



discussion bulletin

Published by the
SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE
NEW YORK 3, NEW YORK

Vol. 24 No. 21

June 1963

Contents

Page

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, by George Carlton | 1 |
| 2. The Sino-Soviet Dispute: New Stage in the Mortal Crisis of Stalinism, submitted for the Minority Tendency by Shane Mage, James Robertson, and Geoffrey White | 17 |
| 3. Correction to Vol. 24, No. 13 | 28 |

35¢

THE STUDENT NONVIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

by George Carlton

Introduction

Originally this document was given as a report during 1962. I have put it through several revisions since then in order to integrate the material in a more comprehensible manner. I'm sure we all realize the importance of the civil rights struggle, and our unfortunate lack of deep participation in it, and therefore the necessity of gaining the most from the limited experiences we have with this movement.

In this document I attempt, from my experiences, however limited, to give a balanced picture of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. I realize that this document is limited. There is much to be added and much must be more thoroughly discussed, such as how whites approach the movement, how white revolutionary socialists approach the movement, how black revolutionary socialists approach the movement, our day to day tactics, etc. Only through a continuing discussion on a nationwide level can we pool our experiences so that we may intervene effectively.

It is important that we know SNCC's weaknesses as well as its strengths if we are to be able to place it in perspective with the whole developing civil rights struggle and if we are to be able to judge our role effectively. In my participation with SNCC I developed the deepest respect for that organization and what it is doing. I know that it is playing an increasingly important role, and I know that it has great potential. I also know that a SNCC person would be the last one to tell you that SNCC is perfect. Of course this same person who will criticize SNCC for its weaknesses, is probably fiercely proud of it as well. He has every right to be. However, it would be suicide for SNCC not to look at its weaknesses in perspective. If we view ourselves as a segment of this struggle and aim to do as effective work as possible in helping the civil rights struggle we can do no less.

Again I would like to say that, though this document is several months old, the points raised in it have not been changed decidedly; the problems that I discuss are, on the whole, long term problems and will be worked out only in the course of a longer period of struggle. There are many questions and points that have been modified by events, such

as the SNCC Nashville conference, but I have seen no need to revise this general informational report.

G.C.
Feb. 16, 1963

Today we are faced with the opening up of a vast arena of political activity. An area of this country, the South, is opening up with an oppressed people finding new strength in their unity. Several comrades, including myself, have gone into the South and explored this territory which is so new to us. We ~~were to~~ attempt to gain an understanding of the movement that is centered around the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. I would like to divide my report into four major parts: 1) SNCC, Its Ideology and Its Operation; 2) Its Relation to Other Organizations; 3) Summation; 4) Our Perspective and Role in the Civil Rights Movement.

I) SNCC, Its Ideology and Its Operation

The one thing that sets SNCC apart from any of the other organizations in the civil rights movement is its orientation to the Negro community. SNCC goes into an area, develops contacts, lives with the people, and has its people face danger, builds a leadership out of the local people, attempts to gain mass support and action, orients towards the poorer, the working class elements. There is no other organization that is so close to the aspirations of the Negro people. This is the real strength of the SNCC leadership. However, SNCC, while being the militant, vital organization that is demanded by the nature of the struggle, is at the same time tied to some of the illusions of the student, middle-class milieu from which it originally arose. These are illusions which of course exist, to one degree or another among the black masses as well. Such illusions are disorienting and in the long run, if not corrected, dangerous. I will give specifics in the course of this document. SNCC is learning and developing in a leftward direction. However, it must be understood that it is not homogeneous and that it has many internal contradictions, problems and struggles.

One of the first ideological questions that comes to mind is the question of nonviolence. SNCC essentially is an organization committed to nonviolence. A good portion of the leadership, if not a majority, believe in it as a philosophy. SNCC teaches nonviolence as a way of approaching the civil rights movement wherever it contacts people, whether in the

movement or outside of it. However SNCC contains those who consider nonviolence primarily a tactic. This organization does not exclude serious people of any ideology as long as they show their willingness to adhere to discipline and show dedication. It must be indicated, however, that although SNCC adheres to nonviolence, on the battle lines it tacitly supports self defense. Armed self defense is a traditional right in the rural South. Correspondingly, it exists concretely in every Negro community in the Southern civil rights movement, most commonly in the rural areas. This seemingly contradictory attitude of SNCC is recognized as a problem by all SNCC people and has yet to be fully resolved.

In discussing the important question of non-exclusion I would like to quote a letter that I wrote to a comrade while in the South. "They (SNCC) reflect very closely the attitudes of the most militant elements of the Negro people. Forman, (national secretary of SNCC) wanted a policy of non-exclusion (he felt that it was necessary) yet he didn't want to get involved in what he referred to as New York politics, i.e., the political squabbles of the various radical groups. Also he indicated that SNCC was not really in a position to put up a fight against a red-baiting campaign, or as it was phrased, SNCC was not in a position to fight the battle of the first amendment. At the same time, he recognized the growing necessity for a Northern base. He generally felt that such organizations would have to be on a non-exclusive policy. He feels that he is in a fix, a dilemma. It will take a lot of thought and discussion with the other SNCC people." Through all of this it must be kept in mind that many and even most of the SNCC people have expressed an attitude that the movement goes beyond the civil rights struggle. They will often express that this movement is part of a struggle to change evils in society that go far beyond the racial question alone.

None-the-less, there seems to be a general lack of clarity on the role of radicals in the movement. The student movement has developed in an atmosphere which generally looks down on red-baiting and other forms of capitulations to the powers-that-be. At the same time SNCC does not want to be identified with the radical elements. It has a close relationship to the government in many ways. Also, there is the problem of SNCC's relation to the "respectable" civil rights organizations. SNCC obtains legal aid from other organizations and works together with them.

The most important point is the question of the attitude of the Negro community in the South. The Southern Negro is

generally extremely conservative in his attitude towards radicals and towards the federal government. Even with the objectively revolutionary nature of the civil rights struggle, the Southern Negro has a long road to travel as far as class consciousness goes.

(The Negro people of course have a certain class consciousness. They recognize their different position in society, but don't yet have a clear idea of its economic and political ramifications, and of what they must do to gain freedom from exploitation. They have yet to realize that their battle is, in the long run, also the battle of the white working class. They will not see this unity of interests until the white working class begins to move again.)

Summed up, the problems of effective functioning in SNCC is tied up with the degree of consciousness the movement has developed, which itself is dependent upon the stage of the class struggle. There still exist many illusions about the federal government and a certain dependency upon it. This stems, at least partially, from a lack of from the labor movement. Obviously, SNCC is not prepared to depend solely upon its own heavily taxed resources. SNCC has not worked out a program on the participation of radicals. This dilemma has never really presented itself, before. At the coming meeting of the general open conference this Thanksgiving this question will undoubtedly be discussed. This is going to be a difficult problem for SNCC; how to keep its necessary policy of non-exclusion and still be able to maintain its position of placing, in the eyes of the Negro people, the Negro struggle first. It must be recognized that SNCC will not and cannot come closer to the revolutionary socialist movement while that movement is isolated from the struggle, and offers nothing but an abstract program, and not the vital day-to-day involvement, direction and just plain hard work which make up a struggle. It is in these struggles that the correctness of our program is proven.

As a final note on non-exclusion, I would like to relate an incident which occurred in Detroit. In July, 1962, one of the leaders of the Nashville Freedom Riders came to Detroit to speak before a rally to raise money for SNCC. A comrade asked her for an interview for the paper. She was happy to give it. However, prior to when the interview was to take place she backed down. She was not at all hostile. It was simply that she had talked with SNCC Field Secretary in Detroit, (also a Nashville Freedom Rider) and was told the nature of the paper. She indicated that when she is not representing SNCC officially she would be more than happy to give an interview. However, she stated that the question of radicals had arisen before in SNCC

but had never really been resolved.

Within the context of the grass roots base of SNCC, there has been a debate going on within the organization. The question revolves around the issue of the importance of the office, or the central organization, as opposed to the importance of the field, that is, the actual organizing and working in the communities. Those who support the field feel that too much money is being used for the office, that the money coming in should be used primarily for the field. Concretely, they feel that less time should be spent by field secretaries in fund raising. Also, those who oppose the office feel that less time and money should be put into such things as propagandizing, office equipment and other things done and needed by the central organization. There exists a strong feeling against a powerful centralized authority. There is a great deal of fear that SNCC will be cut off from the people. For instance, with money, the field representatives would no longer have to depend on the people of the community for support and could act above as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) does. This is what SNCC knows it must fight. Also, with money, it is felt that individuals might be attracted more for the money than for the movement. The great fear of SNCC is that it might become like the opportunistic SCLC.

Some undoubtedly realize the importance of organization, of communication and of propagandization, in short centralization. It seems to me that although the attitude towards the central organization is incorrect, it is an extremely healthy and important reaction against opportunism, and leads the way towards democratic-centralism of a sort.

Another attitude which seems prevalent in SNCC is the attitude that SNCC must remain a student-based organization, that if it changes its base it will become ossified like SCLC or any of the other adult organizations. Despite this approach, SNCC is, in practice, developing a class approach to the movement. Its member organizations in the local communities are oriented more and more not just towards students, but towards the working class also. Because of SNCC's militancy, it is finding it necessary to approach the working class and poor farmer elements. As time goes on I believe that it will find the necessity of expanding beyond the "student only" stage consciously, something it has already begun to do in practice.

An important orientation of SNCC is that of consciously keeping the organization and movement under the control of Negroes. This approach is good and necessary; for the movement which struggles for the emancipation of an exploited people must be under the control of the oppressed themselves. Still, whites have

somewhat of a role to play in the South. One of the big problems of the movement is the scarcity of dedicated people to help organize. Sometimes whites have to be used. Also, whites give the movement an integrated character. Another important function fulfilled by whites is agitation and propagandization in the white community. For example, a white field secretary has been going around to various white campuses getting support for the movement.

At the same time, the intervention of whites has caused important problems for the Southern movement. They make it more difficult to work in the Negro communities of South because of the great mistrust of whites. The situation in the rural communities is made no easier by the increased wrath of the white power structure upon a section of the movement where whites are working.

Besides this, there is a great degree of tension, even within the movement. Liberal whites, with little knowledge or contact with the Negro community, constantly go through the SNCC office. Over a period of time many had gone to Albany, Georgia, during the mass demonstrations and arrests to "see what's happening" and some expected the Negro community to feed and house them for their great liberalism. This annoyed many people in the movement, and in the Albany Negro community. Moreover, SNCC has come into contact with this attitude from its inception. This same type of person often tries to become involved in the activities of SNCC. SNCC, of course, cannot allow these untried whites to jump into the struggle. Even those who have been involved and are considered fairly reliable have demonstrated the reality that whites are too often insufficiently sensitive to the needs of the movement and of the southern Negro. An example of this comes from the involvement of a number of whites in the voter registration drive in southwest Georgia:

The use of whites in the rural South in relatively high numbers (half a dozen or so) was new, an experiment. The whites involved in the project when it began were pushing for action, involvement. Negro leaders from the South who are veterans in the movement, had to keep the whites from tromping out into the Negro community and digging in. The great fear of whites in the community had to be overcome gradually. The whites kept pushing hard, causing high tension. -- In spite of this, the Negro leaders first laid the groundwork -- by getting the people of the community aware of the movement, by letting them know about the whites, by organizing mass meetings, etc. The whites were slowly introduced at the mass meetings and became more or less accepted. The attitude of the white, by their impatience,

displayed the adventuristic, half serious spirit which tends to typify the Northern, white, liberal type that goes South. This is not to say that these people are not courageous and sincere, for some have shown their dedication on the front lines of the battlefield. Rather it shows a lack of political maturity and understanding of what the movement needs.

The extremely suspicious attitude that the SNCC leadership takes towards whites comes out of these experiences and out of the general experiences which a black person has with whites in this country. Any white, even if he has gone to hell and back for the movement, must continue to prove himself time and again. He must continually prove that he is an ally. He must always watch that he doesn't step too far, so that he doesn't seem to be imposing his own ideas and person, which are both white to many in the SNCC leadership, upon that organization.

All of this suspicion is natural and to an unfortunate extent justified by reality, as I've attempted to point out above. The only time that this animosity will break down is - when the white working class joins that battle against the oppressor. Until that time this problem cannot be resolved, but the conflict can and must be softened.

A white revolutionary socialist has a hundred times the pressures upon him that another white might have. He must leave no doubt of his willingness to do whatever is necessary, to show his dedication and sincerity. He must be ready to go out on the battle line, to be completely disciplined in his attitude and his actions to the civil rights movement. He should attempt to establish personal relations which will tend to break down animosity and tension. An important part of this is being careful not to arouse ire by poorly chosen emotional and physical entanglements across the color line. Above all of this, he must always remember that he is white. Never can he forget himself and cross the line of demarcation. This line is not something that I can clearly explain. It is a line that is determined by the relationships built in the process of working together. The line is most restricting in the beginning, but begins to loosen slowly; it may take a few weeks or a few months. Sometimes in the course of involvement in a struggle, it may only take a few days. But it is never gone. This must be understood. It may seem to disappear, but it does not, for it cannot.

Negro revolutionary socialists, because of the limitations on whites, have an extremely important role to play in our becoming a part of the civil rights struggle in the South. This is difficult, of course, because of the relatively small percentage of Negroes in our ranks. However, I must repeat, to the

degree that we become involved it is necessary that they play a prominent, if possible, predominate role.

Just as SNCC doesn't want the civil rights movement to come under the domination of whites, it also demands that SNCC be southern based. In the constitution of SNCC there is a provision for northern associates. However, the northern associates have only voice in the coordinating committee. They have no vote. This approach is necessary if the struggle is to be directed by those who are struggling.

One point of contention within SNCC which should be noted is the conflict of work in voter registration versus direct action. (Direct action refers to picketing, boycotting, sitting-in, and other activities which are specifically aimed at involving people physically in the struggle.) For a period this question was debated back and forth. The final decision was to work something along this line: a combination of voter registration and direct action. Funds allotted for voter registration by other organizations would be used to register Negroes in sections of the deep South. Of necessity community organization of a civil rights character had to be developed in the process. SNCC then would be involved in organizing the Negro community which from there could and would involve itself in direct action. There has been no strict division between these two areas of work up to date, although those registering voters cannot involve themselves in direct action where voter registration funds are helping to support them.

Finally, in order to get a full picture of SNCC and its operation, one must know its projected financial arrangement. The following budget is from a mimeographed sheet used in fund-raising: for the fiscal year from Sept. 1, 1962 to Sept. 1, 1963 a total budget of \$120,000 is projected. This includes subsistence for some 30 persons on the staff which together with a few miscellaneous items, runs \$76,620. Office Maintenance, which includes \$7,500 for telephone bills and \$3,600 for four field offices, runs about \$15,800. Publicity and promotion runs to \$11,300. Summer projects for next summer, which are subheaded "4 intensive community-based local programs," runs to \$13,000. Emergency expenses runs to \$3,280.

II) SNCC: Its Relation to Other Organizations

The first "organization" I would like to deal with is

the government.

One person that I talked with stated that SNCC must maintain good relations with the Justice Department because the Negroes of the rural South have "almost a religious awe" of it. I have gained no further information on this point, and I tend to be rather skeptical of the formulation.

There is a degree of illusion among the various SNCC leaders about the government. For instance, in Cairo, Illinois during the demonstrations there last summer, a leading officer came into conflict with the local leadership and the SNCC field secretaries over this question. He suggested that the Cairo Movement turn the rest of the desegregation struggle over to the State Civil Rights Commission. (Illinois has a public accommodations act.) The Movement would not hear of such a thing for they didn't trust the state government. The demonstrations were continued.

I would like to take up briefly the NAACP and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. These are separate organizations which jostle for power between each other. However, SNCC has used them both extensively for legal aid. Various groups that the NAACP has throughout the South have found new militant youth sections arising, often affiliating with SNCC. Also regular branches have affiliated with SNCC.

CORE does not seem to have close relations with SNCC, probably because it tends to view SNCC as a threatening rival. They did request and received SNCC's aid in getting people for their Freedom Highways campaign that CORE carried on last summer. There is a section of CORE in the South, in Kentucky or Tennessee, which was affiliated with SNCC. I don't know if it still is. Several SNCC people expressed doubts as to whether national CORE would allow them to remain in CORE as a SNCC affiliate.

In Detroit, in the past, CORE has expressed great hostility to attempts to raise funds for SNCC and to any attempt to acquaint people with SNCC. They have, at times, been very crude in their snubbing techniques.

The Southern Regional Council, an organization which is a moderate integrationist body financially supported by foundations such as the Ford Foundation, is in charge of distributing the funds for the voter registration projects. Its normal function is to collect information and to write bulletins on the question of civil rights in the South.

SNCC generally is on good terms with this group, as the SRC works closely with SNCC on voter registration, and as the people there have great sympathy with the work of SNCC. Since the SRC is on a different level than any of the other civil rights organizations, i.e., it is purely an information gathering agency, it is not involved in the struggle between the different groups, but has at times arranged bail for SNCC people.

An important organization in the movement in the South and an organization that has close fraternal ties to SNCC is the Southern Conference Educational Fund (SCEF). This organization has been branded "red" by the respectable movement and is avoided. It has contact, though, with a good number of local civil rights organizations throughout the South. SCEF has maintained an attitude of non-exclusion from the civil rights movement. It has often supplied SNCC with bail money and is depended upon by SNCC in an emergency.

The National Student Association has given support to SNCC in a number of ways. On its summer projects, it works closely with SNCC. It had a voter registration project going in Raleigh, North Carolina during this summer. Every year NSA holds a civil rights seminar where it takes Southerners (mostly white) and introduces them into the civil rights movement. SNCC works very closely with this project and gains supporters and workers from it. NSA has at times been involved in fund raising projects for the civil rights movement, SNCC in particular, on its member campuses.

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) has had close connections with SNCC for a good period of time. It is a conglomeration of politically right-wing social-democratic, Gatesite, ADA types and gets its real strength from its rather contradictory involvement in the militant southern civil rights struggle. (The Gatesites are a tendency which left the CP a number of years ago, flirted with the YS Supporters groups for a short time and then progressively moved further right. SDS is tied to the League for Industrial Democracy - LID - which is an SP-SDF front. LID has been kicking about the Gatesites being in SDS. SDS is quite involved in Democratic party politics, especially in the Reform Democrats around New York.)

A number of SNCC people are members of SDS. SDS has put out a number of pieces of propoganda for SNCC including a jointly sponsored issue of the Student Voice, the official

publication of SNCC. An SDS leader was involved to some extent in the events around McComb, Mississippi last year, where SNCC began its first community based project. He wrote a very worthwhile pamphlet on the events that occurred there called Revolution in Mississippi. It was printed by SDS.

It should be noted that SDS people are active in NSA. Liberal Study papers, put out by SDS officially, are distributed by NSA. Also, a past vice-president of NSA is a leading member of SDS and has been involved this past summer in a SNCC voter registration project in Mississippi.

Another group which should be indicated is the Northern Student Movement (NSM). The Northern Student Movement arose out of the sympathy of some students in New England towards SNCC. It originated at a conference of the New England Student Christian Movement in June of 1961, a conference which a number of SNCC people attended. According to an information brochure, NSM is in contact with groups at the University of Rhode Island, Amherst, Wesleyan, University of Massachusetts, Mt. Holyoke and Cornell, and has helped to create groups at Trinity, Connecticut College, Brown-Pembroke, Tufts, Harvard, the University of Connecticut, Yale, and Manhattanville. All together NSM has (according to the brochure) six coordinating committees encompassing close to 30 campus groups.

This group really started organizing in the fall of 1961. During the spring of 1962, NSM went on a fund raising campaign for SNCC and raised possibly as much as \$10,000-\$12,000, \$4,000 of which was raised in the Boston area.

However, NSM began shifting its orientation from fund-raising for SNCC to involvement in its own actions, still keeping close ties with SNCC. As of May, NSM was planning tutoring and social work projects in Harlem; Baltimore (possibly voter registration here); Philadelphia, Prince Edward, Virginia; Eastern Shore, Maryland (Cambridge). As far as I know they did have projects going in Philadelphia, in Prince Edward, and in Eastern Shore (where I believe they participated in demonstrations and voter registration). In Cambridge SNCC has a very strong group and of course it was working extremely closely with NSM. It seems that NSM is now primarily raising funds for its own projects more than for SNCC.

SNCC's relation to the union movement is important. In the South the character of many of the unions is racist and the Negro community has developed a general mistrust of trade

unions. However, SNCC does have some ties with the trade union movement. It has, for example, gotten some \$3,000 from the Packinghouse Workers in Chicago and has received smaller contributions from other unions. Harry Bridges proposed that SNCC send a person down to Portland to help organize Negroes into an all-white union. In Washington, D.C., the Nonviolent Action Group, an affiliate of SNCC, helped organize the garbage collectors.

A report on SCLC will be forthcoming in the form of either an addenda or a separate report by another comrade.

III) SNCC and The Building of a Leadership: A Summation

To understand SNCC, one must understand its development up to the present and how it must develop if it is to become the leadership, or part of the leadership, of the rising black masses.

It must be understood that many, no, most of those involved in the movement do not look upon it as more than a temporary period in their lives. This is not to say that these students, who put their lives on the firing line, are not serious about what they are doing. Yet it must be recognized that a great number of them are transitory in the movement, that this is how they view it, and that their actions are tempered by this view.

SNCC is not held together by a solid ideological base. Its basic attitudes and approaches are still of a nebulous character; they have not been worked out. The students in it know that Freedom is what they want and that the Negro people can wait no longer for it to be given to them; organization and militant action are what they strive for. But what more is there that holds together this movement? Certainly it is finding it necessary to shift leftward in order to continue the fight on a militant level, in order to prevent any rise of opportunism in its ranks. But it must be understood that this is a movement that is just beginning to clarify its ideology; it must be remembered that it has tendencies all the way from the Students for a Democratic Society, to ardent pacifists, to militant nationalists, to students who have a future among the black bourgeoisie, to any mixture of the previous. Therefore, to a great extent one finds that the discipline of an individual to the organization is very much dependent on the individual's

perspective for himself in the movement, which is itself dependent upon his general orientation in life.

SNCC has a deep-going, anti-bureaucratic, anti-opportunist, tradition. However, it is still a coordinating committee of the southern student movement and other militant civil rights organizations, and, correspondingly, it has the unclear ideology of a newly developing movement.

From time to time, one finds SNCC leaders leaving SNCC and joining other civil rights organizations, usually for power, prestige or simply for financial reasons.

The lack of discipline found among whites functioning in the field has already been discussed.

Altogether, one must realize that SNCC has not a clearly defined ideology, and those connected with it are not bound by a dedication to the hard, clear revolutionary theory and practice. Far from it. As I've indicated before, even some of the best leaders have a confused approach to the relation of the fight for freedom to the state.

While there is a lack of theoretical solidity in the organization, there is a good degree of discipline stemming from the struggles the movement has gone through. This shows itself in the increased power of the central office. The field depends upon the office to get out national publicity, to obtain bail and lawyers. Also, there is constant contact between the field and the office by way of regular reports, and in a tight situation by way of phone calls. Finally the central office supplies a subsistence of sorts for some full time people.

I've indicated that some of the anti-centralist tendencies are healthy essentially, yet, still, strong among many of the students is a reaction based upon "individualism" of the petty bourgeois, anti-discipline variety.

The essence of the ability of SNCC to maintain itself lies primarily, not in the organizational and legal measures that the central organization takes (often, through other civil rights groups, anyway), but in its increasing student and community base among the anti-opportunist militants of the movement. The structure of SNCC is more or less dependent on the adherence of the militants to SNCC as opposed to the opportunism and conservatism of the major civil rights organizations, SCLC and NAACP. The rising needs of the

movement, however, demand much more than this; they demand the curtailment of the individualism of the petty bourgeois, adventurist kind. SNCC must push for the anti-opportunist consciousness to the point where the militants realize the need of centralism, under the control of the movement, of course, and do not blindly reject it. Eventually, when the movement is strong enough, it will no longer be tolerant of the adventurists, whom it must accept in lieu of a more mature leadership. I would like to stress here that I am not condemning these people, who are extremely courageous. Rather I am simply trying to point out the need for development, and those who don't develop with the movement will be forced out.

In short, SNCC must build a dedicated, conscious, disciplined cadre with a long-term perspective in the movement. The process has begun, but only begun. The success of SNCC in leading the rising black masses depends upon this development.

IV) Our Perspective and Role in the Civil Rights Movement

With a picture, not complete, but a start, of this newly developing left of the civil rights movement, the question then arises: what is our role, our relationship to it? First let's glimpse at the problems which are coming to the forefront in the South and in the North.

In the South today a crisis is arising. The major weapons of the movement until recently have been filling the jails, sitting-in, and most important, boycotting. These weapons are reaching grave limitations. The movement cannot cut away the deep roots of segregation by opening up lunch counters; nor can it win its victory by having thousands of people go to jail, no matter how effective it is in organizing and arousing the public. The economic boycott often has only a limited effect because of the relatively little purchasing power of the Negro community. The answer, then, lies in the realm of economic organization on a different level, unionization and political action. SNCC today is moving in this direction; it is a direction which leads directly into working class consciousness. This is nascent at present in SNCC, but in the background of almost everything it does.

The question of union organization in the South incorporates a problem peculiar to this region. Of course, there

is a growing industrialization in the South, but also there are large numbers of sharecroppers and farmers. I doubt if there are many in our movement who have dealt with this problem, and it is a problem that we assuredly will have to deal with.

SNCC will have to have increasing contact with the trade-union movement. It seems to me that it will be through the trade unions to a large extent that the white workers will be reached. This question will have to be very deeply explored.

As the movement searches for means of fighting oppression it finds itself more and more faced with the need for political action. The first step is gaining the right to vote; and concomitant with this is the welding of the Negro community into an army prepared for battle. The process has begun. But where will it go from there? Will it turn to a major political party, in order to work independently through the established primary structure? This might be necessary for technical reasons (tax and legal restrictions). We ourselves have yet to deal with this important political question.

The next part of the question of the South (which SNCC has not yet really dealt with adequately) is the question of self-defense. As the Negro community becomes more organized it will be faced with an organized reign of terror that has not been seen in this country since the years of darkness after the Reconstruction Period. I have tried to indicate that SNCC shows every sign of healthiness on this question but has not fully faced the problem.

In the North, we are facing somewhat of a different problem in building a movement. Unlike the South, there are usually not the dramatic surface indications of discrimination which can be easily organized around and dealt with. The questions are much more subtle and are very deeply rooted. I feel that it is virtually impossible to maintain a movement in the North on the basis of local actions patterned on the movement in the South. I believe that we must attempt to bring the independent student groups that develop closer to where the problems in the North -- employment, housing, police brutality -- will be dealt with. That is, these groups should seek to work with the trade union movement, the Negro American Labor Council, block clubs and tenants leagues, and also, with the various civil rights and community organizations. These are problems which are generally

impossible for a relatively small student movement to deal with alone.

The Northern organizations would of course hold demonstrations in support of the actions of the Southern movement. Also they should have as an important function fund-raising for the South. But these are not sufficient to hold a movement in the North together.

It should be noted that raising funds for the South while being involved in the fight against employment discrimination (to whatever extent possible) would enable the Northern groups to establish invaluable contacts with the trade unions for the Southern movement.

I have put forth what I consider the areas and questions of prime importance. I have no answers to many of the problems. Nowhere can I give a complete answer. We must learn and educate ourselves. Our tasks are just beginning to unfold. But, this much I do know, we will be defeated before the battle if we, and our ideas, do not become a recognized part of this powerful, rising new movement.

(October, 1962)

THE SINO SOVIET DISPUTE:New Stage in the Mortal Crisis of Stalinism

...submitted for the Minority Tendency by
Shane Mage, James Robertson, and Geoffrey White

(1) The open split between the ruling groups in the Peoples' Republic of China and the Soviet Union is a fact of world-historical significance. On the surface the split appears to be a dispute over ideological questions among self-proclaimed 'Marxist-Leninists'. In its underlying reality, however, the split has a vastly different meaning. It signifies the eruption of irreconcilable material antagonisms between national Stalinist bureaucracies. The context of this struggle is the mortal crisis of the Stalinist system squeezed between the pressures of unyielding world imperialism and of rising working classes internally.

(2) The crisis of Stalinism is caused by the growing power of the new generation of industrial and intellectual workers in every country of the Soviet bloc. This generation, thanks to its own efforts and to its birthright--the structural and ideological heritage of the October revolution--has been able to achieve magnificent economic successes despite obstruction, incompetence, and misleadership of the Stalinist rulers. The new working class of the Soviet bloc has embarked on a struggle to cast off Stalinist repression and obscurantism and to establish proletarian democracy.

(3) The suppressed Hungarian and Polish revolutions showed that proletarian democracy can be won only through the smashing of the Stalinist bureaucratic and police apparatus by revolutionary mass action. These struggles, and their repression by the monolithically united counter-revolution, definitively verified Trotsky's program of political revolution. Political revolution--successful repetition of the Budapest commune in Moscow and Peking--will be the climax of the movement of the Soviet bloc proletariat.

(4) Marxist politics and Marxist theory constitute a unified whole. Both are entirely based on the specific class interests of the proletariat, the only really revolutionary class of modern society. The developing political revolution in the Soviet bloc is comprehensible only in terms of this dialectical inter-relationship of theory and practice: the development of a revolutionary-Marxist vanguard party is indispensable to the victorious struggle of the workers, and no party can understand the political development of the Soviet bloc, manifested currently in the Peking-Moscow split, unless it consciously and directly analyzes from the point of view of the Soviet-bloc proletariat, i.e., on the basis of the political revolution.

(5) Only confused centrists could try to explain the Sino-Soviet dispute in terms of the indigestible 'ideological' apologia issued by the two sides and limit their conclusions to a judgment as to which of these positions is more or less 'correct', is righter or lefter. The Marxist, proletarian, view starts with the recognition that the political groups symbolized by both Khrushchev and Mao Tse-Tung are mortal and irreconcilable enemies of proletarian democracy, of socialism, and of the working class. Only on this basis can the real issues in their conflict be grasped.

(6) The opposition of the Peking and Moscow ruling groups is grounded in their identity. The fundamental fact is that both constitute privileged bureaucracies able to maintain their caste power only through a system of totalitarian repression. Their specific caste interests, as the usurpers of power and privilege within a social structure historically deriving from the proletarian revolution, define them ultimately as anti-proletarian and pro-capitalist despite the fact that they are obliged in extremis to defend the organism upon which they are parasites against imperialist military onslaughts.

(7) As a privileged caste formed and organized on a national basis, the Bonapartist bureaucracy of every deformed workers state always and inevitably seeks to maximize its own economic and political power. This takes place necessarily at the expense of the workers and peasants, and, if possible, at the expense of the imperialist sphere--but at the same time no Stalinist bureaucracy has shown hesitancy to defend or increase its own power at the expense of another deformed workers state and of its ruling caste. The 'ideological' struggle between Peking and Moscow reflects the real incompatibility of the material interests of two counter-revolutionary national bureaucratic castes.

(8) The real issues in the Peking-Moscow clash are posed in terms of conflicting power-political and economic needs. These needs reflect the different origins of the two wings of the bureaucracy, and above all they reflect the different relationship of forces between each, imperialism, and the working class. The differential impact of American imperialism upon the Chinese and Russian states raises their antagonisms to the level of sharp struggles. The Maoist leadership must contend with an American policy quite unreconciled to the Peking regime and actively employing all available means to destroy it. The American imperialists even maintain a competing paper-regime in the form of the old tyrant, Chiang Kai-Shek, on Formosa. The Russians are more free from an immediate restorationist threat from imperialism and are driven by other forces to seek a detente with the American government. But what Khrushchev is prepared to offer in the Kremlin's side of a coexistence deal is to go even further in acting as imperialism's indirect policeman

not only among workers in the advanced countries, but over the colonial revolutions--of which the Chinese is one! Thus the particular coloring to the Sino-Soviet ideological exchanges is arrived at.

(9) Unlike the Soviet bureaucracy, which developed in and through the degeneration of an authentic proletarian revolution, the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has its origins in a struggle whose nature was petty bourgeois and whose direct historical mission was basically bourgeois. Its heroic epoch, the Chinese civil war, was a combination of an elemental peasant struggle for the land and a nationalist struggle against foreign domination and for national unification. The leadership forged in this vast revolutionary upheaval took shape as a military elite, selected on the basis of the qualities of combativity, devotion, and discipline. Basically alien to the urban proletariat, and cut off from its own petty-bourgeois roots by the very fact of its militarization, this bureaucratic caste was welded together through the structure and leadership of the Communist Party and the ideology of Stalinism.

(10) China's change into a deformed workers state was initiated in a mass peasant-based revolutionary civil war which was followed by a military-bureaucratic process of structural transformation into a form of society modeled upon the Stalinized Soviet Union, economically and politically cut off from the capitalist world, and economically and politically integrated into the Soviet bloc. The bureaucratic caste completed this transformation in a forced response to the overwhelming objective requirements of military defense in the Korean War and the need for rapid economic recovery and growth. Though this was done in a pragmatic fashion, it was perfectly consistent with Mao's fundamental conception of the 'Bloc of Four Classes', whose true meaning is the claim of the Communist Party leadership to state power as a supra-class 'Peoples' Democratic Dictatorship'.

(11) The success of Mao Tse-Tung and his followers in channeling and distorting into the form of a national-bureaucratic straight-jacket the socialist drives of the Chinese revolution testifies only to the thoroughly and consistently counter-revolutionary nature of the Maoist bureaucracy. The profoundly nationalist outlook of the Chinese Stalinist leaders is reflected in the nationalism of their foreign policy.

(12) The nationalist nature of Chinese foreign policy is demonstrated most dramatically by the fact that Peking's border claims against New Delhi are supported by the Chiang Kai-Shek regime occupying Formosa. The obligation of Marxists to give unconditional defense to the deformed Chinese workers state in order to prevent its military defeat by a capitalist power cannot be permitted to obscure the fact that the extremely sparse population of these wastelands is neither Chinese nor Indian.

The claims of both China and India rest on alien conquest. Humiliation of Nehru's military pretensions in the border conflict is obviously a triumph for Chinese foreign policy, and has gained Peking much closer friendship with the military dictators of Pakistan and Burma. It is an equally obvious blow to Soviet foreign policy, which had made enormous and partially successful efforts to secure a relationship of special closeness with the Nehru regime. It is irrelevant to the Chinese and Russian Stalinists, but of absolute importance to Marxists, that the Chinese policy of posing the question in national-chauvinist rather than class-revolutionary terms has done serious damage to the chances of the proletarian revolution in India and elsewhere in Asia.

(13) The Chinese Stalinist policy of Chinese hegemony over non-Han nationalities is as much a violation of the right of peoples to self-determination and contradiction of the basic interests of the international proletarian revolution as is the Great-Russian chauvinism of the Kremlin. This is shown most clearly in the cases of Tibet (where Chinese policy resulted in an uprising under reactionary leadership) and of Formosa. Though the Peking bureaucrats use the most violent language to denounce imperialist treaties at the expense of China, they completely endorse the imperialist Cairo agreement (among Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang) which gave Formosa to China. Using this imperialist treaty as a pretext, the Chinese Stalinists refuse to recognize the right of the Formosan workers and peasants to self-determination and reiterate their intention to seize Formosa by force of arms. The practical effects of this policy are to give political aid to Chiang in his oppression of the Formosan people and to help U.S. imperialism in its policy of isolation and containment of the Chinese revolution.

(14) The extreme antagonism between Peking and Washington is rooted in the appetites of U.S. imperialism which still resents its 'loss' of China, seeks by all means to hamper and frustrate Chinese development, and openly professes its desire to see the present Chinese government overthrown by counter-revolutionary forces. This continual pressure has led the Chinese Stalinists to formulate a bitterly anti-U.S. foreign policy, at profound variance to the Kremlin's basic line of a bi-lateral deal between the super-powers. The underlying nationalism of the Peking line, however, continually acts to upset all efforts to break through the cordon sanitaire imposed by Washington.

(15) The economic policy of the Chinese Stalinists has undergone the most staggering shifts. Until 1957 the CCP's general line attempted to balance rapid industrialization with gradual agricultural collectivization and slight improvements in living standards--a policy which permitted impressive, even spectacular, economic progress. This course culminated in the brief 'Hundred Flowers' period when the momentary thaw allowed

the general proletarian and intellectual revulsion against the Maoist-Stalinist bureaucracy to emerge into the open. The working-class opposition was immediately and brutally suppressed in the 'Anti-Rightist' campaign. The warning of inevitable political revolution, however, led the bureaucracy to make a radical new departure in economic policy: the demands for workers' democracy were to be buried through transformation of the entire nation into a tightly disciplined economic unit under the slogan of an immediate transition to full communism through the medium of the 'rural peoples' communes'.

(16) The 'great leap forward', viewed objectively, was an attempt to achieve rapid economic development through methods of total military mobilization. It was an act of criminal bureaucratic adventurism, and failed ignobly. The forced communization of the peasantry, the elimination of all restraints on the duration and intensity of labor, and the uprooting of technical specialists led to an economic collapse unprecedented in the history of the Soviet bloc. The decline in industrial and agricultural production, in industrial employment, and in living standards was too drastic to be concealed, despite the fact that the total breakdown in economic planning involved the non-existence of meaningful statistics (and, after 1959, of any statistics at all).

(17) The Chinese economic collapse increased the tension between Peking and Moscow to the breaking point. China was not only unable to fulfill commitments under its trade treaty with the Soviet Union, but simultaneously demanded that the U.S.S.R. give it increased aid. To top it off, the Chinese Stalinists pressed Khrushchev to increase his military spending and to help them expend Chinese resources in the development of a Chinese atomic bomb. Khrushchev's reaction was the brutal withdrawal of Soviet technicians at the end of 1960, and the rapid reduction of Sino-Soviet trade to a level reflecting China's vastly reduced export capability.

(18) The Chinese Stalinists claim that the abandonment of the 'leap forward' and the return of private agriculture on a significant scale are merely temporary retreats within an unchanging policy. The basic policy of the Chinese Stalinists is the construction of 'communism in a single country' on a pauper technical basis using the unaided labor of hundreds of millions of peasants. The continued rejection of birth control shows how adamantly the Maoists refuse to depart even slightly from this reactionary conception, despite the efforts now being made, for the first time since 1957, to increase trade with the capitalist powers.

(19) The authoritarian attitude of the Chinese Stalinists toward the workers, peasants, and intellectuals has always been coupled with the preoccupation of maintaining close ties

with the masses, and of winning genuine support for government policies, if possible. They have sought to gain mass support through a pretense of 'Leninism' as well as through their familiar 'thought-reform' tactics. Similarly, in the period of the first Soviet Five Year Plan, Stalin sought to appeal to the idealism of the workers and the youth on the basis of a seemingly 'revolutionary' line in foreign as well as domestic policy: forced collectivization and the 'Third Period' were inseparable aspects of a single ultra-leftist line. In China, though real enthusiasm among certain sections of the population at the start of the 'leap forward' is well attested, this had disappeared by 1962. Nevertheless the profession of a 'leftist' foreign policy remains necessary for the Mao regime in order to hold together its cadres, to distract international attention from its catastrophic economic blunders, and, in addition, to face the intransigent hostility of imperialism.

(20) The Chinese Stalinists, in their dogmatic reiteration of the Stalin-Zhdanov line on everything from Art to Yugoslavia, and in their continued practice of the Stalin cult, express clearly their real nature. Only people whose own political line has become hopelessly muddled can discover any inconsistency between the Chinese position on 'destalinization' and their criticisms of Khrushchev's foreign policy. The Chinese Stalinists' ideological line is a consistent reflection of their international isolation, the insuperable economic difficulties confronting them, and their inability to make any real concessions to the demands of the Chinese people for greater freedom except at a deadly risk of political revolution. In contrast, the Soviet bureaucracy is in an almost diametrically opposite situation.

(21) The very growth and successes of the Soviet economy have exploded Stalin's autarchic fantasy of the 'two world markets' (the final formulation of 'Socialism in One Country' until Mao resurrected it with his communes) and have forced the Soviet Union to adopt a policy aiming at integrated economic planning within the Soviet bloc and steadily increasing interdependence with the capitalist states. The growth of the Soviet proletariat in size, skill, and cultural level has confronted the Soviet bureaucracy with a gigantic social force that can be temporarily averted from political revolution only at the price of real concessions, of which the liquidation of the Stalin cult was the most profound. The terrible economic drain involved in preparations for modern war, and the general knowledge outside China of the real nature of nuclear war, give the Soviet bureaucracy powerful incentives to promise the people of the Soviet bloc an effective reduction in international tensions.

(22) The basic line of the Soviet bureaucracy is to preserve its power and privileges through a combination of repression with peripheral political concessions to and steady improvement in the living standards of the Soviet people. It therefore feels a profound need for an overall accord with U.S. imperialism which would permit recovery of economic resources now wasted on military purposes and would allow the Soviet Union much freer access to Western markets. Of course the price for this hoped-for accord between the U.S. and the Russian bureaucracy is to be at the expense of others.

(23) The Soviet Union is becoming a steadily more important factor in the world economy and in international politics, as is shown in varying ways by the increasing Soviet oil exports to the West, the spectacular rapprochement between the Kremlin and Vatican, and the decisive military and economic support provided for the pro-Soviet regime in Cuba. This process of steady improvement in the bargaining position of the Soviet bureaucracy vis-a-vis U.S. imperialism has resulted in a general Soviet-U.S. entente on decisive political questions (against political revolution in the Soviet bloc, for neo-colonialism under the aegis of the U.N. in the backward countries) dating at least from the Suez and Hungarian affairs.

(24) U.S.-Soviet cooperation, nevertheless, has been limited drastically by the refusal of the U.S. government to make any concessions on what is, to the Soviet bureaucracy, the quintessential matter: disarmament. The Soviet Stalinists have sought to persuade U.S. capitalists that disarmament is in their immediate economic interest. The Khrushchev position is utopian, not because the economic argument is fallacious, but because it conflicts with other, more fundamental, interests of U.S. imperialism. Imperialist power in the world can ultimately not be preserved without armed force. The U.S., therefore, cannot and will not disarm. The Soviet economy, freed from the burden of armaments, would develop so rapidly that the U.S. would soon find itself in an inferior political and economic situation, and this would be fatal for capitalism.

(25) In the context of its coexistence strategy the Kremlin is willing to give material aid to petty-bourgeois-led colonial revolutionary movements, as in Algeria, while attempting to prevent their development into proletarian revolutions. For example, while maintaining 'correct' diplomatic relations with the French government, the Kremlin, via the Czech government, gave great quantities of arms to the FLN to fight the French, and simultaneously, via the French CP, aided the FLN in its campaign to exterminate opponents within the movement. (After this, the Soviet protests against the outlawing of the Algerian CP sound singularly hollow.) Where such revolutions cannot be confined within capitalist limits, as in Cuba, Soviet aid is accompanied by pressures toward internal dictatorship and suppression of anti-Stalinist currents

and of subordination to the general line of the Kremlin. Thus, even when seemingly aiding revolutions, the Khrushchev line is directly anti-workingclass and counter-revolutionary.

(26) The counter-revolutionary nature of Stalinism in all its forms without exception cannot be permitted to obscure the fundamental thesis of the Trotskyist movement that the Stalinist bureaucracy is defined by its role as a parasite upon the economic structures of the kind established initially by the October Revolution. The regimes in the Soviet bloc, now including Cuba, are deformed workers states: i.e., they are based on property forms established, directly or however indirectly, by the October Revolution, property forms which are the basis for the development of a socialist society. However, the working class in these countries does not wield political power, does not control production, and does not decide the international policy of these states. Thus we see the Soviet-bloc countries as workers states which have become degenerated or been born deformed. Their present form can only be temporary, and it is wrong to interpret these temporary distorted forms as a new or inevitable stage in the development of society. We stand for the defense of these states as of every conquest of the working class. The Fourth International's call for a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy in the workers states constitutes the most effective defense of these states and is part of the strategy of world revolution against imperialism.

(27) The Trotskyists totally reject a sectarian, abstentionist, 'plague on both your houses' approach to a phenomenon of world-historical significance, the split between the Moscow and Peking wings of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy. Thus as in every clash within the labor bureaucracy the contending formations may be compelled to seek mass support through actions whose potential consequences transcend and contradict the real aims of the bureaucrats. We support all actions, however and by whoever initiated, which are in the interest of the working class, since as Marxists we have no interests distinct from those of the working class as a whole. Our intervention tends always to transform actions initiated by the bureaucracy into struggles against the bureaucracy, whereby the working class can develop the alternative revolutionary leadership required for its self-liberation.

(28) In their polemics against the Soviet leaders, the Chinese Stalinists have pointed out aspects of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin line, its conciliation to imperialism and open revision of basic Leninist concepts. In practice, of course, the Chinese have gone as far as the Soviets in supporting those anti-workingclass national bourgeois regimes which are willing to take a pro-Chinese line in foreign policy

(Algeria, Guinea, Ghana). Nevertheless, within the Communist parties outside the Soviet bloc, these Chinese criticisms help to disrupt the discipline of the parties, and stimulate the emergence of tendencies seeking a more militant struggle against their own ruling class.

(29) In response to the Chinese attacks the Kremlin leaders have found that their most potent weapon is the issue of Stalin. Every partial exposure of the reality of the Stalin era, every degree of latitude for the expression of variant views in politics, economics, and the arts, is a gain for the workers, and every attempt to maintain or increase repression under the pressure of 'Stalin's Heirs' in Peking and Moscow is an attack upon the vital interests of the working class.

(30) The basic orientation of the Marxists is always to the workers, never to bureaucratic leaderships. We side with the Communist workers of the western and colonial countries who, however confusedly, seek a revolutionary policy instead of the reformist coexistence line. We side with the workers of the Soviet bloc (and those young intellectuals seeking to be their spokesmen) who are striving to free themselves from bureaucratic oppression and thereby to restore the revolutionary and socialist democracy of the Lenin era. The tactical problem for the Marxists is to establish ideological and political contacts with these revolutionary tendencies in order to develop common actions against imperialist capitalism and its Stalinist bureaucratic labor lieutenants controlling the deformed workers states. The strategic goal of the world Trotskyist movement is the emergence of a new revolutionary leadership on the basis of the transitional program of the Fourth International. 'Our work must be directed so that the workers on whom we have influence should correctly appraise events, not permit themselves to be caught unawares and prepare the general sentiment of their own class for the revolutionary solution of the tasks confronting us.' (L. D. Trotsky)

(31) The program of the Fourth International for the Soviet Union as set forth in 1938, which posed the central task of the Soviet workers as the restoration of Soviet democracy, is entirely valid today not merely for the U.S.S.R. but for the deformed and degenerated workers states generally. The key points of this program are:

- freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees
- legalization of all parties recognized as soviet parties by the workers and peasants
- revision of planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers. Factory committees

should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organized consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products

- reorganization of the collective farms in accordance with the will and interests of the workers there engaged

- proletarian internationalism should replace the reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy. No secret diplomacy--the complete diplomatic correspondence of the state should be published

- only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the regime of Soviets and guarantee its further development toward socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection--the party of the Fourth International

The struggle of the masses in the Soviet bloc is today developing in accordance with this program of workers' democracy. The Trotskyists seek to intervene in support of every struggle, every demand, however limited or partial, in accordance with this program.

May 28, 1963

CORRECTION

The authorship of the 'Declaration on the Cuban Crisis' (Vol. 24, No. 18), added by the bulletin editors, is in error.

The document has no special authorship other than the collective of signatories and should read -- 'by 24 signatories'.

submitted by

Mage, Robertson, and White
for the Minority