

YOUNG SOCIALIST

REVIEW

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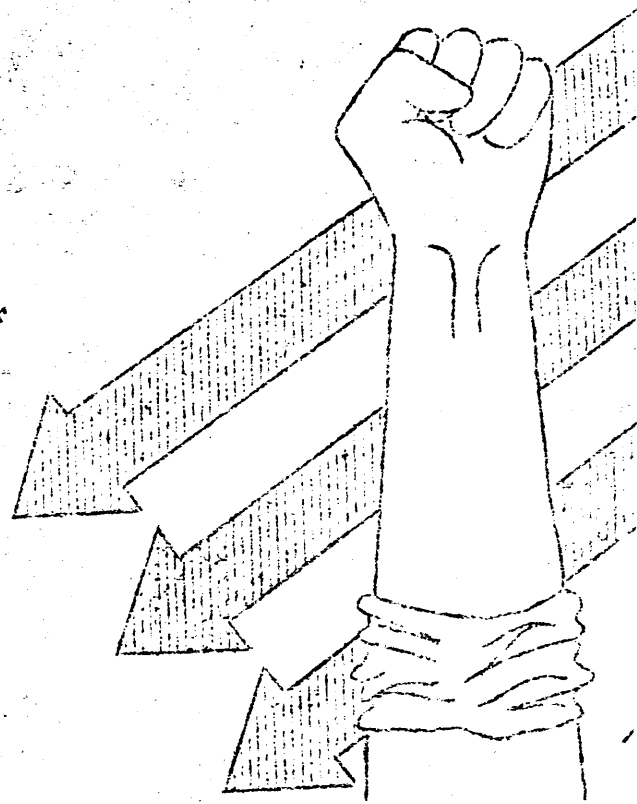
Vol.1 No.3

AUGUST 15TH

1954

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION
BULLETIN OF THE

YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE



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EDITOR'S NOTES.....

WHAT THE YSR IS

The Young Socialist Review is the information and discussion bulletin of the Young Socialist League. The YSR is prepared by the YSL National Office and is edited by Scott Arden, YSL National Secretary.

The aim of the YSR is to constitute a forum for the expression of all points of view within the YSL. It is, therefore, completely open to any member who may wish to contribute his views -- and to any group of members. Contributions from non-members will be accepted, if of sufficiently high interest. (The editor reserves the right to decide in the case of each such article.)

For obvious reasons it should be understood that articles signed by individuals do not necessarily represent the views of the YSL. Any material that is "official" will be clearly labeled as such.

Copy should be submitted to the YSL National Office, Third Floor, 114 W. 14th Street, New York 11, N.Y. If at all possible submit copy already stenciled, single spaced. If this is not possible, then submit material type-written, double spaced. Non-typewritten copy will not be accepted.

It should be clear that the YSR is not restricted to members of the YSL. Though issued primarily for our members it is open to all friends and other interested individuals. Members should make every effort to get copies into the hands of this wider audience. Send in your bundle orders now.

Unless otherwise stated, all labor expended in the production of the YSR is donated.

THIS ISSUE

This issue represents a distinct advance over the previous issues in that its most substantial discussion article (on Indochina) came from "out-of-town". The YSR is published by the National Office as a national YSL discussion organ. It can function as such only if our other comrades throughout the country follow the lead of California. Send in your articles for the next issue NOW!

The Editor, August 15, 1954

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Symmetrical Errors on Stalohism and the National Question

A discussion of the Martin and Gale Resolutions on Indo-China, and the Martin and Barnes-Gale polemic in the 2nd issue of the Young Socialist Review (May 22nd, 1954).

By Jim Robertson, Jack Walker and Arlon Tussing

Two sharply differing views have been presented to the Young Socialist League on the Indochina situation. In the opinion of the present writers both are wrong, although the Martin resolution shows it less clearly and could perhaps be the basis for an amended version. This is so because Martin has spelled out his views more fully in his discussion article, which directly exhibits a flaw in analysis.

The fundamental error into which both comrades Martin and Gale slip is Stalino-phobia and Stalinophilia, respectively. And, as is not infrequently the case, the comrades assail each other with objections and criticisms which strike home.

I. On Max Martin's views

A. Permanent Revolution.

First, we want to point out an inadequacy in comrade Martin's resolution which may or may not conceal an additional difference in understanding and prognosis with regard to a correct socialist policy for the Indochinese themselves. In particular, we refer to the resolution - Part 2, Section B - which characterizes the kind of movement we would desire in Indochina, ie:

"We call upon the independent nationalists in Vietnam to raise the banner of a genuine democratic liberation movement. . . Such a movement would, if coupled with a progressive social program be able to attract the support of the bulk of the people including those who now support the Viet-Minh."

Now any resolution which addresses itself to the problem of a progressive solution of the Indochinese crisis from the standpoint of the struggles of the Indochinese people themselves, must say more than this. In particular, it must consider the introduction of the conceptions and analysis stemming from the Theory of Permanent Revolution, as it would be applied concretely in Indochina. It must be pointed out that any thorough-going or even substantial solution to the national and land problems - historically solved in Europe under the bourgeoisie's leadership - can no longer be effected on such a basis. This is so because, on the one hand the native bourgeoisie is largely neutralized through its intimate ties with the landlords and usurers and with foreign imperialism. And additionally, on the other hand, for the local capitalists to initiate a mass struggle against a stubborn imperialist overlord - without subordinating itself to another rival imperialism - ". . . would require such a mobilization of the social appetites and ambitions of the workers and peasants as would immediately threaten the fundamental class position of the colonial bourgeoisie." (from: "The National and Colonial Struggles", a resolution of the Workers Party, Jan., 1943).

The recent - September, 1953 - intraVietnam opposition to Bao Dai immediately revealed its futility and half-heartedness when it backed down and qualified its opposition to participating in the "French Union", to opposition to it "in its present form". This opposition is akin to the attempted political blackmail of the Indian bourgeoisies's claims for a greater share of the political and economic power in India, demanded when Japan was making sensational advances in Asia early in the Second World War.

Indeed from the modern standpoint of the workers and peasantry the achievement of national liberation is not complete, or even real, without extensive nationalization and socialization of the means of production, together with an anti-imperialist, hence anti-capitalist, foreign policy.

Further, the hard-learned lessons should be stated, concerning the leading role which the proletariat must play in its alliance with the peasantry. And finally, it is necessary to include in our resolution creation of a revolutionary socialist party, seeking and winning a vanguard role, not as a luxury but a necessity if the colonial people are not to be sidetracked from their goal.

In short, the struggle of Imperialism vs. Nationalism, if it is to be resolved favorably goes over in the course of the struggle to the issue of Imperialism vs. Socialism. There is no half-way house which will satisfy even the immediate aspirations of the colonial peoples. But to raise the issue of Socialism is immediately to raise the plane of solution to the international level and to stimulate vastly the forces tending toward solution at this level. The impact of successful proletarian led revolution in Indochina would be incalculably great all over Southeast Asia (India, Burma, Indonesia, Japan) and the rest of the capitalist and Stalinist world.

Concretely, in Indochina, this perspective is not vitiated by the general decline in the force of world capitalist colonialism as a system of dominance. For even in India, Burma and Indoesia, the real political independence which these states had achieved following the Second World War, has not solved the bulk of the problems which stimulated the drive for independence in the first place. And even the fact of independence had lost much of its former meaning, when earlier every independent state was free to compete with the rest to win the economic benefits of nationhood. Rather today, are all the capitalist states fitted into a political or at least economic, hierarchy with the U.S. on top. Particularly in Indochina is the perspective of freedom dim. For the French have been driven by their historic decline to a frantic effort to keep their possessions, and now the US is on the scene seeking to squeeze out the French and perhaps back an "independent" Vietnam & la the Phillipines.

That the Indochinese proletariat (close to a million strong in a country of 26 million) is a force to be reckoned with, has been demonstrated better than in most of the colonial lands. Its militant struggles throughout the 1930's and its valiant efforts to take the helm of the nation in 1945, coupled with its relatively large revolutionary Marxist wing in those periods, show fully its potential.

In Martin's discussion article (Paragraph 22) he touched on some of the elements contained above, but these should be linked together and incorporated in any YSL Indo-China resolution.

B. The Hypothetical Independent National Stalinism:

The serious error which comrade Martin makes is first touched on in his resolution:

"Its (Vietminh's) aims in the war, insofar as these are independent from the aims of Peiping and Moscow, vis-a-vis American imperialism, is the setting up of a totalitarian Stalinist state in Indochina." (Part 1, Sec.D).

This remark was made in justification of calling for no support to the Vietminh side in the war. Then, in his attack on the Gale resolution, Martin spells out his attitude if the Vietminh were free from Russo-Chinese domination:

"But what if the Indchinese Stalinists had broken with Moscow, what if they were fighting for the creation of an Independent Stalinist state? Should socialists be obligated under these conditions to support them." (paragraph 15)

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Martin takes several paragraphs to give his answer -- NO!

By his answer comrade Martin has thrown aside the Marxian criteria of when and under what conditions socialists support national struggles. Furthermore, in his attempt to separate himself more thoroughly from the Gale proposal of military support to Vietminh, Martin has gravely weakened the correct point that socialists cannot support vietminh because it is imperialist-dominated. He says that whether or not Vietminh's war is imperialist-dominated would make no difference to the question of socialist support.

For Martin, it is enough that the Vietminh objective is a Stalinist state in Indo-China, not that the Indochinese CP and the disciplined regular army, the core of Vietminh, are disciplined subordinates of Stalinist Russia via the intermediary, Chinese Stalinism. And Martin is dead wrong. Socialists have never made an identity between the class leadership of a struggle and the issue of the given struggle.

This issue, involving the defense of a bureaucratic-collectivist state against imperialist intervention (the equivalent of a national independence struggle under independent Stalinist leadership), was first faced by our movement at the time of the Tito-Stalin split. At that time the movement met the question squarely, and the policy adopted - "The Defense of Yugoslavia" by Hal Draper, Labor Action, 1/23/50 - is worthy of extensive quotation here:

The Defense of Yugoslavia

... Marxists support all legitimate struggles of peoples for national independence from all imperialism, including those peoples who are unfortunate enough to be themselves ruled by native tyrants and dictators. This doubling of their burden does not exclude them from the right to their national freedom. Rather it has been true often enough that, through such a just fight for independence, even though under a tyrant, the people have been able to mobilize their strength not only to defeat the would-be foreign oppressor but also to sharpen the fight for social freedom at home."

and further -

"Full concrete support to the struggle against reactionary foreign imperialism; no political support to the domestic tyrant - a fight on two fronts, toward the democratic socialist revolution which will mean the end of both Tito and Stalin."

"Naturally there have always been those self-styled socialists, in all the cases we have mentioned, including Spain and China, who saw only two alternatives: (a) either support the struggle for national independence and therefore give up any political struggle at home; or else (b) maintain revolutionary intransigence by supporting neither the home regime nor the real national fight. In no case has the Marxist movement adopted either of these deadly alternatives - and we do not do so in the case of Yugoslavia."

Lest Comrade Martin feel that we are evading his specific remarks on the consequences of even an independent native Stalinist victory in Indochina (ie, his discussion article, Paragraphs 14-21), let us consider the various alternatives in fact, which would arise in the course of such a fight for independence in which an indigenous aspiring Stalinist class were a participant.

First, is the least desirable possibility: one in which the entire movement is in the hands of Stalinists, as Tito after the break with Moscow, when an attempted Russian re-subjugation would have found the entire state power in Tito's hands, at least initially. Even under these conditions what socialist would balk at support for the issue of struggle - national independence versus imperialist subordination. In the first place, the very posing of such a struggle involves weakening and under-

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mining of imperialism. Second, due to the inherent limitations on a native Stalinist ruling class, it is precisely under such conditions that it becomes particularly possible to look for a course of replacing the régime; not on the grounds that its war was unjust, but that it doesn't prosecute the war sufficiently well through fear of its own masses.

Now in the best case - where there would be a broad national movement in which Martin's independent Stalinists are only one of a number of competing tendencies, it is clear on the face of it that we would urge military support to the whole authentic independence movement, and seek the victory of our program in this movement, ie, political support to its revolutionary socialist wing.

It should be pointed out, however, that this latter case is not meaningful since Stalinist movements on their road to power universally have demonstrated the most slavish devotion to their Moscow masters. When Martin argues that we must recoil from even military support (ie, support to the issue of struggle, but no confidence in its leadership) to a Titoist Stalinist movement on the grounds that its victory would not in fact tangibly bring consequences other than a new independent dictatorial state, he misses the same point, that others have missed in the past, while correctly pointing out that an exploitative class robs the people of much of the real fruit of victory. Indeed an Ethiopian victory over Italy would have meant the continuation of chattel slavery! Rather it is precisely upon the contradiction between native exploitative and toiling classes over the meaning and content of self-determination that we must seek to develop.

Martin errs when he would ascribe to a native Stalinist bureaucracy such a potential for seducing the masses of people vis-a-vis the democratic and socialist alternative. For him to imply this ability to a native, non-imperialist Stalinist state or movement is to slip into a self-defeating and Stalinophobic attitude.

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II. On Henry Gale's and Jake Barnes' Views

A great deal of what comrades Gale and Barnes have to say is true. Their general understanding of the application of the Permanent Revolution conception is excellent. So is their general justification for the conditions of support to national independence movements. But when they attempt to come to grips with Indochina and to apply their general formulations they stumble and fall in two places: first in fitting Stalinism within their framework, and second, over the reality of the Vietminh government.

The comrades contend that Vietminh is not subordinated to Russo-Chinese imperialism. Their basic argument in support of this is that although Vietminh is admittedly Stalinist-led, it has so much mass popular backing that such backing outweighs any tendency of the leadership to be an agency of the Stalinist imperialist bloc.

In addition, Barnes and Gale state that an independent Stalinist state, although reactionary, in that it suppresses the proletariat, has an objectively progressive side as well. This is so because the Stalinist government-class divides the land and expropriates the old ruling classes, as well as liberating the nation from imperialist dominance.

(1) First let us dispose of this "progressive-aspect" contention. It is an unhappy thing that this kind of illusion should present itself in our movement today, after all that has gone before. To a Marxist the basic criterion for progressiveness in our epoch centers on the question of whether the given development serves the cause of working-class power and socialism. Now bonafide national struggles (native, anti-imperialist) whether under bourgeois or Stalinist leadership, do serve progress. And for two main reasons: 1) In the course of a struggle the class fetter

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of the proletariat become loosened and it can seek the leadership of the nation, for it is the only class capable of vigorously mobilizing the masses and effectively waging the national and progressively social liberationary war. 2) Moreover, the revolts and struggles of colonial and backward lands, whatever the class leadership, weaken the imperialist overlords, economically and also politically. Politically, especially as the workers of the oppressor country are rallied to the cause of colonial freedom.

But one finds nothing progressive in the internal struggles of a bureaucratic-collectivist class to create a firm base for itself through industrialization and the transformation of the peasantry into state serfs. Nothing progressive, that is, unless one were to conclude that working class power is off the agenda in our time, and that one must enter the tortuous paths of lesser-evilism.

Rather does our perspective lie in advocating and seeking an evolution of the colonial workers toward gaining hegemony over their national struggles and linking these up with, and gaining support from, the working classes in the imperialist mother-countries. In the Stalinist world this would mean, in East Germany for example, seeking to connect the worker's aspirations with those of the Russian masses, perhaps via the intermediary of the rank-and-file of the Russian Army in Germany.

(2) Let us now return to the viewpoint we ascribed to comrades Gale and Barnes, concerning the inherent potentialities of a Stalinist leadership in amass struggle. In contradistinction to an implicit assumption of these comrades, we would like to point out that there is an enormous and fundamental distinction between a colonial bourgeoisie and a Communist party functioning in a capitalist-colonial area - that of social roots. A native capitalist class has contradictory elements. On the one hand it seeks to expand its existing social role and place in the means of production at the expense of imperialism. On the other hand, it is tied to the self-same imperialism, through mutual economic links and also political ties arising through fear of the native masses. For these reasons a local exploiter class sometimes finds itself at the head of a national independence movement, yet lacks the ability to discharge its duties to that movement if the struggle goes beyond certain bounds.

But what about a Communist Party, even one such as the I-C CP which has actually set up a government throughout large regions? Gale and Barnes certainly know the answer. They themselves say:

"We now understand that the Stalinists are agents of the Kremlin, for the basic reason that, as class which exists only potentially before its accession to power, its actual class base is a foreign one - namely the big powerful bureaucratic-collectivist ruling class of Russia itself."

(Page 12, in 4th paragraph, Discussion Article).

Where the comrades go amiss, however, is in stating that:

"However, the moment a Stalinist party takes power in a country, the situation, still speaking in class terms, begins to change: It now has its own social base; it is now a class for itself." And further: "Therefore, whenever a Stalinist party takes power, the organic ties which bound it to Moscow (and Peiping) are immediately destroyed."

What Gale and Barnes have done here is to equate the creation of a new contradictory tendency (of nationalist character) with an automatic process in which a newly-risen native Stalinist ruling-class is impelled into opposition to the Stalinist imperialist overlords. This is not true. Powerful forces work against the expression of the national contradiction on the part of the subordinate Stalinist class - solidarity with the Stalinist bloc against the menace of the world capitalist camp as a whole, and perhaps against some particular imperialist power-seeking to reconquer the given former capitalist colony. Then there are the intra-Stalinist factors in operation.

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Unlike a colonial capitalist class, the Stalinists are an organized group whose cadre has a uniform and decades-old tradition and practice of the most unconditional and obsequious subservience to Russian interests. The Russian Stalinists have shown themselves past masters at continuously recementing this subservience. They provoke faction struggles and purges within the native movements. They recruit certain elements directly to the Russian secret police. These are only some of the more striking means whereby a native Stalinist leadership is inhibited from opposition to Stalinist imperialism.

In short, on taking power, a Stalinist class - nee'party - then becomes the analogue of the capitalist colonial exploitative classes. But in addition, the former are laced into a far more rigid and uniform straight jacket.

Note how far afield we have had to go from Barnes' and Gale's initial premise that a mass-backed Stalinist movement of struggle is the decisive criterion for whether such a Stalinist movement is essentially free from subordination to Moscow-Peiping. In the comrades' own words:

"For our part, we believe that the Yugoslav and Chinese experiences have shown that it is entirely possible for a native Stalinist movement to seek and attain social power on its own, and that this is what is happening in Viet Nam."

And their repeated remark:

"What imperialist power, what imperialist nation is the Viet-Minh the agent or tool of?" To which they go on to argue: NONE.

Or most clearly in Gale's resolution: (Section II, C, 3)

"The Stalinists are a strong and self-conscious contender for social power. They have a tradition of independence from the Kremlin, and possess strong roots in Vietnam which enable them to maintain that independence from both Moscow and Peiping."

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To round out our remarks on Gale's and Barnes' views it is necessary to point out and discuss an ambiguity in their presentation. They seem to be saying two different things at the same time: that 1) A movement such as Vietminh need not necessarily be (and in this case is not) a tool of foreign Stalinism; or that (2) While a Stalinist movement lacking state power certainly has as its dominant aspect, that of subordination to Moscow - as soon as state power is taken this is no longer the case. Perhaps the comrades believe there is no ambiguity in the case of Indochina, on the grounds that the Stalinists' hold on the underpopulated Vietnam hinterland constitutes state power in the sense of supplying a social base to the Stalinists as a social class. This we would like to see them demonstrate.

In any event the comrades hold up the evolution of Tito's Yugoslavia as the case in point for their position on Indochina. And relatedly, in the opening paragraph of Gale's resolution, he compares the Vietminh to the Resistance movement of World War II. But what about Tito's regime? The comrades seem to have forgotten that between the time of the decisive Stalinization of the Partisan movement and the Tito-Stalin split, a number of years passed during which Yugoslavia was the showcase nation of the Stalinist world. It should be pointed out that from the time the partisan movement became subordinated to Russia until the split, the Yugoslav Stalinists played a role first as Russia's instrument against the Germans in the imperialist war, and after the war as Russian satraps for the oppression of the Yugoslav people. Hence this local leadership and its policies in this period were not to be supported, but rather denounced and opposed as traitorous to the Yugoslav nation.

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As for the comparison to the Resistance movements of the Second World War, we would like to quote from a definitive resolution of the independent socialist movement, arrived at after extensive discussion and controversy. It has stood the test of time in every respect since its adoption in 1943.

"The presence of the revolutionary vanguard elements in the (European Resistance) movement, and above all, a correct policy, are urgently required to counteract reactionary imperialist and social-imperialist currents. Otherwise, the definitive victory of these currents will convert the movement into a reactionary tool of imperialism and nullify its progressive significance.

"Inside the movement it is necessary to combat mercilessly the two most dangerous, because relatively most powerful, forces, the imperialists and the Stalinists.

"The imperialists seek to convert these movements into obedient, disciplined auxiliaries to the Anglo-American armed forces. The achievement of this aim would mean the corruption of the movement inasmuch as it would be deprived of any independence of program or movement, would cease to be a popular democratic movement, and become a mere instrument of the imperialist powers. Not only that, but it would cease to be a movement for genuine national freedom, having been converted into a weapon for the restoration of reactionary empires which existed in the eve of the war,..."

And-- "The seizure of control of these movements by the organized Stalinists -- not the sacrificing rank and file militant, but the organized bureaucratic clique -- can be no less disastrous for the future of the struggle for national and socialist freedom."

(From Part Two of the Workers Party Resolution on "The Struggle of the National and Colonial Peoples for Freedom" -- New International, February, 1943).

We concur whole-heartedly with this analysis. And to seek to implement such an approach in Indochina today leads directly to the counterposing of a Third Campist-oriented national movement to the Stalinist sham.

B. The Reality of the Vietnam Government

"There is no question that the Lao Dong (Communist Party) is the leading force. It is the party that provides the backbone of the government." (From Eyewitness in Indochina, a book by Daily Worker writer Joseph Starobin.)

There is unanimous agreement among all political groups, including the Stalinists (as the above statement indicates), that the Vietnam government is dominated by the Indochinese Communist Party.

History of the I-C CP

Especially from the time of the reconstruction of the I-C CP in 1935, the Stalinists have faithfully followed every twist and turn in the international Stalinist line. Up until 1938, the CP followed the popular front line of making the national struggle in favor of a Franco-Russian military alliance and in the interests of the French CP's class-collaborationist policies. In and after 1938 and until the Hitler-Stalin pact the Stalinists presumably advocated the same line; unfortunately in 1938 they were outlawed and had to urge by means of illegal leaflets their policy of cohabitation with the French.

Later, from the time of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, the I-C Stalinists were the most uncompromising enemies of the Japanese. Indeed the United States' OSS seem to have found as its most loyal agency precisely the Stalinist movement. (Reference: "The Struggle for Indochina" by E. Hammer).

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At the end of the war and in the glow of the Potsdam Conference and the Communist participation in the French Government, the Vietminh leaned over backward to reach agreement with the French forces returning to Indochina. The Ho-Chi-Minh government signed an accord with the French which gained far less for Indochina than did the formal agreements a few years later between the French and their unashamed puppet, Bao Dai. But in 1946 the French would settle for nothing less than complete groveling capitulation from the Vietminh. To achieve this, the French armed forces attacked the Vietminh-held port of Haiphong, and the fight was on, despite repeated offers from the Stalinists to negotiate.

Subordinacy

The key point of factual dispute from which support or non-support to the Vietminh struggle for us is whether or not Vietminh is actually subordinated to the Chinese and Russian states. After our lengthy remarks of theoretical character, let us take a look at some of the evidence bearing on this issue:

There is considerable world Stalinist support and backing to Vietminh. While this in itself is not conclusive, extensive and prolonged aid from interested imperialist powers certainly carries with it a strong inference. Even the avowedly Stalinoid "Monthly Review" admits: "That the Vietminh cadres are formed in China, agreed. That food comes from China is certain. That some Russian and Czech material has been brought in is proved." (June, 1954)

Secondly, the close correlation between the Vietminh military campaigns and world Stalinist diplomacy must be noted: The Berlin Conference to reach agreement perhaps on Germany was paralleled by the retirement of Vietminh armed columns from an undefended Laos; the Geneva Conference to seek a negotiated deal on Indochina found for its parallel the vigorous assault on the vulnerable Dien Bien Phu to strengthen the Stalinist case. It is to be doubted that Ho-Chi-Minh is telling China and Russia how to run their diplomacy. The reverse is much more likely, to put it mildly.

Finally, and most impressive in our eyes is that, whatever the outcome of the Geneva Conference, not only is a Russian spokesman able to create two new Peoples Republics at will (for Laos and Cambodia), but in addition the Russian and Chinese show every ability to make what deal they will over Indochina and make Vietminh like it. Certainly the latter's representatives have been the last to demur from such a course.

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III. Concluding Remarks

Given the above analysis it should be obvious that the current YSL line as expressed in the NAC minutes and in the Young Socialist Challenge is correct. We will reiterate the essential points:

- (1) No US intervention in Indochina!
- (2) Neither Vietminh nor French Imperialism; For the Third Camp of the Indochinese people!

A YSL Resolution, however, must go considerably beyond these simple formulations. And such a resolution would do well to avoid the symmetrical errors presented to us in the initial resolutions and supporting articles of comrades Martin & of Gale-Barne

And finally, there is one consideration in addition to all the foregoing which the YSL should consider: namely, that in the given imperialist conflict in Indochina, Peace, even a negotiated peace of a divided country, is certainly a lesser evil to the continuation of a bloody war in which the people have no stake and which continuously holds open the threat of a general Third World War.

--June 9, 1954

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DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ANVIL

By Scott Arden and Charlie Radetsky

(The following resolution will be presented to the NEC Plenum)

1. The National Executive Committee rejects the notion of a YSL financed ANVIL, either in its present form or in any "broadened" form (i.e., one that includes even more "lib-lab" material than the present ANVIL).
2. The YSL, therefore, ceases to support the magazine ANVIL.
3. The YSL will, however, continue to push and sell the current (Summer-Fall 1954) issue so that the magazine will end with as little debt as possible.
4. The viewpoint of the NEC is: that if the YSL can raise sufficient funds to support a printed magazine, that such funds be used to publish a third-camp socialist youth magazine -- a specifically YSL magazine.

end

ANVIL -- A Discussion Article

By Scott Arden and Charlie Radetsky

In the strongest possible way we must urge the adoption of the above resolution. Further support to ANVIL would clearly be a serious error for the YSL, and such support must be withdrawn, recognizing that the tremendous amount of work that some comrades have put into ANVIL in the past is no longer fruitful. Some comrades, unfortunately seem to find it impossible to consider the ANVIL question objectively and are influenced, rather, by their sentimental attachments to the magazine. We hope that this article will have the effect of convincing both these comrades and others that these sentiments must be overcome for the good of the YSL.

The Convention decided that the YSL should help put out one issue of ANVIL, with the understanding that the NEC should then reappraise the magazine and its value and decide whether or not to continue supporting it. The first part of this decision has been, and is being, complied with. ANVIL is out and is being sold nationally. The coming plenum of the NEC will face the question of our attitude toward ANVIL in the future.

At present there seem to be three major points of view within the YSL in terms of what should be done with ANVIL. The first of these, which seems to have the least support, is that ANVIL should remain more or less what it is now and that the YSL should continue to support it. The second point of view is that ANVIL should be "broadened" to contain more "liberal" material with the intention of involving liberal organizations and individuals -- the YSL, of course, continuing to support it. The third viewpoint, ours, is that ANVIL in its present form, and certainly in any "broadened" form, should not be supported by the YSL. Rather, that if and when it is possible for the YSL to support a magazine, that the magazine be a third camp socialist youth magazine published by the YSL.

Viewpoint I, if supported by anyone, is supported by very few and for good reason. The present ANVIL set-up is unreal to the point where it is based on a fiction. ANVIL while appearing, from its masthead, to be a magazine put out by a cross-section of anti-war student clubs is, in reality, nothing more than a YSL magazine which does not represent the YSL in the sense of benefitting us politically or organizationally. Almost everyone of the organizations listed as a sponsor of ANVIL is, in fact, defunct. ANVIL is put out, sold and financed thru the efforts and at the expense of the YSL

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and YSLers. The extreme inefficiency and difficulties involved in getting out the current labor-donated issue were so unbelievable that to detail them would be to introduce slap-stick comedy in the best tradition into an otherwise serious discussion. Let us, instead, point out that the result was that the production of the issue was a serious drain on the energies of the New York YSL and took some of its best members out of other activities for a period of at least several of the most vital weeks in the units existence.

To sum up briefly, the major reason for not continuing to support ANVIL in its present form is that it accrues no tangible gain to the YSL in any meaningful degree. Its articles do not represent a real introduction to third camp socialist thought -- and certainly not to the YSL. The organizations which "support and edit" it are fictitious and, having no real existence, cannot be drawn into any close relationship with the YSL, which, if they were real functioning organizations, could be a reason for continuing ANVIL. Therefore any argument that the YSL should continue to drain itself financially and otherwise to support ANVIL in its present form is unrealistic and can have no other content.

Position II, that ANVIL should be "broadened" to include a liberal, as well as a socialist point of view and that liberals and liberal organizations should be involved in its production, while a more sensible position is equally as unrealistic. Considering that one of our major problems in this period is to break out of our isolation (which to some extent we have been able to do), one could imagine that the broadening of ANVIL would be desirable -- and in a sense it would be, if it could be meaningfully broadened. The simple fact, however, is that this is impossible.

We are in a period when not only socialist, but liberal and all other student organizations generally, are weak and, except for minimal functioning (usually on the bureaucratic level), almost nonexistent. There are, that is, no organizations and few individuals which the YSL could successfully and productively draw into the production of a magazine. The most prominent of the student liberal organizations, SDA, could contribute little to such a magazine in any sense.... And this, we should not allow ourselves to forget, is talking in the dream world terms of (1) SDA's being willing or interested to participate in the production of such a magazine, and (2) of ADA's allowing them to do so if SDA were so willing or interested. That both of these contingencies are "unlikely" is the understatement of the decade.

Further, any appeal to members of SDA (or other liberals), any attempt to use ANVIL as some kind of hybrid introduction to some kind of hybrid third camp position, would have about the same amount of application in the real world -- which, unfortunately, our knowledge of the state of the YSL's finances forces us to live in. The leading members (almost the only kind that exists) of SDA are on the whole nice people but are, in greatest number, careerists, out to find a snug and secure place for themselves in the liberal capitalist world. Our exhaustive experience has been that recruitment to the ideas of third camp socialism, much less to actual membership in a socialist organization (which as we all know is not a very respectable sort of organization to belong to), of SDA liberals is, at best, peripheral.

This is not to say that there is no reason for us to maintain a cordial and friendly relationship with SDA and other honestly liberal organizations. While we certainly should cooperate with them on specific issues wherever possible, any effort to involve them in ANVIL could not accrue any advantage to the YSL. There are no liberal youth organizations, SDA included, which have any mass membership or mass appeal which would make it worthwhile for us to consider co-sponsorship with them of the major effort that putting out a magazine represents.

Clearly, what these comrades who hold this point of view are actually proposing is that the YSL finance (solely, to be realistic) a broad magazine which would present the liberal and socialist points of view, and that we, while doing all of the work and putting up all of the money, de-emphasize the role of the YSL in the pro-

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duction of the magazine by cluttering up the masshead with the names of individual liberals who, for some esoteric reason, the YSL treasury provides with a magazine.

That neither viewpoint I nor II makes any sense is clear. If the YSL can afford a magazine (and there is serious doubt that it can) at all, that magazine should be a YSL publication -- a third camp socialist youth magazine. Who would sell such a magazine? The same people that now sell ANVIL -- friends and members of the YSL. Who would buy it? Again, the same people who now buy ANVIL. Such a magazine would be at least as attractive (the authors would, for example, be almost identical) and our whole experience has been that ANVIL does not sell because of the "broad" nature of the "groups" that "support and edit" it. Sales, obviously could be at least as good as those of ANVIL. YSL salesmen would certainly demonstrate considerably more enthusiasm in selling a YSL magazine than in selling ANVIL. (The lack of enthusiasm for ANVIL is well known to all of us -- many comrades, for not totally bad reasons, don't even bother reading ANVIL.)

That a YSL publication would be of real value, both politically and organizationally, is unquestionable. The content of such a magazine would be oriented towards presenting our socialist views and could be used to introduce a wide number of students and young people to the serious thinking of the YSL and YSLers. It would present longer articles representing serious political thinking. This would not be duplicating the Young Socialist Challenge or the Young Socialist Review because the former should be written in a broader popular form (fairly short articles, suitable for mass distributions, etc.) and the latter is primarily an internal discussion organ rather than a public one (in nature if not in fact).

In conclusion, therefore, we must repeat: For the YSL to support a magazine which is not a YSL magazine is ridiculous. No other organization that could be involved would add anything in the way of marketability and to involve any liberal group or individual(s) could only be a serious error. It could only mean that the YSL would be financially strapping itself to provide an anti-socialist point of view with a public forum. To involve them for the sake of drawing them closer is unrealistic..

In our opinion, presenting our own ideas in our own magazine is the only point of view which can possibly be supported. We hope that our resolution will be adopted by the NEC and that the YSL will find the financial means to publish the first issue of such a magazine in the not too distant future.

end

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The Development of an Ideology

by Michael Harrington

My intention in this short discussion is to treat one limited aspect of the rise of an ideology: monotheism. The relevance of this somewhat esoteric excursion will become clearer in the course of my remarks. But briefly it is this: that involved in a study of monotheism is the concept of combined and uneven development. As an analytic tool, this concept is of crucial importance today. A group of comrades from the New York unit intend to initiate a study class on this topic in the Fall, and this short footnote is an example of how the notion of combined and uneven development can be brought to bear on the rise of an ideology.

My starting point is a remark made by Kautsky in his Foundations of Christianity (S. A. Russell, 1953): "At any rate it is no mere chance that all the monotheistic popular religions came from nations that were still in the nomadic mode of thought and had not developed any notable industry or art: a long with the Jews, these were the Persians and later the Arabians of Islam, who adopted monotheism as soon as they came into contact with a higher urban civilization..." (p. 163-4)

My thesis is this: that in the emergence of Jewish monotheism we can see the operation of combined and uneven development, in that precisely because Judaism arrived late on the scene of civilization (as compared to the river societies of Egypt, Mesopotamia and China) it was able to carry through a "permanent revolution" in ideology and thus play a far more advanced role than developed, and therefore more rigidly stratified, societies.

This short footnote in no way masquerades as an "explanation" of the development of monotheism. I confine myself to one aspect of this theme.

1. The Emergence of the Hebrews

- (a) "The Hebrews arrived late upon the scene and settled in a country pervaded by influences from the two adjacent superior cultures." (H and H A Frankfort in Before Philosophy, Penguin, 1951, p. 251)
- (b) The Hebrews emerged out of a nomadic past, as opposed to the long urban development of life in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Their class structure is not, however, as simple as Kautsky, and others, often imagine. Yet it is true that they did not share the sophisticated assumptions of the neighboring peoples that "the individual is part of society, that society is embedded in nature, and that nature is the manifestation of the divine." (Ibid, p. 241)
- (c) In contrast to the oriental-despotic nature of the adjacent societies, the Jews never developed a strong centralized kingship. Their culture - and particularly their religion - grew out of a loose military confederacy of tribes. (Max Weber, Ancient Judaism, Gerth and Martindale trans., Free Press, 1952, p. 232)
- (d) Within the oriental-despotic societies, belief in magic persisted, astral and zoomorphic gods abounded (W F Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, Johns Hopkins, 1940, p. 201) and orthodox theology was rarely questioned (Karl Jaspers, Origin and Goal of History, Yale, 1953, p. 48).

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- (14)
- (d) As a result of this political looseness, a prophetic strata, basing itself upon political issues, but not specifically political in content, arose within Judaism. (Weber, supra, passim)

2. The Primitive Nature of the Yahwe Cult.

- (a) The Yahwe cult was image-less. "Certainly this was not the product of any ancient 'high level' speculations concerning the nature of God. Rather the reverse holds, it was the result of primitive cult implements, which, given the great sanctity of the ancient war ritual of the confederacy was definitively stereotyped at a particular early time. The god remained image-less simply because he still had none at the time of reception." (Weber, supra, p. 156)
- (b) We cannot even say definitely that Moses (c/ 1200 B.C.) was a monotheist. The First Commandment is compatible with monolatry (i.e. the worship of one God among many). (T.J. Meek, Hebrew Origins, Harper & Bro., 1936, p. 192)
- (c) However it is an extremely over-simplified approach to say, as Charles S Seely does in Philosophy and the Ideological Conflict (Philosophical Library, 1953), that (1) Yahwe was merely a "hill-people's" cult as a protest against the exploiters of the plain, and (2) that messianism was a hill-people's development (p 44). The decisive points were fairly late in Jewish history (Deutero-Issiah) and involved, along with the prophets, the rationalization of the priestly class and the social pressure of the proletariat.

3. The Consequence.

- (a) As a consequence of this late emergence, and a relatively primitive and image-less Yahwe cult, "A god, whose ancient transmitted cult was without image, plainly had to be, normally, an invisible deity. Such invisibility necessarily fed his specific dignity and uncanny mysteriousness. Here again the historically given cult of the confederate god occasioned his spiritualization which was both facilitated and suggested by these qualities." (Weber, supra, 158-9)
- (b) "In any case, the Empty Ark (of the Covenant) and its significance was symptom and probably also the occasion for the relative spiritualization of this anthropomorphic conception of God, as directly determined by the absence of images in worship." (Weber, ibid, 159)

To sum up thus far. There are three major elements in discussing the rise of Hebrew monotheism in relation to combined and uneven development: (1) the late emergence of the Hebrews out of a nomadic past into an area pervaded by higher cultures, with the persistence of an image-less, and somewhat primitive god of a tribal war confederacy. (2) Within this context, the phenomenon of a prophetic strata which related political fortunes to this cult-god. In Egypt and Mesopotamia, messianism was directed toward the actual king. In Israel, where there was not strong kind - even a hostility toward monarchy based on the oppression of the two neighboring states - this messianism crystallized around the cult-god, Yahwe. (3) When the Jews were taken into captivity, i.e. when these factors had combined to demonstrate that the immediate political hopes of the Yahwe-ists were to be defeated, the cult became more other-worldly, more spiritualized, more monotheist. In other words, the ideological advance took place at a time of political disintegration. (In this regard, cf. Herbert J Muller, The Uses of the Past, New Am-

erical Library, 1954, p. 62) "The higher religions have commonly grown out of the failures of civilization, bringing promises of eternal life to dying societies ...the most characteristic sign of their loftiness is the abasement of man and earth, an other-worldly or life denying spirit." There is a certain truth to this, but without the other factors already discussed, it explains little or nothing about the development of Hebrew monotheism.)

One discouragement before proceeding to a conclusion. In a very stupid book by a very great man (Moses and Monotheism, by S. Freud, Hogarth, 1939), Hebrew monotheism is traced to the individual influence of Moses who is seen as an Egyptian, Thotmes, who had become a monotheist during the brief (eighteen year) monotheism of the 18th Dynasty (to 1350 B.C.) under Amenhotep IV. Freud, using the scholarship of Sellin, assumes that Moses was murdered by the Jews. He traces the development of monotheism from this trauma as a historical-neurotic process. Whatever the value of his methodological assumptions (not much, I think), there is practically no modern scholarship to support his factual premises. The book is fairly nonsensical. It contains one excellent characterization of the an-iconic Yahwe cult as "...the triumph of spirituality over the senses..." (P 178), and that's about all.

Generalizations. Weber, in Ancient Judaism, makes certain generalizations which go beyond my general thesis. He wrote, "Rarely have entirely new religious conceptions originated in respective centers of rational cultures...To be sure this (a new conception) never occurred without the influence and impact of neighboring rational civilization. The reasons for this is always the same: prerequisite to new religious conceptions is that man must not have unlearned how to face the world with questions of his own...Precisely the man distant from the great culture centers has cause to do so when their influence begins to affect or threaten his central interests." (P 206) Whether this is always true or not, my brief outline of an analysis of Hebrew monotheism would suggest a play of combined and uneven development in this case, i.e. the late emergence of a relatively primitive and imageless religious cult within the context of two highly developed societies, made it possible for that cult to become the basis for an advanced development of ideology, at the point of the threatening - or disintegration - of its political values, allowed it to skip the whole stage of representational polytheism and reach to an age-less monotheism.

end

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16)
STATEMENT ON THE PEACE IN INDO-CHINA

(Adopted by the YSL National Action Committee by majority vote)

The peace which has been concluded in Indo-China is an imperialist peace.

On the side of France, there was no semblance of an attempt to pretend that the Indo-Chinese people, or even the puppet government under Bao Dai, was being consulted. An even more extreme form of this blatantly imperialist attitude was taken by the United States which, in general, strove for continuation, or even extension, of the war.

In the case of Viet-Minh a Stalinist leadership building on a genuine sentiment for independence made it clear, time after time, that they were subordinating this struggle to the needs of Russia and China. The central persons in the negotiation itself were Molotov and Chou en Lai. Again, little or no attempt was made to cover up the imperialist character of the agreement from the point of view of the Stalinists.

Moreover, the likelihood is that the military demarcation lines drawn up under the truce agreement will remain the political boundaries between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Thus Vietnam will be divided between the Stalinists and the French; divided into half in the same way that Germany and Korea were.

Despite the reactionary and imperialist nature of the truce agreement, it has one feature which socialists do not decry; it puts an end to the bloodletting which has wracked the country for the last eight years. The end of the bloodshed and of the destruction of the country will be welcomed by the peoples of the world. It can also give the genuine Indochinese nationalists a chance to regroup themselves and begin a struggle for a free united Indochina. We have to recognize at the same time that it also provides a breathing spell for the two imperialisms to consolidate their rule over their respective sections of the country.

The truce really satisfies no one; not America, nor even France, nor, according to press reports, the Vietminh. The Bao Dai regime has also protested against the partition of the land. The unhappiness of the Americans, French and Vietminh over the truce does not concern us, nor can we feel aroused by the semi-hypocritical and totally ineffectual protestations by France's puppets.

Of greater concern to us is the reported statement of a coalition of religious-political groups which are more or less independent from both Ho and Bao Dai. We note with gratification that this statement characterized the truce as a division of the country between French colonialism and Stalinism, a division which frustrates the desire of the Vietnamese people for an independent united Vietnam. - Regardless of whether or not these groups have the potential for developing in a Third Camp direction and regardless of their present nature, we feel that this reported statement represents the true interests of the Vietnamese people.

Whatever progressive developments will occur in the next period can only occur in opposition to the division of the country and to the two imperialist forces that it is divided between. What is needed is the organization of a genuine independence movement -- a movement which will struggle for a free, democratic, united and independent Indo-China.

end

NAC STATEMENT ON GUATEMALA

(17)

(The following statement was adopted by the YSL National Action Committee at its meeting of July 6th by unanimous vote.)

The Young Socialist League condemns the cynical imperialist intervention of the United States government in the revolution against the Guatemalan government headed by Jacobo Arbenz.

The revolution led by Carlos Armas would not have been possible without the military assistance and political encouragement of Washington against a democratically elected government which had won widespread support through its program of land reform. The self-styled "liberation" army propped up by United States support is on a par with the phoney "liberation" armies that the Stalinists often use to cover their reactionary policies.

The justification of this imperialist adventure is made on the grounds that the Arbenz government was "Communist influenced" or "supported". No pretense was even made that it was a Stalinist regime or that it was Stalinist dominated.

The direct beneficiaries of the Armas revolution will be the United Fruit Company and the dispossessed Guatemalan landlords. The Guatemalan workers and peasants who supported the Arbenz government, and from whom the Stalinists derived their greatest strength, have not learned of the reactionary character of Stalinism. It is the United States and its allies, the landlords and the United Fruit Company, which stand out as the reactionaries.

In the name of fighting Stalinism, the United States has handed another political victory to Stalinism. The imperialist intervention has been denounced and exposed throughout the world, even by the conservative press, and once more Stalinism has been able to demagogically pose as the champion of national independence, land reform and democracy. The Guatemalan episode once more conclusively demonstrates the inability of capitalism and its reactionary allies to wage a progressive struggle against Stalinism, and their incapacity to lead the way to a truly democratic society.

end

STATEMENT ON ATOMIC WEAPONS

By Mike Harrington

(The following statement, by Mike Harrington, will be presented to the NEC Plenum)

The Young Socialist League is not a pacifist organization, although it includes, and welcomes, pacifists in its rank.

However, the development of modern armament has reached a point where even non-pacifists must take a principled and categorical stand.

The use of atomic weapons against cities is an act which is morally and politically unjustifiable. We therefore categorically condemn such weapons, no matter what government may use them. As weapons of total destruction, atomic bombs cannot be used by one class against another, or by one government, however progressive, against another, for they strike at all humanity, regardless of class or nationality.

We therefore affirm an absolute rejection of the use of such weapons at any time or under any circumstances.

end

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BIG POWER NEGOTIATIONS

By Mike Harrington

(The following resolution by Mike Harrington will be presented to the YSL National Executive Committee Plenum in September.)

I. To a socialist, "co-existence" of the two major blocs means the co-existence of imperialist exploitation. We are therefore opposed to any point of view which would raise such a slogan. For a socialist, there can only be one attitude: for socialism, against imperialist power divisions.

However, when we say this we must be very clear on what we mean. We are dealing with the concept of co-existence as a historical solution to the problems of our time. By rejecting such a capitulation to the forces of imperialism, by demanding that the continuing struggle be for socialism, we do not necessarily oppose a detente, even an imperialist one, which may well be the very pre-condition of the struggle of the third camp against the two imperialisms.

Within this context, we must very carefully define our attitude toward big power negotiations.

II. In line with our general point of view, we reject the notion that big power negotiations can lead to a permanent settlement of the crisis of the twentieth century. For since that crisis is rooted in two exploitative systems, even the approximation of a solution must involve struggle against them.

III. In the immediate future, we can, however, see how such negotiations might lead precisely toward a strengthening of the third camp.

(a) A detente would result in a lessening of polarization. It would obviously come as a partial response to the pressure of mass movements in both camps and in the uncommitted areas. Such movements would not be, and are not now, third camp. They are an inchoate reaction to conditions whose final political articulation must be the third camp.

As such, we would be found as the left-wing of such movements, e.g. the Bevanites.

(b) A detente would also involve some kind of assertion of independence on the part of the uncommitted nations. Such Nehru-like phenomenon are not the third camp; they are also the area of struggle for the third camp.

IV. But above all: imperialist peace is to be preferred to imperialist war, for such a peace still contains within it the hope, the possibility, of the third camp, while imperialist war promises the possibility of a destruction so vast as to initiate a retrogression of historic proportions.

V. Therefore, we define our political attitude toward big-power negotiations as follows:

(a) they are incapable of making any kind of a permanent solution to the crisis of our times, and we reject the position of those who conceive them as such;

(b) they are capable of providing immediate conditions conducive to the growth of the third camp, or rather they would arise partially as the result of such conditions;

(c) we analyze the movements which demand such negotiations as incipient, non-articulated third camp phenomenon;

(d) as a detente, as a breathing space in which third camp struggle can grow, we prefer big-power negotiations to big-power war, imperialist peace to imperialist war;

(e) but we clearly affirm that only anti-imperialist third camp struggle can ever make a solution of the evils of war and poverty which are the scourge of our time.

end

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By Scott Arden, Jake Barnes, Henry Gale and Charles Radetsky

The authors believe that the independent socialist movement, as expressed mainly in our organization, the YSL, and that of our close friends of the Independent Socialist League (as the only other third camp socialist organization of any consequence in the U.S.), faces a crisis. In our opinion this crisis, the origins of which lie equally in the objective trends of the present epoch and in the radical movements and tendencies from which we come, has become so serious that "holding the line" is no longer sufficient -- rather, only the most complete and determined theoretical and organizational rearmament, begun immediately and prosecuted with all of the vigor and resources we can muster, can hope to place our movement in a position where we will be able to decisively influence the advanced workers and other politically conscious elements in the coming period.

It is our intention, which we will pursue with every effort and through all of the political and organizational channels open to us, to probe and expose the nature and roots of this crisis in our own cadre and in the theoretical arsenals of our movement, to draw the necessary conclusions for clarity and effectiveness, and to act within the independent socialist movement, loyally, seeking by every democratic means to secure the adoption and effectuation of the principles and policies which we believe to be necessary to the resolution of the crisis. We welcome the aid of other comrades in this endeavor.

Although we believe that the roots of the crisis lie in major questions of principle and theory, we refuse to shrink from the seemingly most trifling questions of organizational detail, since (1) we know well that clarification often must begin at such levels (where deeper political differences have often, historically, first become evident) and (2) because we resist the snobish and dangerous error of drawing a false dichotomy between "political" and "organizational" questions -- which, though obviously distinguished by certain features, are dialectically interrelated, frequently in the closest possible way.

Further, we are particularly mindful of our responsibilities in the matter of leadership. It is an axiom of political responsibility that criticism of a leadership group is only responsible if the opposition is itself willing and able to provide an alternative leadership. At the same time as we attempt to win the support of the YSL cadres to our theoretical and programmatic positions, we shall advance representatives of our positions as candidates for leading positions in the movement, with the declared aim of achieving a working majority on the leading committees. Any less would be frivolous.

THE DEATH AGONY OF CAPITALISM AND THE CRISIS OF THE PROLETARIAN MOVEMENT.

We consider that the present drift in the independent socialist movement in the U.S. is toward abstentionism with regard to the labor movement and the trade union struggles, coupled with adaptation to the "liberal intelligentsia" in orientation, and centrist in general, particularly in questions of the world anti-imperialist wave of revolution. The symptoms of these diseases are numerous and at this point we shall cite only a single glaring instance for each charge. Although our movement has drastically criticised even the most advanced trade unions (correctly), such as the UAW-CIO, for their lack of a serious program of demands in the face of growing unemployment and unrest, CHALLENGE (and LABOR ACTION) have not gone on to present a program of realistic immediate demands to catch the imagination of the workers. Although the major topic of discussion in every shop in the country is recession and layoffs, our movement has not produced a single full-fledged discussion of this problem. It is to the advanced section of the working class and its allies -- including of course the youth and student movement -- that we must address ourselves if we ever hope to gain their ear.

If we continue to ignore the immediate problems of the workers and student and working class youth to such a degree, we shall cut off completely any hope of not being permanently ignored by them. To us, this glaring failure to provide articulation (and, when we have the opportunity, leadership) to the class in whose name we speak is symptomatic of the rampant growth of petty-bourgeois and academicist attitudes and prejudices in the socialist movement — which is not entirely a consequence of our social composition, but also of a general, and growing, tendency to abandon the theoretical tools of Marxism for the language and mode of thought of petty-bourgeois democratic phrase-mongering.

Our orientation on the campus and among the official liberals has become one of attempting to reconcile ourselves to them on the basis of urging them to greater intransigence in defense of their own avowed principles. Granted that this approach has at least the merit of realizing that they could never be won over to a revolutionary socialist position, it has the serious drawback, which we believe has already manifested itself to a dangerous degree, of transforming our movement into a rear-guard which attempts to cover and delay the retreat of the liberals from a liberalism which we ourselves analyse as untenable. It would be better to make the sober assessment that the degeneration of world capitalism and the unprecedented rise in world power of the growing U.S. State, and the increasing militarization of all phases of American life, have together rendered the classical intelligentsia venal to the last degree, and to make our own approach one of competition with, rather than infiltration or "influence of", this social group.

The dominant mood in American life today is that of petty-bourgeois terror and hysteria in the face of the threat of Stalinism, and this mood has seriously infected even our own cadres. In political practice its consequences appear in the form of slogans and formulations which imply that if only the bourgeoisie would make some concessions to the workers, though still within the framework, of course, of bourgeois class rule and capitalist property relations, then the workers would be glad to participate in the crusade against Stalinism. That in the face of the daily crumbling of the entire edifice of world capitalism a Marxist could even consider abating any aspect of the class struggle -- for anything this side of workers' power-- is to build a solid and firm bridge to class-collaboration of the most blatant sort. And to suggest that this decadent, rotten-to-the-core capitalism is even capable of any such major progressive step is to decisively miss the central objective development of our epoch. One does not expect lively offspring to come from senility, nor unprecedented progressive developments to emerge from the womb of capitalism in its death agony.

WHAT MUST BE DONE.

The comrades who share our general analysis of the crisis of our movement must now prepare for a thorough re-evaluation and an intense period of thought and study. We have in progress, or projected, a comprehensive series of theoretical and practical-agitational documents and pamphlets which embody the tentative course which we consider necessary. (Agreeing on the problems, and the general approach necessary in approaching them, we are working on these problems in something approaching a concerted way.) These will be submitted, as may be appropriate, to the YSR or the leading committees of the YSL and to the September Plenum. Those of us who are also ISL members will, in all consistency, raise similar questions in the ISL as may be appropriate. Those of the most pressing priority can bear schematic description:

(A) We will present, to the YSL Plenum, a resolution under the title "Draft Resolution on the International Situation". Our fire will particularly concentrate on two points:

I. The attitude taken toward the national and social revolutions in the colonial world, which seems to us, for reasons already enumerated, to be one of abstentionism, i.e., of abandoning these movements to Stalinist leadership and, where such is not

already the case, eventual Stalinist control. More concretely, we shall oppose the line of calling for the formation of "third camp movements" in these areas from whatever uncommitted (though however corrupt) forces may exist, and substitute our own dictum that the third camp in the colonial world can only be created by fighting at the side of the masses in the anti-imperialist struggle, and actively contesting the fraudulent claim of the Stalinists to leadership. The petty-bourgeois, of course, who views Stalinism as a force of almost mystical potency, as a direct result of the gulf between himself and the workers, will be horrified. If so, the exposure of such elements in their true colors will in itself justify the effort involved.

II. The idea that socialists can call for the formation "on a consistently democratic basis, of an Independent Western Union" is, if possible, even more pernicious. That such an enormous and unprecedented progressive step as a unification of Western Europe is possible to capitalism at its present stage of degeneration is unthinkable from beginning to end. Such a proposal can only exhibit a transparent faith in the continuing vitality of capitalism which, if it had any basis, would make the very existence of our movement a function of pure sentimentality. At this stage, Europe will be unified either by military conquest, or on a socialist basis -- nothing else is possible.

(B) An attempt at a serious analysis of the social nature and historical prospects of Stalinism, and its fundamental dependence on the existence of the final crisis of world capitalism. The fact, that is, that Stalinism feeds on the decay of capitalism and derives its dynamic from the continued existence of the capitalist system. Particular attention will be paid to investigating the possibility that indigenous bureaucratic collectivism (national-Stalinism) may under certain conditions play the role formerly played by the bourgeoisie at the level of the bourgeois-democratic national revolution. The forces tending toward national-Stalinism, or "Titoism", will be closely analysed in terms of the ideas advanced by Comrade Wang in the New International of Mar-Apr, 1951.

We are, further, alarmed by the growing tendency in our midst to substitute anti-Stalinism for socialism. We are not willing to substitute Stalinophobia for political thinking. While opposing Stalinism consistently, in the strongest possible way, we find ourselves forced to the conclusion that it is necessary to educate certain comrades to some basic socialist ideas -- indeed, even those ideas which are normally covered by the most basic introductory class in socialist theory. Without digressing at length to address ourselves to this specific problem we, at this time, would point out only several things which should give comrades an indication of what we mean:

No class society (even the totalitarian) is invincible -- rather, as long as there is class society the oppressed class (or classes) will be forced into conflict with their ruling class (whatever be its nature). Every class society, as such, inevitably and with no exceptions, carries within itself contradictions that must inevitably lead to its downfall. The means of struggle that the oppressed class will find open to itself, or be able to seize, will of course be dictated by the nature of that society. That these means are different under Stalinism than under capitalism in no way can mean, to the Marxist, that they do not exist. If Marx did not, in his time, chart the contradictions of Stalinist class society and provide us with an analysis of the nature and forms of class struggle within that society then that is our job -- the job of Marxists today. We do not propose to evade our historic task by the simple but dangerous expedient of excepting Stalinism from the general laws that apply to all class societies.

(C) Resolutions on orientation will be introduced, as required, at all levels of the YSL, urging the sharpest possible turn toward the active participation of our members and movement in the trade unions and labor politics, based on the greatly increased industrialization of as many of our members as possible, and the recruitment of youth for careers as shop militants.

(D) Especially in the present period, the arenas most readily available to a socialist youth organization are largely limited to the campus. Therefore, while attempting to assert ourselves in a balanced manner in all arenas in which American youth are currently to be reached, we realize that our immediate prospects for recruitment lie among student youth.

(E) An article is projected, and should soon be available, which will oppose in the strongest possible way that tendency that has arisen, and any that may arise, which proposes any formula of a period of "peaceful co-existence" between the capitalist world and Stalinism. The fight for human dignity and socialist freedom was not halted in the face of the development of the mass destruction weapons of World Wars I and II and it must not be abandoned or castrated in a hysterical reaction to the threat of fission weapons. It is by no means evident, in any degree, that the peoples of the two war blocs -- or even the decisive sections of their rulers -- would contenance the unleashing of a war involving such catastrophic weapons. If anything these peoples are less ready than before for such adventures.

There can be no excuse for making our movement a belated party to the infamous deals of Yalta and Teheran, via such proposals as "co-existence". Socialist do not grant either of these social forms (Stalinism or capitalism) the right or potential for long-continued or stabilized existence, let alone "co-existence". To advocate an endorse imperialist deals at the expense of the world's peoples (and particularly at the expense of those sectors now engaged in legitimate and democratic struggles for national self-determination) could only mark us forever as traitors to the world working class and socialist movement. The cowardice based on petty-bourgeois hysteria and fear, and compounded by national chauvanism coupled with an attitude of ignorance and distrust toward the world working class and its potential, must be decisively disavowed by our ranks and leadership if we are to continue to consider ourselves a socialist movement.

(F) It is anticipated by the present writers that comrades whom we believe to share many of our general attitudes (if not our specific conclusions) will introduce resolutions on the War Question which will be acceptable to us. Though in our opinion this task is less pressing in nature in view of the current developments on the world scene (the war danger, for the time being, having receded) we welcome such resolutions -- if for no other reason than the fact that precisely on this question near-capitulationist tendencies in our midst have tended to arise most clearly.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROPOSALS FOR THE NEC PLENUM.

We are united in our support of the informal proposals already made that the NEC Plenum reconstitute the size and composition of the NAC. We propose a five man NAC. As long as the size of the NAC is such that it is necessary to go begging for people who are willing or able to serve, there is no chance for it to reflect the specific weight of various viewpoints in even an approximate manner -- much less provide the YSL with a week-to-week national leadership of real calibre. It is actually a necessity, from the point of view of democracy, that the NAC be small enough so that there will be active competition for seats. For leading comrades to have to fight for NAC seats would be the surest way to insure a vast increase in their theoretical and literary activity.

The present "overweight" NAC has the effect of thoroughly obscuring the relative strength of the positions which everyone knows exist, and at the same time creates a situation where leading comrades are not forced to take a definite position on various issues facing our movement. With a five man NAC, the prospect of winning a working majority would at least exist for any serious single viewpoint. We will attempt to maintain those two comrades in agreement with us who are on the current NAC, and to add one more, which would give us a working majority of three. Should we fail, at least then those who did gain the majority would be in a position of unambiguous responsibility on policy matters. We shall, therefore, raise and publicize the demand for the reduction of the NAC to five members, and formally propose this reduction and a specific slate at the Plenum itself.

RESOLUTION ON DISSENT MAGASINE

by Michael Harrington

(This resolution was adopted by the National Executive Committee of the YSL by a mail referedum)

I. The Young Socialist League is, on principle, in favor of all open forums where various points of view within the socialist movement may be expressed. We do not consider that such forums can take place of socialist organization, particularly in this period when we feel that every convinced socialist must belong to a socialist organization. We do however, feel that these forums have a great value in presenting a place for exchange of ideas and their dissemination to socialists and non-socialists.

II. As such a phenomenon, the new magazine Dissent deserves our support. This does not mean that we are in political agreement with the politics of any one editor of Dissent, or all of them taken together. It does mean that we welcome the appearance of this magazine as a forum for socialist discussion, a forum which will print the socialist anti-war position.

III. We therefore encourage all of our comrades who wish to do so to write for Dissent and to present the various aspects of our point of view.

IV. We also encourage the use of Dissent as part of our educational program.

May 1954

end

----- CLIP AND MAIL TO: -----
YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE, Third Floor, 114 W. 14th St., New York 11, New York

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