They are seeking a course of action and a program.

The mood of these youth awakening to political and radical consciousness has been shaped by another recent development. Many of the same youth who participated in the picket-Woolworth movement and the civil-defense protests were swept into the "Stevenson for President" campaign prior to the Democratic party convention. Naturally, the Stalinists, Social Democrats and pacifists worked hand and glove with ADA and labor officials to promote this. The many youth who engaged in the Stevenson movement again suffered a cruel disillusionment. Instead of a turn in foreign policy away from the war drive, they saw the Democratic party convention steamrolled by the Kennedy machine and nominate outstanding symbols of the war drive, the anti-labor drive and Jim Crow racism.

All these factors offer opportunities for us to carry on successful propaganda for the SWP ticket and for a program of genuine struggle against the capitalist war drive. As the election campaign develops, the whole radical movement will be subjected to the pressure of the contradiction between the glittering illusions held out by the Stalinist and Social-Democratic policies and the harsh realities. We can and must do everything in our power to carry our campaign message to these circles and above all to the campuses where the new radical youth will return in the fall and urge them to work for and vote for the SWP ticket.

The correctness of the decision of the YSA founding convention to make the SWP election campaign its main activity for the period of 1960 has been fully confirmed and if vigorously carried out can bring substantial returns.

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In carrying our election campaign to the radical and militant pacifist workers and youth we should carefully work out the methods of reinforcing our direct propaganda for our platform and candidates with the tactic of united-front and building revolutionary socialist and left-wing groups within the Stalinist, reformist and pacifist formations. There is no ground whatever for considering the entry of either the SWP or the YSA as organizations into any existing peace organizations or party.

In formulating our attitude towards special antiwar organizations we must be mindful of the rich historical experience the movement has had on this question. In the first and second world war and the interim between them and throughout the cold war the Marxists have

had to combat the pernicious theory that the war question can and even must be considered apart from capitalism and consequently that the struggle against capitalist war requires "special" forms outside the class struggle to wage it. One of the greatest betrayals of Stalinism consists in its reinforcement of the pacifists and Social Democrats in this betrayal. Mass struggles against imperialist war have been dissipated into fake pacifist congresses, petition campaigns and committees of prominent do-gooders, as a result.

The leadership in the struggle for peace belongs to the revolutionary socialist party and not to pacifists. Victory in the struggle can be achieved only through the unfoldment of the class struggle in all its forms to the point of total defeat of the capitalist war-making class.

Mass struggles against specific manifestations of capitalist war preparations and against the war program of the imperialists are some of the most advanced expressions of the class-struggle road to peace provided these movements do not fall prey to the pacifist formulas. Revolutionists promote such struggles, participate in them fully and fight for their development to a stage of revolutionary consciousness through the Leninist tactic of the united front. There are times when the united-front actions in this struggle assume organizational forms or when organizations of an ad hoc character are set up to promote the united front. The united front of action can also lead to higher forms of organization and consciousness up to the formation of organs of workers' power. But all these forms and transitions must be clearly demarcated from the pacifist nostrum of a special struggle against war through special means.

Through the united front of mass struggle against specific moves of the imperialists in the war drive or against their hated institutions, the revolutionists seek to mobilize the widest popular movement of indignation and protest. They seek to link their program with the genuine peace sentiments of the masses and to help the masses make the transition from limited and partial opposition to war, often encrusted in pacifist ideology, to a revolutionary struggle for socialism.

For this reason it is of extreme importance that we keep up to date and make more precise our transitional slogans and demands so that we may accomplish this purpose and not simply become an indistinguishable part of the general "peace movement." From our point of view, the general "peace movement" is composed of contradictory parts. It includes the masses of workers and youth who genuinely strive for peace and the pacifist, Stalinist and Social-Democratic misleaders who trade on these peace sentiments to direct the movement into futile channels and tie it to capitalist politics. Our slogans have validity and purpose only in this context.

For example, during the period of the outbreak of the second world war we formulated our proletarian military policy as our revolutionary transitional program for the entire epoch of permanent capitalist militarism and war. Directing our attention at the masses who were resisting the imperialist war drive of that time and were falling prey to pacifist illusions and slogans, we sought to link our program with their consciousness and at the same time help them break with the pacifist misleaders. We introduced class criteria into the movement against capitalist conscription: We are opposed to



capitalist conscription, we said, but we are in favor of military training under the control of the workers' organizations.

The reasons we advanced for this program were fundamental. We recognized the reality of the epoch in which society, divided into classes engaged in struggle, tends to settle all the great questions before humanity by military means. The working class must under no circumstance be allowed to fall into the illusion that it will be able to carry out its mission of reorganizing society along socialist lines without encountering the fierce armed resistance of the capitalist minority. The working class must therefore be adequately trained and prepared to defend its revolutionary right to change from capitalism to socialism by majority decision. We said that we proposed to campaign for a law providing for schools and camps where workers would be trained in the military arts under trade-union control.

To the masses deluded by the lie that the war was for the purpose of fighting fascism, we pointed out that the capitalist class in the U.S., Britain, France, etc., had encouraged the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy. The capitalist-controlled officer corps was antiunion, antiworking class, racist and fascist-minded and could not be entrusted with the lives of the masses of soldiers. We showed how the real struggle against fascism would have to be waged against these very officers and their like at home and the working class must be prepared to do so.

This program was not peculiar to the situation of World War II; it was and remains a program for the epoch. In 1948, when we were engaged in a struggle against the Stalinist-pacifist Wallace movement we wrote in our resolution, "Militarization of the USA and the Tasks of the Socialist Workers Party" (Internal Bulletin, June 1948):

"The struggle against war is inseparable from a political struggle against all these parties and the war-breeding capitalist class system they support. The antiwar struggle is inseparable from the struggle to replace capitalism by the planned economy of socialism.

"With the drive toward war and military dictatorship, our program and slogans against capitalist militarism acquire exceptional timeliness. Events themselves will help teach the workers that they must set as their goal the acquisition of independent skill and power in the military as well as the political field.

"American capitalism calls for a conscript army. The workers should oppose this. To Wall Street's proposals for military conscription of the youth, labor should reply with the demand for control over military training by the trade unions. This will prevent fascist-minded officers from indoctrinating the minds of the youth with hatred for organized labor.

"Within the armed forces themselves they must insist upon the right of the rank and file to participate in politics and public life, to elect their own officers, to organize along union lines and engage in collective bargaining. They must demand an end to segregation in the armed forces and oppose the imposition of a Prussian military system upon the United States."

This resolution was written not in the context of an alleged war against fascism but after the opening of the cold war against the Soviet Union. To imply that the military policy had bearing only in the second world war because of the issue of fascism, is to attribute a social-patriotic motive to it. This was Shachtman's charge at the time. Meanwhile, he was capitulating to petty-bourgeois pacifism as one of the successive capitulations that led him to outright support of the State Department socialists. The proponents of the proletarian military policy, on the other hand, never granted an ounce of support to the "antifascist" facade of the imperialists or to the pacifists who lined up to a man in support of the war they promised to oppose.

Our task in relation to the anticonscription movements among the student youth and the working class today remains as it was formulated in the proletarian military policy. We cannot simply say: End Conscription! and leave it at that. The pacifists call for an end to conscription and seek to imbue the anticonscription movement with its own ideology and its perspective. We can hardly do less as revolutionary-socialist opponents of pacifism.

Of course, if we do not understand the profound character of the proletarian military policy as formulated in the transitional demand of military training under trade-union control, if we regard it as an immediate agitational slogan dependent on a popular movement being present for its enactment, then it is easy to get into false arguments about its applicability today. But that could be done also with many other points in the transitional program including the labor-party slogan. Our task is to carry on propaganda for our military policy and understand that we will be able to pass over to agitation and action only with the rise of the mass movement, including a mass movement against capitalist conscription. Today such a movement is only in its incipient stage.

The art of carrying on a struggle against the imperialist drive towards World War III is not simply to repeat without regard to the concrete situation any and every slogan in our arsenal, with the same emphasis and volume and at all times. We must carefully gauge each situation and through immediate slogans find the proper link between the given level of consciousness of the masses and our basic program. In addition we have propagandistic slogans of broader character. And generally we are in the stage where our tasks are primarily propagandistic.

There is today abundant material for conducting education and propaganda for the proletarian military policy. It happens to be one of the most urgent questions in the world. In Cuba we have one manifestation, where the revolutionary developments have actually led to a realization of our slogan and we see the beginning of military training of the working and student masses under the control of the unions. On the other hand the capitalist-controlled military establishment has been shattered and suppressed.

Throughout Africa a great debate is raging in the political movements of the African working class and youth over the question of "passive resistance" versus the training of the revolutionary forces for armed struggle against the violence used by the imperialist oppressors to keep them in bondage.

In the United States, as a result of the sharpening struggle for Negro rights in the South, a great debate opened in the Negro movement over the question of armed self-defense touched off by the famous courthouse-steps statement of Robert Williams in North Carolina. This debate was the main issue in the Negro press for many weeks and was the center of interest at the 1959 NAACP convention where it took the form of a struggle for Williams' democratic right to present his views on armed self-defense of the Negro people. In that debate the NAACP, though taking punitive action against Williams, declared for the Negroes' right to armed self-defense.

To argue that the military policy has bearing in the antifascist struggle, in the civil-rights struggle, and even in the revolution itself -- but not in the struggle against war, is to miss the main point. First of all, these struggles are integrally and sometimes centrally a part of the antiwar struggle and secondly it is precisely the aim of the military policy to introduce the consciousness of proletarian revolutionary tasks into the pacifist-ridden arena of the "peace" movements.

Finally, the idea that the slogan of military training under trade-union control is wrong at this time because the trade unions are dominated by Meany and Hoffa who favor the cold war, indicates a misunderstanding of the whole concept of the revolutionary transitional program. To present the objective tasks confronting the working class and to call for the working class to fulfill these tasks through their class organizations, is to presuppose that such a struggle will meet with the opposition of the capitalist-minded labor bureaucracy. If the unions adopted our proletarian military policy or our labor-party policy or our policy for a workers and farmers government, this would signify that the bureaucracy has been defeated or is in the process of being defeated. Therefore we must see the process in its motion and not statically.

I have concentrated my attention on the question of the struggle against capitalist conscription. But we must examine all our antiwar slogans in the same light. We must carefully distinguish between our revolutionary approach to the struggle against the capitalist-arms program and the pacifist panaceas of disarmament; we must distinguish between our demand for the recognition of China and a demand for China's entry into the UN that sows illusions in that body; we must distinguish between denouncing Washington for its refusal to negotiate with workers' states and demands that sow illusions in summit meetings and peaceful coexistence. In other words, the danger exists that our slogans become a part of the general pacifist clamor and fail to serve a revolutionary purpose. There is no simple blueprint for avoiding such confusion. What is required is to sift out in each case the class line hidden beneath generalizations that often cover irreconcilable class differences.

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The discussion that has begun in the leading bodies of the party and the youth should, in my opinion, lay the groundwork of a general campaign of education and clarification of our whole view on the question of war and peace. I have tried to set down only a few of

the thoughts that I believe are necessary as a starting point for success in such a discussion.

At the forthcoming plenums of the party and YSA we can perhaps carry this discussion to a new level by preparing theses and resolutions which will bring up to date our program on these fundamental questions.

July 24, 1960.

STATEMENT

By Tim Wohlforth

The Murry Weiss Memorandum aims to be a statement of the "principled groundwork" of our work in the antiwar field. If it really was only this then of course there would be no difference of opinion on the document for we all agree on the question of principles.

What it really is is an attempt to treat the relationship between our principled views and our tactical work. However, there is little in the document on the antiwar groupings and actions that are in existence at the present time -- primarily in the youth field. Therefore it tends to be an abstract discussion of the relationship between principles and tactics.

There is nothing more useless than a discussion in the abstract of the relation of principles to tactics. Such a question can only be dealt with in the concrete. It is precisely for this reason that some of the formulas, prescriptions, and proscriptions in this Memorandum seem so inapplicable to our present work -- some of them actually could disorient our work.

Rather than engage in an abstract discussion of abstract relations, we in the youth are heading towards a concrete formulation of our tactics in the form of a general Tasks and Perspectives resolution. This, in my opinion, is the correct way to deal with this question. If there are any real differences on tactics, and I think there very well may be, let these differences come out with the youth in the form of an attempt to work out such a resolution.

In the meantime I feel I cannot vote for this Memorandum as it contains some material which properly should be discussed in the youth organization (e.g., tactical questions related to the student antiwar work); some material which is fallacious precisely because it is unrelated to the present reality (e.g., a rather loose use of the label "pacifist" for all and sundry groups); and some material which is just plain irrelevant (e.g., the perfectly correct discussion on the Wallaceite movement).

My vote should not be interpreted as one of opposition to those sections of the Memorandum which correctly reaffirm our basic views on the question of the fight against war.

October 4, 1960.