

YSA

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Vol. 9 No. 9
February, 1966

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50 cents

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

YSA, BOX 471, COOPER STATION, N.Y., N.Y. 10003

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NEC STATEMENT ON THE STEVE FOX CASE

The letters and supplementary statements included in this bulletin are documents pertaining to the charges brought against Steve Fox by the Detroit local, his trial and expulsion, his appeal, and correspondence with the National Office.

In his "Open Letter to YSA Members Concerning the Antiwar Orientation and the Charges against Stephen Fox," written November 20, 1965, Fox does not dispute the charges brought against him by the Detroit local; on the contrary he readily admits that he distributed the "Allies and Perspective" document to the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam.

In his "Summation of the Situation" written February 4, 1966, Fox further states, "The question the YSAers have to deal with is far beyond the formal question of whether I broke discipline or not." Once again, he does not dispute the charges or claim there was anything unfair about his trial and expulsion.

It is clear that the facts of the case are not in dispute. On November 17, 1965, Fox printed in Quantity and distributed to the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam for discussion and a vote his document entitled "Allies and Perspectives for the Antiwar Movement." A copy of the document had previously been submitted to the Detroit local Executive Committee, but there had not been time for them to act upon it. Fox's act was a clear violation of discipline, for which charges were brought against him in accordance with the provisions in the constitution, and he was expelled. Fox did not appeal this action by the Detroit local until January 9, 1966, well over a month after he was expelled. According to the Constitution, such an appeal is to be made within fifteen days.

Another aspect of Fox's breach of discipline is documented by the November 11 letter from Fox to the NEC, and the NEC reply of November 18. Far from being merely a local matter, Fox's action came at a time when the YSA was engaged in the most crucial nationally coordinated intervention in the antiwar movement to date. He not only distributed the document to the Detroit Committee, but in direct violation of an NEC decision and instruction, personally distributed it to the delegates and participants at the Thanksgiving national antiwar convention. Thus, Fox, still formally a YSAer, was publicly attacking the YSA at the convention where we were under attack by all our opponents.

Since the convention and his expulsion, Fox has continued his public attacks on the YSA. He has joined SDS and personally distributed, both in Detroit and at the national SDS convention, leaflets attacking the YSA's role at the antiwar convention. His various documents and attacks on the YSA have been republished by Spartacist and distributed at antiwar meetings around the country. (See Spartacist appendix)

Fox's major contention in reply to the charges brought against him is that politically he is correct, that the entire YSA

membership and its conventions are wrong, and therefore his flaunting of the most elementary concepts of discipline is justified. He states in his "Summation," "For the political defense of the movement you must consider why the presentation of such ideas constitutes the breaking of discipline." Even giving such a statement a charitable interpretation, it shows an abysmal contempt for the YSA and the decisions and actions taken by it. All political activities engaged in by members of the YSA are subject to the approval and direction of the YSA. This would be true even if the activities did not contradict the decisions and policies of the YSA.

Fox's statement implies that his ideas have not been submitted to the YSA or discussed by the YSA, that he has been prevented from even raising them, and that the Detroit local acted out of fear of confronting Fox's most recent ideas. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The YSA has made exception after exception to allow Fox to present his ideas for discussion within the YSA. He has been part of a minority for the last two conventions, has submitted and supported numerous documents, and has seen every one of his positions discussed and rejected by the national conventions. At the last national convention, Fox (Carlton) presented two documents during pre-convention discussion. Neither of these documents received enough support in a single YSA local to win even one delegate. No delegates to the convention were elected on the basis of support for the Fox documents. Despite this fact, Fox was given time to present his position to the convention, where it was unanimously rejected.

Fox's presentation of these views within the YSA, during pre-convention discussion and at the convention was not a violation of discipline. Neither would it have been if he had submitted his most recent views to the current pre-convention discussion on the antiwar movement. They would have been discussed and voted upon by the entire membership. But the public distribution of his position of opposition to the YSA policies outside the YSA, is clearly a violation of discipline.

Fox disputes neither the fact of his indiscipline nor the fairness of his trial. He merely informs us once again that he is right, the YSA is wrong and headed for doom, and that because of this, Fox, the individual, now stands above the norms and regulations of the YSA. That opinion he is entitled to hold and act upon - but not as a YSA member.

The NEC will ask the pre-convention National Committee plenum of the YSA to present a motion to the convention to uphold and commend the action of the Detroit YSA local in expelling Steve Fox.

February 17, 1966

3737 Woodward
Detroit 1, Michigan
November 18, 1965

Dear Comrade Steve:

You are hereby notified that charges have been brought against you for a willful act of indiscipline.

In accordance with the article of the Constitution dealing with Trial Procedure, the following Sections will apply: "Section 1. Any member or body of the YSA may bring charges against any member for violation of the constitutional articles, program or policies of the YSA. The charges must be initially presented in writing to the highest body of which the accused is a member. That body may constitute itself as the trial committee or may refer the charges to a lower body of which the accused is a member. Charges may be dismissed at any time by the body having jurisdiction at that time. Section 2. No body shall meet as a trial committee unless all members have been informed in advance of the business at hand. The accused must be given notice of the trial date and a copy of the charges at least 15 days preceeding the trial. Failure to appear or to send a letter of defense in the absence of excuse for such failure shall be grounds for conducting the trial in absentia. Section 3. The disciplinary measures which are available in the event the accused is found guilty are, in increasing order of severity: censure, private or public, suspension and expulsion. These measures may be applied only as a result of the trial procedure outlined in this article. To censure or suspend a simple majority vote is needed, to expell a two-thirds majority is required."

In following the procedure outlined by the Constitution, the Local, meeting as the trial committee on Decemver 5, 1965, at 5:00 p.m., will hear the charges. They are as follows:

- 1) On Friday, November 12, 1965, you presented a document entitled "Perspectives and Allies for the Anti-War Movement) for consideration by the Local Executive Committee. This document, including points to be voted upon, was to be submitted into the discussion of the Detroit Committee to End the War in VietNam prior to the sending of delegates to the National Coordinating Committee Convention in Washington.
- 2) At the time of the Executive Committee meeting of Saturday, November 13, all members of the Executive Committee had not yet had the opportunity to read the document, so no action was taken. It was decided by the Executive Committee to discuss the document and make a decision on your request after the one copy had been circulated among the Executive Committee members.
- 3) On Sunday, November 14, you called me to ask if the Executive Committee had made a decision about presenting the document. At that time I told you that the document was being circulated among the Executive Committee and that you would be notified after the discussion had taken place. On Monday, November 15,

you called Jan and asked if the Executive Committee had reached a decision. Jan stated that the question had not yet been taken up. He also said that he personally disagreed with the advisability of presenting the document for discussion in the Committee, but that the Executive Committee had not taken formal action. In neither of these conversations did you indicate that you intended to proceed regardless of the decision of the Local leadership.

4) On Wednesday, November 17, just prior to the meeting of the Detroit Committee to End the War in VietNam, we learned that your document had been printed in quantity, was placed on a table in the Committee's headquarters, and was to have a place on the agenda at the meeting, with a section of the document to be voted upon by the Committee membership.

5) Following the meeting, I called you and asked why the document had been given over to the Committee. You stated that it was to be presented. I asked if you were aware that you were violating discipline. You answered, "I was aware."

6) It is obvious from the aforementioned record of events that you made a conscious decision to violate YSA discipline knowing that the necessary result would involve disciplinary action.

Comradely,

Marilyn Levin

cc: Local Membership
National Office

11/21/65

Dear Jack,

Enclosed is a copy of an open letter to the YSA by Steve F. concerning the charges brought against him. A motion to the YSA to hold a discussion on his document is included in the open letter. He also issued an ultimatum to us to present the document publicly to the anti-war convention as an individual if we don't agree to jointly issue a paper including his points. The motion was declared out of order. So, now we are forced by the constitution to wait 2 weeks to throw him out (Dec. 5) while he continues to violate discipline as a YSAer.

A problem which exists because Steve is still a member is that he will undoubtedly attempt to attend YSA fraction meetings in Washington. Our feeling is that he shouldn't be allowed to attend these meetings.

That's it. See you in Washington.

Comradely,

Marilyn

(N.O. Note: A copy of the Open Letter is included in the Spartacist appendix. Pages 6-8 were originally a mimeographed copy of this letter, and thus have been omitted.)

February 23, 1966

Pages 6-8 were missing
in the original bulletin.

Marty

MINUTES OF DETROIT YSA
FOR SUN., DEC. 5, 1965

Motion - to dispense with minutes. passed
Approved agenda - E.C. report, sub-drive report, trial,
adjournment.

E.C. Report - Marilyn

motion - to dispense with class and business meeting to
allow maximum time for trial. passed.

motion - that time for trial be broken up as follows:
30 minutes presentation, 15 minute intermission, 45 minutes
for discussion and that the 45 minutes be divided among
those who sign up for speakers' list, and 15 minute sum-
maries. passed.

motion - that next meeting start at 3:00

Sub-drive report - Derrick M.

motion - sub-drive mobilization be held next Sun. at 10:30
in the morning. passed.

Trial -

motion - that Steve F. be expelled from the YSA. Opposed:
Steve F. For: all others. passed.

cc. Dobbs and Cannon

4055 Fourth, Apt. 301
Detroit, Michigan 48201
November 11, 1965

National Executive Committee
Young Socialist Alliance
P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York 3, New York

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a resolution that I am proposing we submit to the forthcoming antiwar convention in Washington, D.C. I realize that the YSA is submitting a number of papers, but I feel that the question dealt with in "Allies and Perspectives for the Antiwar Movement" is crucial for the movement in the coming period.

Already in some areas students are being hit by the combination of a lack of large scale organized movement and lack of perspective. With a correct political position, the YSA can help stop and/or prevent the demoralization process.

Because this question is of such prime political importance, I am sending copies to comrades Dobbs and Cannon.

Comradely,

Stephen Fox

P.S. Because of the shortness in time, please respond immediately.

enc: Perspectives and Allies For the Antiwar Movement (see Spartacist appendix)

Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, New York 10003
November 18, 1966

Dear Steve,

Last night at a meeting of the NEC your document for submitting to the Washington Antiwar Convention and four points to be voted on by the delegates was discussed.

The unanimous feeling of the NEC, in line with our orientation toward the antiwar movement (see Doug's plenum report to refresh your memory), is that our major tasks at the convention will be: (1) to push for the establishment of a national organization based on the independent committees to end the war in Vietnam with its focus on the war in Vietnam and no other issue; (2) the central programmatic demand to be adopted by the new organization should be withdrawal of U.S. troops, as opposed to the demand for negotiations, based on the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination.

The YSA's point of view on the war in Vietnam and the antiwar movement has been and at the convention will be expressed in our general propaganda (YS, Militant, Vietnam pamphlet) and in person. We will not be submitting any documents to the convention in the name of the YSA.

Many of the points you make in your document are correct but it is simply not appropriate in view of the major tasks before us at this time. A vote by the convention delegates on the four points would be especially inappropriate. Other parts of your document are not correct.

The NEC passed the following motion with respect to your request: "Motion that the Fox document be filed and not submitted by the national YSA, any local YSA unit, or any individual to the Washington Antiwar Convention." (adopted unanimously)

Fraternally,

Jon Britton
For the NEC

cc: Detroit YSA

4055 Fourth, Apt. 301
Detroit, Michigan 48201
January 9, 1966

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

Dear Comrades,

I am hereby officially appealing my expulsion from the Young Socialist Alliance by the Detroit local to the coming national convention of the YSA. Please notify me as to the time and place of the proceedings and any other factors that may be relevant such as the length of my presentation.

Comradely,

Steve Fox

Box 471
Cooper Station
New York, New York 10003

January 25, 1966

Steve Fox
4055 Fourth, Apt. 301
Detroit, Michigan 48201

Dear Steve,

We received your letter of January 9 indicating that you are appealing your expulsion of December 5 to the next YSA convention. Your right to appeal was forfeited as the YSA Constitution states that "an appeal must be filed within 15 days after the action being appealed."

Nevertheless, the NEC suggests you immediately send us a written statement of your reasons for appealing your expulsion. We will try to see that a copy gets to each of the convention delegates. Whether or not oral arguments in support of your appeal will be heard will be a decision of the convention itself. In the interests of having your statement carefully considered by the delegates it should be kept to a reasonable length.

The Convention will take place on March 4,5, and 6 in Chicago at the Workman's Circle.

Comradely,

Betsey Barnes
National Secretary

February 5, 1966

Y.S.A. N.E.C.
New York

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are the papers which I am presenting to the YSA convention. It is impossible for YSAers to understand what this expulsion is all about without having read the Perspectives and Allies document. The Summation speaks for itself. The antiwar convention analysis is critical to having an understanding in the concrete the differences between the position of the majority and my own.

Inasmuch as I must be careful not to take off time from work, I would not be able to be in Chicago until Saturday, March 5. Please take this into consideration.

Please respond soon.

Comradely,

Steve

enc: Perspectives and Allies for the Antiwar Movement
Report on the Antiwar Convention
Summation of the Situation

SUMMATION OF THE SITUATION

by

George Carlton

For some eight years now I have worked and helped to build what have up to recently been organizations based on the interests of the working class, organizations having confidence in the mass of workers to struggle against this society which weighs like a millstone around their necks and sends their youth to slaughter.

For a number of years, $3\frac{1}{2}$ to be exact, I have become increasingly aware of an important drift away from this essential confidence in the working class. Decades of relative isolation from workers struggles and decades of relative quiescence of the class have shaken the old basic cadre to the core. We therefore find that when the student youth began to constitute an increasing proportion of the American Trotskyist movement, a more and more rapid change occurred in the basic political perspective of the movement. What could have been a healthy addition and strengthening factor to the movement if there had been a strong, confident proletarian core to orient them, turned into something else. As the composition of the movement has changed and as the student youth, to whom the problems of society and of the working class remain an abstraction, took greater control, the initial degeneration in the proletarian orientation caused by demoralization of the older ranks took an accelerated form.

To the student youth who find something wrong with society and are attracted to socialism, "working class" is just another abstract category that they accept. They file this concept away like good students. However, when there is a question of concrete application to the struggle, every leadership or force that is or seems to be moving in a leftward direction becomes the wave of the future. Lack of real roots in the struggle and in the class has brought with it a lack of ability to look at any development in any manner except impressionistically. First, within my memory, came SNCC as the bearer of the revolutionary banner. Then the Black Muslims; then Malcolm. Today it is the students. In Detroit for a period it was Cleage who could do no wrong. Every time the question of raising a working class program was brought up, first in civil rights and now in the antiwar movement, the answer was: "This is not the time." It took SNCC and CORE to raise working class demands for the civil rights movement before the Trotskyist movement did. Even now a real program has not been developed; the "program" has consisted of reporting what has already been developed by SNCC and CORE. It took Malcolm to break from the petty-bourgeois aspects of black nationalism before the Trotskyist movement would even recognize that there were petty-bourgeois aspects of black nationalism. (See 1964 Draft Resolution on the Negro Struggle and Theoretical and Practical Problems Facing the YSA by G. Carlton.) The first criticism of the Black Muslims that the Trotskyist movement ever really put

out was in the words of Malcolm just before he was murdered. But there is no Malcolm today to have the courage to say the things that we should be outspokenly saying.

"Ah, but that is not so," majority spokesmen have declared self-righteously. "We have indeed criticized all these organizations that you say we do not criticize." And frantically they search through their documents and triumphantly show me a sentence here and a phrase there that say: "All of course is not perfect in such and such an organization. They have not yet completely assimilated the correct approach." Phrasemongering has taken the place of careful, balanced criticism. Phrasemongering has taken the place of a concrete working class program. The Stalinists say the same thing about the Soviet Union: "Of course, all is not perfect..."

The approach that the YSA has taken towards the antiwar movement is the culmination of the logic of its present political method. The Trotskyist movement could have played a crucial role in the development of a militant working class perspective for a whole section of the antiwar movement. Instead they have declared such a program alien to their approach. Instead they engaged in a whole set of maneuvers around second-rate organizational questions in order to win organizational control of whatever they could. Instead at the November antiwar convention they subordinated all political discussion, the focal point upon which a revolutionary working class organization attempts to win hegemony, to an unworthy detail in their maneuvering. Instead they have branded themselves as Stalinist maneuverers and wreckers in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of the antiwar movement, including its best elements. And what will the YSA do when the NCC does accept its slogan of immediate withdrawal?

Why did this occur? The negative attitude toward a working class perspective does not leave a vacuum. The YSA has turned to other forces, differing from time to time, to carry through the struggle. Today the Force is the students. But the Trotskyist movement has been burned quite a number of times by these petty-bourgeois groupings. They have therefore begun to turn more and more to the only force that they feel they can really trust: themselves. As the YSA has lost its revolutionary confidence in the working class (and therefore lost the ability to develop a working class political program of meaning for the antiwar movement) to that extent they have replaced the political struggle for political hegemony in the antiwar movement with an organizational struggle: it is an organizational maneuver thinly clad by one slogan aimed towards no particular class forces in the tradition of the Stalinists.

What is the reason for my taking the course that I did at this time? These developments have been taking place for some time. However, for the first time during this whole generation the YSA is faced with a vital growing movement in which it could have important influence. This movement comes at a time when there is a seething among the industrial workers. It comes at a time when the working mass of the Negro people are demanding more and more solutions

to their economic situation as the most exploited and impoverished section of the working class, as well as demanding their democratic rights. The YSA reacted politically to this situation by rejecting the most basic and minimal class approach as presented in the Perspectives and Allies document, and in the manner described above. The final decision as to this fundamental political question rests now in the hands of the 1966 YSA convention.

The question the YSAers have to deal with is far beyond the formal question of whether I broke discipline or not. I as an individual am not important. For the political defense of the movement you must consider why the presentation of such ideas constitutes the breaking of discipline. This is the only political basis upon which you can decide. If these ideas are fundamental to the very existence and survival of the movement as a revolutionary working class movement then the question of formal discipline must take a back seat.

The decision is yours.

February 4, 1966

3737 Woodward
Detroit, Mich. 48201
January 20, 1966

Dear Betsey:

Enclosed are all of Fox's documents which I could find around here. As you can see, he has been very prolific. Also, he has been much more active since he freed himself from the shackles of our petty-bourgeois centrist organization.

He was expelled December 5 and by December 8 he was in SDS, actively collaborating with our worst opponents, namely P. W. and co. The documents which he passed out at his trial attacking the antiwar work of the YSA have been given to any number of new kids who have come around the Detroit Committee and I found a pile of them there yesterday sitting on top of, and burying, copies of the BTHN Newsletter which W. and Co. have been trying to exclude from the DCEWV on the grounds that they are not genuine antiwar literature but are factional organs.

W. was delighted with Steve's expulsion and has used it whenever he thought he could against the YSA. He supported and pushed Steve's motion to orient the DCEWV to the Rouge Plant because he thought this was something that we cared about and would oppose. We didn't spend any effort on it, however, Steve got a few kids together, wrote up the leaflet in conjunction with his father (he had a committee to work on it but didn't consult them on the final version), and a few of them passed it out last week at the Plant. Walt went along to see what happened: Not much. As you can see, the leaflet is pretty bad: no bring-em-home, just "workers can be a decisive force for peace."

Steve is now sort of an entertaining oddity in SDS. A number of the SDSers think his position is intellectually profound but, of course, they are too lazy to do anything about it. He is going to entertain the local SDS meeting tonight with a discussion on "A Working-Class Perspective for SDS?"

As you may have noted already, Steve waited too long to appeal. His appeal came considerably more than fifteen days after his expulsion. So we are under no obligation to allow him to waste time at the convention. The opinion of myself and the alternate NCers here is that we shouldn't.

If you wish any more information, let me know quickly.

Comradely,

Jan

(The following articles were written by Stephen Fox, who has recently been expelled from the Detroit branches of the YSA and SWP. We have reprinted them for the information of those working in the anti-war movement to aid in clarifying the issues involved. Additional copies may be obtained from SPARTACIST, Box 1377, G.P.O., New York, N.Y. 10001.)

PERSPECTIVES AND ALLIES FOR THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

by Stephen Fox

(The questions of political action and minimum demands for the anti-war movement are not within the scope of this paper although these questions are extremely important. The question of the formal organization of the anti-war movement is also not considered for the same reasons. Outside of these questions, it is essential that those in the anti-war movement have a perspective on the various forces within our society and our relation to them in order to develop a program and a good idea of where we are going. The paper itself is not being presented for vote, but the points listed at the end are.)

INTRODUCTION

The anti-war movement is faced with the task of developing a force which is capable of halting the U.S. government's bloody struggle to maintain and extend its rule of force over the under-industrialized nations. The war in Vietnam, the action in Santo Domingo are the harbingers of an entire epoch in which the U.S. will play the role of gendarme over a seething, rebellious colonial empire, a role taken from the weakened imperialists of Britain, France, Belgium, and Portugal. The power of the western nations, both economic and political, is being threatened by the uprising of whole sections of the colonial masses, who are seeking an end to their grinding poverty, and end to their landlessness, an end to their super-exploitation in the mines, on the plantations, and in the factories, and an end to the vicious, despotic police states which maintain these conditions.

The government of the United States is lashing back with the weight of its gargantuan arsenal, its vast industrial resources, and with its youth who must shoulder the weapons.

The war was not begun and is not being carried out simply by ignorant or stupid politicians. The anti-war movement does not face a few individuals who have wormed their way to the top and are in positions of power by accident. Rather, we face the conscious policy of the majority of those who control the economic and political complex of this nation.

To understand the character of the social forces which the anti-war movement confronts, and the tremendous internal and external power they possess, is to recognize that a movement based overwhelmingly on the campus is not sufficient to halt the war in Vietnam. The questions that loom before the anti-war movement are: 1) who are our primary potential allies; and 2) what means are necessary to end the war.

WHO POTENTIALLY ARE OUR ALLIES

Before the second question can be answered, i.e., what means are necessary to end the war, it is necessary to establish from where our allies will be recruited.

The arenas that exist are 1) the politicians and members of the economic aristocracy; 2) the middle class businessmen and professionals; 3) the university-based people, students and faculty members; 4) the workers in organized areas, in unorganized sectors, and the unemployed; 5) the various minority groupings, the largest of which is, of course, the Negro people. This last grouping cuts across various lines of demarcation, although it is based overwhelmingly in the employed and unemployed workers.

1) The economic aristocracy in this country is, on the whole, the basis of support for the policies of the administration. Without their support the newspapers, the mass communications media, the political machines, and the entrenched bureaucrats throughout the apparatus would stop McNamara and Johnson dead. The war is too important, too decisive for the ruling economic stratum not to be intimately connected with the decisions and with the execution of the war.

There is, however, a section of this class which feels the war will be too costly, that there are other means, more liberal means of maintaining American domination in the colonial areas. An important, even decisive reason that they feel that the U.S. should not carry on such a war is the attitude of the American people, which is somewhat less than enthusiastic and which has given rise to a spirit-

Spartacist...2

ed, vocal, organized opposition. The governmental critics of U.S. foreign policy such as Senator Morse, and in the Santo Domingo crisis Senator Fulbright, must be recognized as limited and partial allies. Though their support is welcome, we must not have illusions on how far it will go. If we lean on it heavily, we will collapse when it is removed. An example of Morse's position was indicated at the time of the steel negotiations earlier this year. Senator Morse was part of the team sent in by Johnson to avert a steel strike. The Monday, August 30, 1965 issue of the Detroit Free Press carried the following quote from Morse: "'Neither side can justify the deadlock,' Morse said. 'It is unexcusable and unjustifiable. No group in management and no group in labor in the United States in this hour of crisis can justify bringing any segment of the economy to a standstill.'"

Senator Morse is still an intimate part of the political machine and we must recognize this. There should be no question as to Fulbright's relation to the economic and political structure.

2) Some people in the anti-war movement tend towards that section of the middle-class, of the small businessmen (small shopkeepers, grocers, etc.) and the professionals (doctors, lawyers, dentists, etc.) who have indicated a certain dissatisfaction with the war, as the first basis of support for the movement. However, because of their general attitudes and positions in society, this grouping is particularly vulnerable to "respectable" social pressure. Their lives in most instances are tied towards working to higher social and financial planes. Because they are striving towards these goals, because they see these goals potentially within their grasp, and finally because they, on the whole, do not want to jeopardize the social and financial status they have already gained, the majority of individuals in this grouping will not join an anti-war movement which stands firm against America's war policies. SANE is the organization which most clearly represents the liberal elements of this middle-class grouping within the anti-war movement. It vacillates under pressure, opposes the policies of the U.S. government by looking for "better ways" to combat the independence struggles, the "Communist" struggles.

Sections of this grouping will offer support of one sort or another to the firm, militant opposition to the war, but no decisive sector will be won until the anti-war movement is already powerful and massive.

3) The students and faculty members of the universities have been the first to raise angry protest on any important scale at the slaughter of the Vietnamese. This group, extremely important as a center for the organization of a mass movement against the war, as a spark, in and of itself has little social power. Alone it will become demoralized and unsure. Isolated it will retreat both politically and in numbers under the blows of the right wing and the government.

The university movement is still on the upswing. But the upsurge on the campus is not going to continue indefinitely without important outside support.

4) Logically, those who are most alienated from American society are the ones who can most easily be brought to clear understanding of the nature of the war and why it must be opposed. However, there is vast difference between being able to understand and being able to be organized into an opposition. With this in mind, we must look to the resources within the laboring class as a whole and the more highly exploited minority elements within it.

Firstly, there are millions of youth of draft age in the work force. There are millions more men and women there whose sons face going to Vietnam. The fear, the uncertainty is stirring just beneath the surface, and not always entirely beneath the surface.

Secondly, the viewpoint that the organized workers are content, that they have most of their basic problems solved, that they are really part of the middle class and thus have no real basis for struggle is false. While it is true that most workers are employed and in some cases even working overtime, the conditions under which they are working have deteriorated qualitatively. On the production lines of the auto plants it is not unusual for speed-up to have amounted to 200 and 300% in the last decade. In steel, the working conditions are also fantastic. Often workers are forced to work 16 hour days in the blazing heat of the furnaces. Gases, smoke and soot always clog the lungs in the steel mills and the foundries.

Everywhere the threat of cybernation looms over jobs. New metal stamping processes promise to eliminate thousands of jobs. Remote control devices are eliminating crane operators and locomotive engineers in the factory complexes. The printed circuit in electronics has eliminated jobs. The basic oxygen process and other technological advancements in steel hold the promise of hundreds of thousands walking the streets. For example, Bethlehem Steel's Burns Ditch plant, the most modern in the industry, may well produce up to 10% of the nation's steel with as few as 9,000 men. Uncontrolled cybernation in the mines has resulted in the unemployment of scores of thousands of men and is undermining the conditions of work and the wages in the small mines which must "remain competitive." Newly automated loading techniques are leading to the cutting down of work teams among the

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longshoremen. Computers are daily eliminating white collar jobs.

Insecurity is everywhere. Work conditions are deteriorating. Workers who find these circumstances in their daily lives must be asked: you or your sons are told we must fight in Vietnam. Why are we fighting there? For what are we fighting there? For whom are we dying there? The anti-war movement must reach these workers with the answers to these questions.

The unemployed and the super-exploited poor can be reached. However, the basic problem here is that this grouping is divided and demoralized, and their organization initially will most likely occur on an economic basis. The organizing of this sector will be of great importance in the future, but except in exceptional cases, the anti-war movement does not have the forces at this time to intervene here alone.

The crucial decision as to where the anti-war movement must consider extending its organization must take into account the decisive question of the trade unions. The difference between having a vehicle to organize within and not having one, the difference between having the protection of a union organization and not having it, the difference between having a degree of confidence in the ability of the workers to stand together and win, and not having this confidence make all the difference in the world as far as the question of who can be organized most easily and who must be approached first.

The Negro people, because of their position in this society, immediately reacted to the war as being alien to their needs, to their interests. Large numbers of Negroes quickly sized up the hypocrisy and deceit of the American government. This group, together with other oppressed minority groupings, are the most alienated section of American society and will form an important basis for the further development of the fight against the war.

Within these frameworks, i. e., the position of the workers as a whole, the Negro in particular, and the importance of the trade unions, the Negro worker in the organized industries attains a central position as the basis of anti-war organization within the trade-union movement, and therefore must attain a central importance for our movement.

WHAT MEANS ARE NECESSARY TO END THE WAR

The executives of American foreign policy do not take the decision of war lightly. Nor will their determination to carry through the policy be changed by moral suasion. They know what they are doing to the Vietnamese people. These are hard men of power fighting to maintain their power. To challenge them requires a position of power for those in the anti-war movement. Demonstrations on the present scale, while being an important tool for reaching people and for mobilizing and holding our forces, are not going to halt the war.

The organized workers numbering over fifteen million have vast economic and political power. United, filled with the confidence that they are correct, these workers can bring and hold scores of millions of other Americans with them and neutralize millions more. The life stream of the U.S. is in its industries and its transportation. These lie, potentially, within the power of the American worker. The power to halt the war lies within the ability of the American workers to unify the American people behind them and to stop or threaten to stop the economy. That is, the economic and much of the political power of the American working class lies within the concept of the political strike. While to propagandize along such lines on a general scale would be puerile, we must keep and use this concept to help organize forces within labor. This concept is essential to the future success of the movement.

HOW WILL THIS ORGANIZATION COME ABOUT?

The union leaderships have, almost to a man, capitulated to the policies of the government. Even Emil Mazey, secretary treasurer of the UAW, who has a certain tradition in the peace movement, broke under pressure and voted with the entire UAW executive board endorsing the war.

The allies of the anti-war movement lie in rank-and-file and not in the completely compromised leadership of the unions. The organization of the rank-and-file against the war will most likely take the form of a revolt against the union bureaucracies around a new, militant leadership and a more general program for job security, for better and safer working conditions, for protection against the run-away shop, i. e., organization of the South, and the organization of the unorganized shops in the North. It is up to the anti-war movement to bring the basic question of the war into the struggle, and make it, if it comes within our power, the initial focal point for this organization of the ranks.

It is obvious that large sections of workers are not in motion at this time. But it would be false and self-defeating to believe that this condition is either natural or permanent. The discontent is there, but it is unorganized. A serious and sustained approach to the shops and factories by the anti-war movement may well act as a catalyst in bringing the basic underlying discontent of the rank-and-file to a head. The following article from the November 9, 1965 New York Times gives a brief indication of the discontent of workers with their union leadership and shows their ability to intervene and stop government projects.

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St. Louis, Nov. 8 - Production of Gemini spacecraft was halted today when 16000 machinists walked off their jobs at the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation in a dispute over what strikers called pre-space age wages.

"First man in space with horse and buggy wages," read one picket sign in front of the huge complex where the Mercury spacecraft Freedom 7 was built. Comdr. Alan B. Shepard Jr. became America's first man in space when he rode in that capsule in 1961.

McDonnell also built the other Mercury and Gemini spacecraft used for manned orbital flights. Geminis 8 through 12 are still under construction here.

The unauthorized machinists' strike was not expected to interfere with the Gemini 6 and 7 flights Dec. 6. Those capsules are already at Cape Kennedy, Fla.

But production of McDonnell Phantom jet fighters used by the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines also came to a standstill after as many as 50 pickets gathered at each of the 12 gates. Many of the jets are being used by United States forces in Vietnam.

Picket lines were set up shortly after midnight when the contract between District 9 of the International Association of Machinists and McDonnell expired.

The strike was voted almost unanimously after the machinists rejected the company's latest contract proposal and turned down an extension recommended by union leaders.

Strikers said they sought an across-the-board wage increase of 20 cents an hour for each of the next three years plus numerous fringe benefits. They said McDonnell had offered a pay increase of 6 to 8 cents an hour. One picket said the present average wage was \$2.77 an hour. Union leaders refused comment.

Many pickets also voiced fierce dissatisfaction with their union and said the strike was as much against their leaders as it was against McDonnell. Union leaders agreed to a five-day extension of the contract for further negotiation despite an 8,568 to 174 membership vote against it.

Strike authorization was withheld by the union's international headquarters in Washington and pickets were told to remove the union designation from their signs. They complied in most cases.

But only a loose organization ruled strike activities. Each picket line had a leader in charge of each gate where state troopers and local policemen were stationed. Only minor incidents occurred.

William E. Simkin, director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in Washington, sent William Rose, a national office representative to a joint company-union meeting here tomorrow. Two other Federal mediators are already in St. Louis.

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE TRADE UNION

Workers in the plants, correctly or incorrectly, have a great distrust of those outside the shops who intervene in their problems. The workers have sufficient self-confidence to feel that they do not need outsiders to tell them how to organize themselves for struggle, outsiders who have not worked under the conditions the workers face and who don't understand the problems. They consider students, too often correctly, who attempt to do this as adventurers, using less kind terms when verbalizing their thoughts.

This brings forth the very delicate question of how a university-based movement can work in the trade unions. Essentially the role of the anti-war movement must be to contact sympathetic individuals in the trade unions, supply aid to those trade unionists already in our organizations and work on an individual level. It must be up to the anti-war trade unionists to organize among the ranks of the workers.

The abstract literature of the students, passed out by students, bearing the name of a student organization will only develop hostility among the workers. Workers will listen to those among them whom they know and trust.

But the student-based anti-war movement plays a very important role with regard to the trade unions. As its strength grows so grows its ability to attract the more conscious and less prejudiced trade-unionists. This ability makes the student-based movement the focal point of the initial organization of anti-war trade union militants.

While the student anti-war movement can provide an arena for conscious unionists to meet, can aid organization in any number of physical ways, the major immediate task is to develop a program capable of attracting workers. The future of the movement hinges on the kind of political and tactical program it develops.

PROGRAM AND TACTICS

There are several points that must be dealt with in relation to program and tactics:

1) whether to oppose the war primarily from a moral opposition to war in general, or to oppose the war primarily because of its oppressive and reactionary character;

2) whether to pose an anti-draft program as any major part of our general program;

3) the nature of the actions that we should as a movement engage in: the questions of draft card burnings and civil disobedience.

1) The American working class has a deep, militant tradition of struggle for its rights. The his-

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tory of American workers is a history, extending up to this day, of being prepared to battle for their own.

There is no need to detail the stories of the many strike struggles, of the battles between the unionists, the police and the scabs. It is clear that this proud tradition is not non-violent. It includes the education squads which would convince scabs that it wasn't right (or healthy) to act as a strikebreaker. The history includes fists, clubs, sabotage and dynamite.

These same workers, if convinced that the American government is in truth fighting for the freedom of the Vietnamese, will only ignore or scorn those who oppose war in general on moral grounds.

"True," they say, "war is rotten. War is hell. But if we don't fight them now, they will enslave more of the world. We'll simply have to fight later, and harder when they are at our doorstep."

No abstract moral grounds will convince the mass of American workers that the war is wrong. Rather we must show that "they" who the workers fear are nothing more than the people of Vietnam struggling for independence. We must show that it is in truth the United States which is attempting to enslave Vietnam under the most brutal of tyrants, Ky, who is only one of a chain of U.S.-supported dictators.

Showing them, explaining to them the true character of the war is the only way that we will win over the numbers of workers that we must in order to halt the war.

2) The question of a program against the draft raises again the prime task of first organizing and educating around the real nature of the war in Vietnam. That is, before any significant number of people become opposed to the draft, they first have to be convinced that the armies of the United States are aggressors and the tools of an oppressive foreign policy.

It is true that most youth feel a certain fear concerning the possibility of fighting and dying. However, most will go anyway either if they feel the war is right or they are not organized in sufficient numbers with a militant, firm mass social base outside their ranks.

Further, those who only don't want to go without any real political conception of the wrongness of the war will never be organized into the movement. This is too unstable a basis by itself and ends in nothing once the individual is irrevocably drafted or deferred.

On a mass propagandistic level this approach not only does not build a real base among draftees, but it also alienates a population which is not yet convinced that the war is wrong and therefore considers such an attitude towards the draft as cowardly and deserving of scorn and punishment. This approach is not the way to build a movement against the war. The primary task must be to educate and organize for mass social action.

This is not to say that we endorse the draft. Nor should it be excluded that at a later date when there is widespread understanding as to the nature of U.S. foreign policy that this concept could effectively be used. Further, we definitely should, among ourselves, be familiar with the legal alternatives to the draft and make sure all new people in the movement learn them. But this concept should not become any major part of our program at any point during the present period. Mass communications, it must be remembered, can make a particular stressed point made at one incidental time into a major question. We should avoid publicizing this aspect of our program.

3) The question of draft card burning and civil disobedience are important to the continued survival of the movement.

Our aim is to build a mass movement which will halt the war. We cannot build a movement either with people who have burned themselves to death or with people who are rotting in prison for years for the act of burning a draft card. This kind of demonstration while being a most decisive act of moral commitment, is not the kind of thing that will lead to the building of the movement. Personal witness and sacrifice will at most gain publicity, but publicity is a pitiful, weak, shallow thing compared to that which is given in exchange. We desperately need such dedicated individuals to carry on the fight against the war. This is not to say that many of us should not support those who do burn their draft cards. But if we have to go to jail, let us do it for something more worthwhile than a burned piece of cardboard.

Civil disobedience can be a useful tool or it can be draining and destructive to the movement. Unlike the original civil disobedience carried on by the sit-inners and freedom riders during the first few years of the 60's, there is no immediate, ready formed social basis to turn to for support. The Negro people did not have to be educated about their conditions of existence and could be reached readily. The social basis of support for the anti-war movement, however, is not so ready made. It has to be created. Because U.S. foreign policy and Vietnam still remain far away to most people, the question is not as clear. We must ourselves educate and build a mass social basis.

Civil disobedience carried through by individuals or by a few dozen people will not bring a sympathetic response from any important section of the population, today. Rather, these persons will be considered wild students or nuts. If however relatively large numbers, hundreds and thousands, can

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be organized into such demonstrations, people take them far more seriously. The only valid reason for engaging in civil disobedience is the action's ability to sustain and build the movement. Draft card cases and numerous isolated cases of civil disobedience are extremely time-consuming and put a tremendous financial drain on the movement which is not repaid by a positive reaction from those who we want to reach.

A) All told, we must concentrate almost exclusively on education about the oppressive nature of the war the U.S. is carrying on and we must regulate the question of the draft to the background.

B) Further, the American workers will not be reached on any important scale by moral appeals against war in general.

C) Finally, the anti-draft movement should discourage individual acts of martyrdom and organize civil disobedience primarily on a large scale.*

SUMMARY (To be Voted Upon)

1) The university is the basis of the anti-war movement during this period. The campus organizations are now growing. The forces there must be expanded, for these are the forces that can spark a wider organization. However, this group, if it remains in isolation, will become demoralized and will begin to disintegrate.

2) The anti-war movement must look towards the rank-and-file workers and the Negro people as the main sources of power in a struggle against the war. The middle class may have sections that are sympathetic to the anti-war movement, but it will only be brought behind us when we are an established and real power.

3) The establishment of the anti-war movement among the ranks of the labor movement will most likely come as part of the development of a real opposition to the present day labor leaders and with a move to bring the unions once again into the hands of the ranks.

4) The real anti-war movement must aid to the full extent of its capabilities those members who are in the trade unions. We must seek to develop and expand our contacts with the trade unions.

November 7, 1965

*Points A, B, and C are not being placed before the body for vote because it is understood that more complete motions along this line are being presented. If such motions do not materialize, these will be put forward to be voted upon.

OPEN LETTER TO YSA MEMBERS CONCERNING THE ANTI-WAR ORIENTATION AND THE CHARGES
AGAINST STEPHEN FOX

Dear Comrades,

November 20, 1965

There is an immediate and pressing problem within the anti-war movement and that is the problem of developing a political perspective beyond the immediate period. The questions of minimum program, of national organization and of basic tactical orientation are all of a great degree of importance. No less important are the points of 1) trying to instill a confidence into the anti-war movement, a confidence in the future of the anti-war struggle which itself is dependent on the anti-war movement being able to see the possibility of large masses of people entering its ranks; and 2) of giving the proper direction as to where to look for this development. Members of the anti-war movement will, regardless of what we in the YSA do, look for this support. It is up to us to break them away from a middle class orientation. Those in the anti-war movement who do not develop any kind of hope in forces outside the students will either become demoralized and leave or begin to engage in adventures. The Trotskyist movement has the political duty to try to give a working class perspective to the anti-war movement.

I agree with the tactics and minimum program as the YSA has presented them. I do feel that the addition of a political perspective is necessary. The proposals contained within "Perspectives and Allies for the Anti-War Movement" in no way cut across the basic tactics proposed for working in the high schools and on the campuses. It very explicitly and clearly limits the role that students can play within the trade union movement and says that we must primarily organize the campuses which will provide a spark for wider organization.

Also, though it does not go into the questions of program deeply (because the paper would be unnecessarily long and cumbersome) my proposals do not in any way conflict with those of the YSA. If there is any point where comrades feel that I do conflict with the proposed minimum program or the development of a national organization I would willingly revise the paper and delete the offending passages.

In spite of agreement on this level, there are, very clearly, important differences. For sundry reasons, Jan indicated to me, after I had presented the basic paper to the local leadership, it would probably not be accepted. Two calls to the National Office and a talk with Jack Barnes clearly brought out that the proposals are unacceptable to the YSA leadership.

The question is why. The difference is on a political level. Though the YSA leadership mouths the phrases of the old working class revolutionary movement, the essential content and the ability to apply the proletarian orientation to the living movement is absent. The basic confidence in the working class is absent. On the contrary, because of the lack of confidence in the working class, the YSA is opposing any effort by other forces to introduce elements of a working class approach within the anti-war movement. Instead of trying to modify and correct errors, the YSA opposes any such orientation. The YSA, in place of a politicalized proletarian orientation, is putting a tactical and pragmatic orientation towards students.

If a political question is not involved, and inasmuch as the proposals in my paper are important and don't cut across other proposed political and tactical points, then I admit I was in error in submitting the document to the DCEWV. Under these circumstances I would propose a reconciliation.

If the working class perspective for the anti-war movement is basically accepted, if the essence of the four proposals at the end of the paper "Perspectives and Allies" is accepted, then I am more than willing to work out a new and joint statement making any other corrections, modifications or deletions thought necessary.

Further, I am willing to make a public withdrawal of the "Perspectives and Allies" paper upon the submission of the alternative paper. Upon this basis, i.e., basic political agreement with the YSA, I will abide by the discipline of the YSA. I will make the public statement in a form and manner deemed proper by the local.

If, however, it is decided that these minimal working class concepts are unacceptable as a political line in the anti-war movement, then the proletarian orientation of the YSA and its mentor, the SWP, is a total objective farce, despite the most virulent protestations to the contrary. No matter what the subjective emotions of an individual might be, the objective political line of the organization and the acceptance of that line determine the essential direction of the organization and the individual.

The denial of the importance of these questions and the denial of the necessity of presenting these concepts to the anti-war movement at this critical period in its development would indicate a political difference of the most serious and fundamental nature. Under those circumstances, because the question is so important and because the denial of this position would mean the objective abandonment of the proletarian orientation, I would have no recourse but to present the document "Perspectives and Allies for the Anti-War Movement", to the anti-war convention as an individual.

Inasmuch as the anti-war convention will take place shortly, the Detroit YSA has only a few days to make a decision. I move therefore that the Detroit YSA believes that the essence of the four proposed points at the end of the paper "Perspectives and Allies for the Anti-War Movement" is in keeping with the political tradition of the working class revolutionary movement; that it is important for the anti-war movement during this period; and that it does not contradict the tactics and program proposed by the convention and the plenum. Therefore the Detroit YSA will work out a political statement in accordance with those points to be presented to the anti-war convention.

Comradely, Stephen Fox

THE STUDENT ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT AND THE FIGHT AGAINST WAR

(The YSA-SWP perspective, the Paul Booth-SDS perspective and the class struggle road)

by Stephen Fox

At the anti-war convention two seemingly opposite points of view on the perspective for the anti-war movement were presented. However, they never politically confronted each other because of the submergence of political questions in the organizational dispute. One was presented by the YSA and SWP and the other by sections of SDS. The basic premise for both points of departure is the nature of the anti-war movement today, i.e., the overwhelmingly student composition of the most militant and conscious section of the movement.

The premise of Paul Booth and the section of SDS that he represents (as he presented it at the Saturday, Nov. 27, plenary session of the convention of the NCCEWV) is essentially as follows: the only force that can stop the war is the organization of the masses of people. Further, he says that the only way these people will be mobilized is within their own organizations dealing with their many problems. As far as the organization of students goes, they are almost immediately attracted to multi-issue organizations such as SDS, YSA, or the DuBois Club as soon as they are attracted to the anti-war movement. Students who are open on the question of the war are usually searching and questioning about the other social problems as well. Therefore we find that chapters of radical organizations themselves are often involved in the organization of new anti-war committees, or that independents who are involved in the formation and building of such committees rapidly develop a broader perspective and become sympathetic to one or another of the multi-issue radical political organizations.

Though many of the points made by this section of SDS are correct in and of themselves, there is something crucial that is missing from their approach. The logical result of this political approach has been the belief that the independent anti-war committees have no role to play any longer, that students should simply be involved in community organizing and that therefore the independent committees should simply dissolve into this activity. Many members of SDS have expressed this position in a number of localities and in some areas such as Ann Arbor have begun to carry it out. But the result of the turning away from activity in the independent anti-war committees by these students has not been a turn towards mass work. Rather, there is a turn inward into the SDS as if SDS will be the mass movement. This approach is both sectarian and dangerous.

It is absolutely correct that an effective anti-war struggle will not be waged by a single-issue anti-war organization but will be won by masses of workers and the Negro people who recognize that the struggle against war is part of their general social struggle against oppression and exploitation.

The war will take on more and more of a central place among the problems facing the American people as the war escalates into a general war against the struggles of all colonial peoples for freedom: Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, Santo Domingo, Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, Rhodesia, the Congo, etc. The independent anti-war movement as it exists today is playing a crucial role in the crystalizing of sentiment against the war. If there were indeed a mass movement capable of struggling against the war today, the existence of a separate organization against the war would be unnecessary. But this force does not yet exist. Today's anti-war movement can play an important role, even a decisive role, in the development of just such a force on the American scene. For an indefinite transitional period the separate anti-war movement will play, if it is allowed to, this extremely important function. But there is a real threat to its existence from the sectarian desertion and attacks from sections of SDS.

The YSA and SWP take what is essentially a symmetrically opposite approach to that of the Paul Booth type of attitude. That is, whereas Booth and the sections of SDS which he represents see little or nothing of value in the present anti-war committees, the SWP-YSA see little or nothing of value anywhere else. The YSA-SWP sees the struggle against the war as a struggle based upon the student organizations. Their whole orientation is towards building student committees exclusively without seeing the essential task of expanding the movement and beginning to reach beyond the campuses to the workers and to the militant sections of the civil rights movement (unless they seriously believe that workers and civil rights people are going to join a student organization). Their position is the ultimate in empiricism and pragmatism. They see a militant development at this juncture, and, without viewing the objective tasks before the anti-war movement, project it indefinitely into the future. They see the indefinite extension of the student organizations as the "mass" base for the movement. But people will be mobilized in combat against the government's war program on a mass scale only on the basis of a more general program affecting the problems they face in their daily lives. The reaction of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to the war and to the anti-war movement shows the real potential in the development of such mass organizations.

The YSA and SWP cannot see beyond the immediate period, cannot offer a perspective beyond the students. The Paul Booth school in SDS has not yet been able to recognize the importance of the present anti-war movement for the organization of the Negro people and the rest of the working class. It is necessary that we see the present development of student based organizations as an extremely important, if transitional, development and use this tool as a bridge to the organization of the Negro people and the rest of the workers.

What is missing in both the SDS and YSA approaches is a class struggle perspective for the anti-war movement. This is why the YSA-SWP cannot react correctly to the errors made by sections of SDS. This is also why these sections of SDS cannot see the important role of the anti-war organizations in the development of a mass opposition to the war, and why they turn inward organizationally, considering the anti-war committees as organizational competitors.

(December 5, 1965)

A REPORT ON THE ANTI-WAR CONVENTION AND DISCUSSION OF THE YSA -SWP POLICIES IN THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

by Stephen Fox

The first convention of a young movement whose life span is measured only in months could have been an important step in the clarification and development of a correct political perspective for the movement. On the whole the delegates were hungrily seeking new ideas and ways of building a mass movement to halt the war. The attitude was one of complete non-exclusion. Yet despite the crying need for political discussion in this new movement, the YSA and SWP carried through an organization maneuver which submerged the entire convention from the first session of the first day to the last day in a bitter, demoralizing, fruitless organizational struggle. Yet today the YSA and SWP are carrying through that same course in spite of the fact that their actions have alienated them from almost everyone in the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement and every other arena that the YSA and SWP attempt to work in.

The questions that face us are: exactly what happened, why did it happen, and what should have been done.

THE MOOD

The National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NCCEWV) was first formed earlier this year as the organizational coordinator of the new local independent Committees to End the War. Delegates from all over the country came with several questions in mind: what is the nature of our enemies, what must we do to build a mass movement capable of halting the war, who must we approach to build this movement, how must we approach them, and what program will reach them?

The mood and organization structure was one of complete non-exclusion. The organs of all the radical tendencies were freely distributed and sold without hindrance. The office of the Washington Committee to End the War in Vietnam was always open to any of the participants in the convention without restriction who wished to use the facilities to put our position papers during the convention. These facilities included free use of stencils, paper, and the mimeographing machine. The atmosphere was one in which all political ideas could be discussed openly and freely.

The mood of the overwhelming majority of participants was, on an individual level at least, in favor of immediate withdrawal of American troops. The people had, however, to be politically convinced on the viability of this demand in building a broader movement. Hundreds of delegates wore pins supporting the NLF. (The Committee to Aid the NLF was allowed full rights to present its views and literature.) Chapters of the SDS had 32 to 36 out of more than 600 full and alternate delegates attending the convention. (Total registration incidentally was over 1500.) The position of SDS (which is an extremely loose and heterogeneous organization) was in line with the militant mood of the convention. In its call for the November 27 March, SDS came out clearly and strongly for immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. Even the DuBois Club (which had few official delegates) was split to some extent on the issue of immediate withdrawal in the face of the vitality and militancy of the movement. At one point during the convention a DuBois Club member, in the name of his local club, supported the immediate withdrawal of American troops as the central slogan for proposed days of protest next March 25-26.

There were, without question, a number of people who have been hostile to the SWP and YSA in the leadership of the NCCEWV. If they had, however, attempted to use their organizational position to stop the SWP and YSA from participating in the political discussion they would have been stopped short. Witness what happened when the chairman of the Friday night session attempted to cut off Jens Jensen who was speaking in favor of a new national organization for withdrawal now. An impromptu demonstration of the delegates and participants was held until the presiding committee allowed him to speak. There were no further attempts to stop free discussion on the floor of the convention. As it was, the success of the YSA -SWP in forcing the convention, contrary to the political mood of the overwhelming majority of the delegates, to concentrate almost exclusively on second-rate organizational questions, is in itself proof of their ability, if they had so desired, to put forward a political line to a complete and exhaustive extent.

THE EVENTS

Before the first session of the first day of the convention, Thursday, November 25, as people entered the convention hall they were given a leaflet by YSAers announcing a meeting of a separate workshop which was to be held that afternoon. The workshop was to be concerned with the formation of a separate national organization of the independent CEWV's. It was signed by about 30 delegates, approximately half of whom were YSAers. At the first plenary session this workshop became the prime bone

of contention. These were the issues: the independent workshop was to be held at the same time as the workshop on National Structure was scheduled. That is, an independent organization was being formed under the leadership of the SWP-YSA before the delegates had a chance to decide what the NCCEWV should become. The question of having this workshop was never discussed beforehand with the presiding committee even though two of the signers of the leaflet were on the presiding committee. Finally, at the independent workshop Thursday afternoon, the YSA had separate registration forms for the new organization already mimeographed up and two YSAers were having people sign up. The YSA-SWP showed a crude lack of respect and regard for the forms of the convention in which the overwhelming majority of the delegates and participants had confidence.

The SWP-YSA by taking this question outside the NCCEWV ignored the real possibility of setting the stage thru political discussion and education of winning the mass of delegates over to a correct stance on the question of immediate withdrawal of troops. The SWP-YSA ignored the fact that the delegates and participants look upon the NCCEWV as the real vehicle at present for the most militant sections of the anti-war movement. Why the SWP-YSA did this will be taken up further in this document.

Because the SWP-YSA had begun the carrying out of an organizational maneuver of this type before the convention had a chance to discuss its objectives, and therefore what organization the delegates thought was necessary, the SWP-YSA was attacked from all quarters (including from most of the independents) as splitters and disrupters. This fight which had begun Thursday afternoon continued thru Thursday night. All other questions were pushed completely to the background. The depth of the hostility towards the SWP-YSA was so great that they had to break up the independent workshop and bring the discussion into the National Structure workshop where it properly belonged in the first place.

The completeness of the submergence of all other questions into this bitter, factional organizational struggle which seemed to go on endlessly, caused extreme confusion and disgust among many participants. The Southern delegation was going to pack up and leave Thursday night because they had come to find out what should be done, not to listen to organizational squabbles. They were finally convinced to remain at the convention.

The fight went on thru Friday, much of the discussion all the way thru being on the right of the independent workshop to hold a separate meeting, inasmuch as it hadn't been proven that the NCCEWV convention was not basically a viable vehicle for the independent committees.

Friday night there were reports from a representative of the presiding committee and from a YSAer acting as a representative of the group wishing to form a new national organization. What the representative of the presiding committee specifically said is unimportant. All that need be stated is that this maneuver by the SWP-YSA gave every political opponent of Trotskyism a firm basis to shift the question from a political discussion to an organizational attack on the SWP-YSA. The YSAer in his presentation stated that what is needed is two organizations: 1) a coordinating committee of all groups in the anti-war movement from right-wing SANE to the independent committees and the YSA, and 2) a national organization of the independent anti-war committees around the demand of immediate withdrawal. Further, the YSAer said that in order for the NCCEWV to be this coordinating committee it must have essentially a liberal, non-programatic approach and that it should therefore not take a position on such questions as immediate withdrawal.

The YSA and SWP were therefore proposing that the NCCEWV become simply an impotent umbrella coordinating committee like the Turn Towards Peace where the leaders of the various anti-war organizations such as SANE and the independent committees could meet once or twice a year. They were proposing this at a time when the left of the anti-war movement was not prepared for such a move and consider the NCCEWV as still essentially representing them. To propose such a move when the political differences had not yet been discussed and crystallized, when the forces within the movement had not yet had a chance to polarize, when the NCCEWV convention was still a viable political form for the thrashing out and clarifying of these differences, was completely wrong. It showed that the YSA and SWP were engaged in an organizational maneuver to split the movement and to win away as many elements as possible, organizationally, away from the SDS and the DuBois Clubs and into an organization dominated by the SWP-YSA. All this was to occur and did occur without political clarification. The independent committees were unprepared politically for a national organization around the slogan, "Withdraw the Troops Now". This was demonstrated by the results of two votes, one on Friday night, one on Saturday morning.

The Friday night vote occurred around a motion from the MFDP delegation. It stated that the convention should adopt the slogan "Freedom Now - Withdraw Now" as the major theme on its signs during the demonstration the following day. The motion was overwhelmingly defeated with the delegates from the SWP-YSA voting with the majority against the motion. This act is the most revealing and indefensible of political acts. It showed the logical end of the SWP-YSA position which states that the anti-war movement must exclusively deal with the anti-war questions. Further, it showed the organizational

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fear by the SWP-YSA that the NCCEWV might become a viable opponent to the proposed SWP-YSA-dominated organization, and completely undercut its base by the NCCEWV taking a militant position for immediate withdrawal.

The next morning, Saturday, a motion was brought in by the National Action workshop supported by Dave Dellinger and Staughton Lynd for days of protest on March 25-26, '66 around the central theme of immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. The position that the SWP-YSA had taken the night before was so transparent and embarrassing in daylight that they reversed themselves. The SWP-YSA came out in support of the motion. Not the least of the reasons for this change was the separation of the civil rights struggle from the anti-war struggle. However, because the delegates and their committees were not politically prepared to support such a national slogan, the motion was soundly defeated. There still had been no real political discussion, except limited discussion around those motions and in the workshops, in which, with few exceptions, YSAers and SWPers did not participate because of their complete absorption in the organizational dispute. Just a partial list of the panels indicates a wide range of openings: political perspectives, campus action, anti-draft, national structure, peace and freedom (civil rights), national action, and six others.

All during that Saturday after the demonstration the YSA and SWP caucused with independents, trying to convince them as to the correctness of their course. All along independents dropped away as it became clearer and clearer what the SWP-YSA were trying to do.

The final absurdity came on the last day of the convention when the SWP-YSA put forward a counter proposal to that of the presiding committee's on the structure of the NCCEWV itself. The presiding committee put forward a resolution which included the following points: national organizations supporting the anti-war struggle (including the SWP and YSA) would have one delegate without vote in the standing committee; independent committees would have one vote per 100 members; in areas where there were no independent committees a local chapter of an anti-war political organization would have one vote regardless of how large it is; a whole machinery was set up for political discussion.

The YSA-SWP counter-proposal stated that the NCCEWV would have no political line because it would function simply as a coordinating committee and that the decision of the NCCEWV would be based on the independent committees to end the war, with national organizations having one vote per organization.

This proposal by the SWP-YSA is beyond all rationality. If the organization is indeed to be a non-political coordinating committee, why in the world have any kind of a fight over its structure? Why indeed should it be based on the independent committees if they cannot put forward any kind of political program thru the NCCEWV? The only answer that could possibly be made as to the reason for such a fight was that the SWP-YSA did not want a viable political organization which would undermine their own anti-war organization. The final result was only that the last day of the convention was destroyed and added to the casualty list of the first three days. By the time discussion on political questions and perspectives came around at about 1:30 PM Sunday, everybody was getting ready to leave and was generally too tired and embittered by the organizational hustle to seriously discuss political questions.

The YSA and SWP ended the convention with a notice of a meeting of the caucus to form an independent national organizations.

THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS AT THE CONVENTION

The YSA and SWP showed a complete lack of political seriousness throught the convention. They put forward no political position papers at all for the delegates to discuss and vote on any time during the convention proceedings. The only papers that were presented were organizational documents mentioning a few slogans. But this is not all. The SWP-YSA did not make even the minimum political preparation required for preparing the anti-war movement and the convention for such a move. The anti-war committees in the overwhelming majority went to the convention not having even thought of the possibility of the building of an alternative organization at this point. In fact, this tactic which is having such important repercussions was never discussed among the YSAers nationally who are involved in anti-war work. The sole document which the YSA based its actions on was the resolution passed by the Washington Heights Committee to End the War in Vietnam. This document was not distributed either nationally or at the convention and it was only by accident that we received a copy.

The Washington Heights resolution, even if it had been presented to the convention, does not explain what is needed to be said. It does not explain the relation of the slogan "Withdraw the Troops Now" to the building of a real opposition to the war. The sentiment at the convention was for immediate withdrawal, but the underlying feeling was that this demand was too radical to win people at this time. This attitude should have been systematically dealt with and discussed to show that this demand is the only way to build a real movement against the war and flows logically from the movement's analysis of the U.S.'s role in Vietnam. But the YSA-SWP are incapable of really answering this. The reason that these committees feel that this slogan is too radical is because of the nature of the people whom they are approaching, and the basis that they are approaching them on. They are aiming at the

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middle class, or "that little old lady from Iowa" as Staughton Lynd said, and on the grounds of morality rather than class interest. The SWP-YSA oppose the introduction of the class question into the issue: they refuse to give a working class perspective to the anti-war movement and bitterly fight those who attempt to. This shows the political bankruptcy of the SWP-YSA line.

There has been a basic challenge to the very existence of the independent anti-war movement by sections of SDS which the SWP-YSA has ignored and not answered politically. Paul Booth of SDS, at the Saturday morning session of the convention, expressed the line that the only force that means anything in the struggle against war is the multi-issue community organizations. He all but called for the dissolution of the anti-war committees into community organizing without recognizing the importance of the role of the anti-war movement today. This was and is one of the most important underlying challenges to an independent anti-war movement and the SWP-YSA has not said a word about it.

The YSA-SWP did not give a real perspective for the development of a mass anti-war movement, did not clarify the multitude of questions that were in almost every mind at the convention. The people in the anti-war movement know that the student movement alone is a dead end. Time and again one could hear people discussing and asking where the movement should go. This is the central question for all serious anti-war fighters. The YSA and SWP have answered in two ways: 1) they are organizing a national organization based solely on students and 2) they are in the process of expelling those in their ranks who offered a working class perspective to the anti-war movement.

This approach towards the anti-war movement puts the SWP-YSA in the most anti-working class and petty-bourgeois camp. The completely petty-bourgeois nature of the YSA's position is indicated clearly in the information bulletin put out in Detroit by the Detroit YSA on the events surrounding the convention. "Now'community groups whose main purpose is not peace, but who wish to take part in our convention' (SNCC projects, tenant organizations, trade unions, etc.) were invited." In contrast to this, the SWP-YSA proposes a national organization based on the program of immediate withdrawal, the right of self-determination and "4) the member committees cannot be affiliated to any other national or political organization, although they are encouraged to take part in joint anti-war actions in their areas.

The class issue becomes clear: implicitly the only organizations to be allowed to participate in the immediate withdrawal committee are student organizations. Community and workers organizations which do agree with this slogan are implicitly requested to stay out of this organization.

The clearest summation of the political and organizational line of the SWP-YSA in the anti-war movement came on the motion introduced by the delegation from the MFDP to the anti-war convention. Their presence at the convention, one of the healthiest signs both for the development and broadening of the civil-rights struggle in the South and for the anti-war movement itself, was actually contrary to the line of the SWP-YSA which actually wants a so-called mass anti-war movement based solely on students and having no connection with any other type of struggle. But the issue was joined when this group introduced a motion calling for the main slogan for the demonstration on the following day for the NCCEWV convention to be "Freedom Now - Withdraw Now". The SWP-YSA actually joined with the majority of delegates in voting this slogan down. If the majority of delegates were afraid of alienating certain middle class types with the demand for the immediate withdrawal of troops, the SWP-YSA appeared to be afraid of alienating elements who might be for withdrawal, but opposed to Freedom Now. Instead of proposing a transitional approach to the other segments of society, the Negro people and the entire working class, without whose participation the anti-war movement is doomed, the SWP-YSA took the opposite course.

If there had been a political clarification and polarization thru political discussion; if the class question and perspective was clear; if it had become clear that a really important section of the anti-war movement was ready to engage in a national organization around the demand for immediate withdrawal while another section was politically and organizationally opposed to such a move, then it may have been proper to move organizationally. First, there should have been an attempt under such conditions of clarification (which do not yet exist) to win over the NCCEWV. If this could not be done it might then be proper to start building an independent organization, depending on the relation of forces and the ability to win over other elements in the NCCEWV.

The path that the YSA and SWP are traveling has led to disaster both politically and organizationally. The YSA and SWP must turn back now before it is too late.

December 4, 1965