



# The Power of MASS ACTION: Young Socialist Strategy in the Antiwar Movement

Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin

Volume 14, No. 3

Nov. 30, 1970

25 cents



# **The Power of MASS ACTION: Young Socialist Strategy in the Antiwar Movement**

Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin

Volume 14, No. 3

Nov. 30, 1975

25 cents

This draft resolution on the antiwar movement was written for the Young Socialist National Convention to be held at the Manhattan Center in New York City, December 27-31, 1970. It was drafted by the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance.

Similar resolutions and discussion articles will deal with other activities in which young socialists are involved. These initial draft resolutions, along with any others submitted to the convention, will be discussed and the general political perspectives outlined in them will be voted on.

The resolutions are being circulated prior to the convention to assure the fullest possible discussion on political perspectives and activities before the convention meets.

Young socialists from around the country are invited to participate in the written discussion and urged to attend the convention. Contributions to the discussion and inquiries can be sent to the Young Socialist Alliance, P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003.

Vol. 14, No. 3

November 30, 1970

Published by:

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

Price 25¢

## THE POWER OF MASS ACTION:

### YOUNG SOCIALIST STRATEGY FOR THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

Vietnam remains in the center of world politics, and the deepening conflict in Indochina is at the root of the gravest problems which have ever confronted the U.S. ruling class. The Nixon administration's attempts to create the impression that the war is "winding down" in no way correspond to the reality which is that the war has continued to intensify during the past year.

#### Imperialist Strategy in Southeast Asia

Since the end of World War II, from which the United States emerged as the supreme imperialist power, the U.S. capitalist rulers have undertaken the task of quelling the struggles of colonial peoples for self-determination. The conflict between imperialism and national liberation struggles in the colonial countries has been the axis of revolutionary activity during these 25 years.

The fundamental aims of Washington's strategy in Southeast Asia have been to stem the tide of colonial revolution, maintain the encirclement of the Chinese workers state by U.S. military bases, and, ultimately, to try to roll back the victories of the socialist revolutions in North Vietnam and China.

What began as a limited counter-insurgency operation in Vietnam in line with these objectives has steadily escalated into a war of monstrous proportions. But despite the dispatch of more than half a million troops, the expenditure of billions of dollars, the use of the most terrible military technology in history, the deaths of nearly 50,000 American GIs and many times more Vietnamese, Washington has not been able to crush the Vietnamese revolution.

The heroic resistance of the Vietnamese against the barbarous aggression of U.S. imperialism has combined with increasing social unrest provoked by the war's effects inside the United States to create a relationship of class forces less

and less favorable to the American rulers.

At the same time, Washington's imperialist allies have been unwilling to back up the U.S. war effort, adding another dimension to the problems of the American ruling class.

The U.S. government has been forced to respond to this changing relationship of forces by altering the tactics with which it continues to pursue the same basic aims. While deepening differences have developed within the ruling class itself over these tactical shifts, such divisions have occurred within the context of agreement on the fundamental objectives of U.S. imperialism.

Because of all of the above difficulties, Nixon, while committed like his predecessors to the continued U.S. imperialist domination of Southeast Asia, has been unable to win an outright military victory. Like Johnson before him, he is aiming at a negotiated settlement similar to the outcome imposed on Korea, a settlement preserving a capitalist South Vietnam as an Asian base for U.S. imperialism. While the imperialists would make limited concessions to achieve such a settlement, they would not concede on the decisive question of state power-- that is, which class will rule? So long as this question is undecided, the war will go on. There has been no indication that the Vietnamese revolutionists are prepared to buy the kind of "just peace" Nixon is trying to sell. Although this possibility cannot be excluded, as long as the Vietnamese freedom fighters continue to struggle for complete national liberation and Washington holds to its basic objectives, the war will continue until one side defeats the other.

Nixon's fake "peace proposal" and his propaganda about scaling down the war are designed to quiet massive opposition to the war in the United States. At the same time that he has carried out a number of partial troop withdrawals and cut the use of combat troops in order to reduce American casualties and dampen mass

antiwar opposition, Nixon has increased the use of military technology. According to a November 8 report in The New York Times, "So many American planes are bombing the Ho Chi Minh trail in Southern Laos that military officials have established traffic patterns similar to those in use at major U.S. airports." The bombings in Cambodia and South Vietnam have also been stepped up considerably.

For Nixon and the ruling class, placing greater reliance on military technology in order to foster illusions that the war is gradually drawing to a close is an extremely risky business. First, it has not succeeded in turning the tide of battle in favor of imperialism. Second, the potential exists for a sudden and dramatic escalation of the war which would cause a greater outpouring of anger by masses of people whose hopes for peace have been raised by Washington's maneuver. This has already been demonstrated by the invasion of Cambodia and the explosive protests it generated.

Nixon's decision to expand the war by invading Cambodia was made necessary by an extreme shift of the military-political situation to the disadvantage of Washington. The massive popular resistance to the CIA-backed rightist Lon Nol regime represented a tremendous deepening of the class and national struggles in Cambodia. The dynamic of these struggles threatened to overthrow the puppet regime. A similar process was taking place simultaneously in Laos. By late April, the theater of the war encompassed Laos and Cambodia along with Vietnam. The imperialists are now engaged in a war on three fronts in Indochina, in each case attempting to prop up a reactionary government incapable of holding out by itself against the armed power of social revolution. The U.S. rulers are now in a situation in which they can find themselves at any time forced by the exigencies of the conflict to make a decision about reversing the partial troop withdrawals--either to re-escalate or get out.

Nixon was forced to pull back from Cambodia by the eruption of mass mobilizations in May. The sharpness of the tensions that developed then has been blunted to some extent by his apparent restraint from further escalation coupled with his propaganda offensive, partial troop withdrawals and a decline in GI casualties. Nixon's administration was also successful in hushing the "doves" of the two capitalist parties in the 1970 election campaign.

#### The Potential for Another Upsurge

For the time being, Nixon has managed to disarm large sections of the masses who

oppose the war. Yet he has been able to do this only by raising the expectations of the majority of Americans for peace by persuading them he is embarking on a course of withdrawal. Nixon has purchased a short lease to maneuver, but he has obtained it on bad credit and at an extremely high price.

The illusions that exist will be shattered by developments in the war. The recent bombing raids and landing of ground assault troops in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam are indications of the way in which Washington's continued pursuit of its fundamental strategic aims will lead to a situation that will once again trigger an explosion of active opposition in the United States.

The mass mobilizations of the antiwar movement during the past six years prepared the way for the spontaneous independent upsurge of last May, and they have prepared and will continue to prepare for such outbursts in the future. In the present situation, ripe for another social explosion, it is the responsibility of all those who support the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination to prepare politically and organizationally for another upheaval even greater than the one in May. The antiwar movement has the obligation to organize mass demonstrations in the streets counterposing the demand for immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops to the propaganda maneuvers of the ruling class. Building the next series of mass antiwar demonstrations is the central task of the YSA in the antiwar movement for the period immediately ahead.

#### International Opposition to the War

The U.S. imperialists have hoped to make use of the Soviet bureaucracy in pressuring the Vietnamese into surrender at the conference table. However, Moscow has been less able to enforce a capitulation than in similar situations in the past. At the same time the Kremlin has consistently defaulted in its responsibility to respond to the step-by-step escalation of U.S. aggression.

Moscow bears the primary responsibility for failing to stand up against U.S. aggression in Indochina, but the Maoist bureaucracy has also abdicated its responsibility to aid the Vietnamese. Peking's grandiose rhetoric about the war in Vietnam has not been matched by any more than token concrete aid, and China's sectarian refusal to press for a united front defense of the Vietnamese revolution by all the workers states has made it easier for the Kremlin to renege on its obligations.

Both Moscow and Peking have put their own narrow, bureaucratically conceived national interests ahead of the Vietnamese revolution, and this policy has been reflected by the failure of the Communist parties throughout the world to mount mass actions against the war. This is especially criminal because in many countries the pro-Moscow parties are mass parties whose weight would significantly shift the balance of struggle. The Maoist parties have generally pursued a sectarian course of abstaining from the mass antiwar movement.

Cuba's revolutionary internationalist defense of the Vietnamese revolution has been the most consistent among the workers states outside of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

The reformist social democratic parties, some of which are mass parties, have either openly supported U.S. imperialism or abstained from the struggle against the war. The major exception is the Japanese Socialist Party, which has participated in the Japanese mass antiwar movement.

In the vacuum created by the betrayal of the Stalinists and social democrats, an independent antiwar movement has developed internationally which has bypassed these parties to their left. This antiwar movement has led mass mobilizations which have helped to generate a worldwide youth radicalization that has swelled the ranks of the international revolutionary socialist movement.

The section of the international antiwar movement which can deal the most powerful blows to U.S. imperialism is the movement in the United States.

### The U.S. Antiwar Movement

The antiwar movement which has developed in the United States is unique in American history. For the first time a mass action movement against an imperialist war has developed and grown while the shooting is going on. This unprecedented movement has had a profound effect on American politics.

The mass mobilizations of the antiwar movement have been able to win over the majority of people to an antiwar position. The November 1970 referenda on the war held in Massachusetts, Detroit and San Francisco provided further evidence that a clear and growing majority of the American people favors withdrawal from Vietnam.

Not only does this explosive antiwar sentiment impose narrow limits on the ability of the ruling class to maneuver

in the Indochina war, but it severely restricts them in contemplating other such wars in the future.

Today the antiwar movement has reached such a massive stage that, properly led and organized, it has the potential power to force the imperialists to withdraw their forces from Indochina.

Moreover, the antiwar movement has helped to wipe away the witch-hunt atmosphere of the 1950s and early 1960s. Its mass mobilizations have played a major role in the creation of a climate of protest favoring the development of other mass struggles against the capitalist rulers. The Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican struggles for national liberation and the women's liberation movement have been spurred by the effects of the antiwar mobilizations.

The main factor in the accomplishments of the antiwar movement has been the continued organization of massive demonstrations independent of the capitalist class and its parties. The means through which these mass demonstrations have been organized have been coalitions which are a particular form of the tactic of the united front. In the absence of any mass party of labor or the oppressed national minorities, these united-front coalitions have been able to unite diverse forces around the organization of mass antiwar action. The coalitions are composed of a heterogeneous grouping of individuals, organizations, parties and tendencies opposed to the war.

As revolutionary socialists we have fought within the antiwar movement for four central principles: 1) the central strategy of mass demonstrations, 2) the central demand for immediate withdrawal, 3) the principle of non-exclusion, and 4) the principle of democratic decision-making.

The activist student sector of the broader antiwar movement has furnished the bulk of the participants and pushed and prodded other sectors into support for the mass actions. The Student Mobilization Committee has been able to best organize and lead the militant student left wing of the antiwar movement in a consistent defense of the four basic principles of the mass action perspective.

### Mass Action

It is the mass demonstrations independent of the capitalist parties and institutions which are the source of the antiwar movement's power. It is the threat to the ruling class of masses of people in motion outside of its control which will ultimately compel the imperialists to get out of Indochina.

## The Demand for Immediate Withdrawal

The demand for immediate and complete withdrawal is the only demand which is consistent with the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. It makes a clear demand on the capitalist U.S. government, placing responsibility for the war squarely on the imperialists. Expressed in the slogan, "Bring All the GIs Home Now!", it is a demand which can reach out to the broad masses of the American people and unite them in common action against their government.

## Non-Exclusion

The principle which allows the participation of any person, party or organization which is opposed to the war has been essential to the strength and success of the antiwar movement. The role of the revolutionary socialist vanguard, whose participation depends on this principle, has been indispensable in keeping the movement on a course of independent growth.

## Democratic Decision-Making

The democratic making of decisions at periodic open mass meetings and conferences has also been a necessary element in maintaining the strength, independence and growth of the antiwar movement. Only frequent and open discussions where the deciding vote is cast by the rank and file antiwar activists can ensure the firm adherence of the movement to the other central principles.

## Antiwar Coalitions 1965 - 1969

The history of the antiwar movement has been a history of continued struggle over the four basic principles of mass action, immediate withdrawal, non-exclusion and democratic decision-making. Each of the national antiwar coalitions which developed prior to 1970 was able to thrive so long as it adhered to these principles and organized mass actions. Each coalition declined and fell apart as it strayed from the four basic principles.

The first viable national antiwar coalition, known as the National Mobilization Committee, organized national demonstrations in April and October, 1967. Under the pressure of the 1968 elections, it abandoned mass action and disintegrated. Antiwar actions were continued by the Student Mobilization Committee during the period between the collapse of the National Mobilization Committee and the formation of the New Mobilization Committee. The New Mobilization Committee was formed in July, 1969, and organized the November 15 March on Washington. After November 15 the New Mobe retreated from mass action and degenerated.

Neither of these coalitions was a stable, long-term formation because of the centrifugal political forces which operated on its constituent elements; while the New Mobe contained forces which were not in the National Mobe, both of these coalitions rested in large part on three main elements: the Trotskyists, the Communist Party and the radical pacifists. The demise of each coalition came about when the CP and pacifists fled mass action.

## The Antiwar Movement in 1970: The Growth of NPAC

The past year has been marked by shake-ups and realignments in the organized antiwar movement.

The Vietnam Moratorium Committee, formed in late spring of 1969, was organized by forces tied to a section of the Democratic Party. The VMC oriented toward capitalist politicians from the outset, and with the approach of the 1970 elections and the capitulation of the Congressional "doves" to Nixon, this orientation destroyed the VMC. The VMC made no real effort to organize the protests it had called for on April 15, 1970, and it decided to disband on the eve of the invasion of Cambodia. Consequently, the VMC played no role in the May events.

The leadership of the New Mobilization Committee, dominated by the CP, pacifists and a handful of ultralefts, changed its orientation after November 15, 1969, away from mass action toward support for capitalist "peace" candidates, combining this with an attempt to substitute small-scale acts of civil disobedience and adventurism for mass demonstrations. Like the VMC, the New Mobe called for protests on April 15, 1970, but refused to build them as mass actions.

The sole activity of the New Mobe in May was to call for the May 9 demonstration in Washington, D.C. Because of the intervention of other forces and the massive numbers who came to the capital, May 9 was a successful mass action. But the New Mobe leadership, which had attempted to organize May 9 as a confrontationist trap for those who attended, viewed it as a disappointment; New Mobe leaders published vicious red-baiting attacks on the SMC, YSA and Socialist Workers Party for the role of these organizations in marshalling the action and preventing the kind of bloody police attack the New Mobe considered a "militant" confrontation.

The antiwar activity led by the SMC during the New Mobe's decomposition and the widespread mobilizations of May set



the stage for reorganizing a national antiwar coalition. In June, 1970, at the national antiwar conference held in Cleveland, the October 31 demonstrations were called and the National Peace Action Coalition was formed. NPAC set itself the task of involving new forces that had been jolted into readiness for antiwar action by the May protests.

NPAC was organized on the basis of agreement to build the October 31 actions and adherence to the four basic principles of non-exclusion, democratic decision-making, mass action and immediate withdrawal.

The success of the October 31 demonstrations, which brought out tens of thousands of people in more than 40 cities proved the viability of NPAC and the correctness of its perspective. While the turnout was modest compared to some previous mobilizations, it is by far the largest which has ever taken place in a pre-election period.

Moreover, the process of building the actions and involving a broader base of forces in NPAC was carried out in the face of active hostility and red-baiting by the CP and other remnants of the New Mobe, as well as red-baiting and violence-baiting by the government and sections of the trade union bureaucracy. The CP and a handful of ultralefts from the old New Mobe created a new multi-issue reformist organization, the National Coalition Against War, Racism and Repression. This formation has been unable to mount any successful activities in the fall. As a result, some of the former elements of the New Mobe who had not associated with NPAC previously, can now be won to its perspective for antiwar action in the spring.

The YSA supports NPAC, but unlike the previous coalitions, NPAC does not have the support of the pacifists and the Communist Party. NPAC is based on local antiwar groups and forces with a mass base like the SMC, trade unions, Third World organizations and others. NPAC has been particularly successful in involving support from the trade union movement, laying the groundwork for participation by social forces whose power will be decisive in forcing Washington to withdraw its troops.

Some of the forces around the old New Mobe have joined NPAC in the past several months, and more should be encouraged and expected to do so. However, the predominant base for NPAC's leadership is firmly rooted in the more substantial organizations which have come into the antiwar movement during the past year.

The prospects for a successful mass action in the spring depend largely on the movement's ability to tap the energy and

power of students, who have furnished the bulk of the participants in the mass actions and who have been the main base for the militant, independent left wing of the antiwar movement.

#### The Student Mobilization Committee

Since its inception in December, 1966, the SMC has been the major vehicle for organizing the students in antiwar action. The SMC is by far the largest student antiwar organization with many thousands of members and chapters at hundreds of colleges and high schools all over the country.

The SMC was originally organized as a coalition resting on the same three elements as the old national adult coalitions. But when the pressure of the 1968 elections drove the CP and the radical pacifists away from mass action into campaigning for capitalist "doves," the YSA was able to lead a victorious fight against these forces in the SMC for the perspective of continued mass action. The pacifists and the CP then walked out of the SMC.

In 1968 and early 1969 the SMC continued to organize mass actions and succeeded in prodding others to support them while the National Mobilization committee fell to pieces. The SMC was instrumental in helping to form the New Mobilization Committee and winning the call for a mass action in Washington on November 15 as the focus for that coalition. The SMC again played the role of continuing the mass action perspective after November 15 when the New Mobe went the way of its predecessor.

Since the fall of 1969, major changes have occurred in the student movement. SDS declined dramatically after its 1969 summer convention, at which it split apart into three small groups. The only organization which continues to use the name of SDS is a narrow group dominated by the Progressive Labor Party. The other splinters barely exist, and no new organization has arisen which acts as the kind of all-inclusive radical youth organization SDS used to try to be. During the same period, the SMC made major advances, particularly in the course of building the October 15 Moratorium, the November 15 March on Washington, and the May 1970 student upsurge.

The SMC conference in February 1970 dramatically illustrated the growth and influence of the SMC. Close to 4000 participants made it the largest student conference of its kind since the 1930s. The geographical representation was greater than at any previous antiwar con-



ference. With all political tendencies present, the mass action perspective put forward by the leadership of the SMC and backed by the YSA carried overwhelmingly.

The upcoming SMC conference will be just as important in concretizing the further gains of the SMC, maintaining its political line and mobilizing forces for the next major antiwar action in the spring.

During the period of its tremendous growth since 1968, the SMC has evolved into a more cohesive membership organization which individuals join on the basis of political agreement with the main principles of the SMC. Many SMC activists now not only belong to local SMC chapters, but are members of the national SMC as well. This new membership policy has helped to create a keener sense of organizational loyalty among the members at the same time that it has enhanced the SMC's democratic procedures. The strengthening of the national SMC by building the largest possible base of national members in the local chapters will help to ensure the SMC's continued leadership role in the student movement as well as democratic decision-making in the SMC.

#### The SMC's Role in May

One of the major activities of the SMC is organizing mass antiwar action on the campus. The May strike, which mobilized millions of students, has shown the importance and power of such activity. Students' actions on the campuses spearheaded the shaking of the entire structure of American society, and students initiated steps to expand the struggle beyond the campuses.

Although the upsurge went beyond the campuses in only a limited way, the example of the antiwar university set by the May actions has laid a basis for future upsurges which can be even larger and which can succeed in catalyzing massive action among other sectors of the population.

The scope of the explosion in May and its spontaneous and rapid development went beyond the capacity of any existing student organization to be the central leadership. Nevertheless, the SMC was able to play an important role in affecting the direction of many campus strikes.

#### The Antiwar University

The SMC put forward the concept of the antiwar university, the goal of which is to win maximum use of university facilities to build the struggle against the war by reaching out to GIs, organized labor, the oppressed nationalities and women, and bringing them into antiwar action.

The continuation of the antiwar

university strategy is the major aspect of the SMC's program on the campus. This includes organizing struggles to get rid of ROTC, war recruitment and other campus complicity and the draft, as well as the effort to recapture and extend the students' control of campus facilities for antiwar organizing.

#### The SMC and Defense of Student Rights

One of the most striking results of the May upsurge was that it intensified the fear of the ruling class that continued involvement in Indochina threatened an upheaval shaking the very foundations of U.S. capitalism. The role of students as the detonator of such an upheaval was a lesson drawn graphically for the American rulers by the May strike. Since the May events have ebbed, they have been carrying out a coordinated crackdown on campus political activity in hopes of defusing the potential for another such explosion.

In line with this crackdown, university administrators have been able to whittle away many of the gains won by students in the strike. New restrictions have been enacted at most schools aimed at limiting political activity on the campus.

The SMC must continue to play a role in leading the student antiwar movement and mobilizing to fight back against such restrictive measures by school administrations. This fight is necessary to continue building antiwar actions and also to prepare for another general student strike when the occasion arises.

The fight against campus restrictions must be combined with a continued fight to parry and drive back the counter-thrusts of the Nixon administration aimed at the student movement. The SMC can point out the hypocrisy of a government which murders masses of Vietnamese and then attempts to scandalize and smear the antiwar movement on the basis of isolated incidents of violence. Washington's attempts to resurrect official red-baiting such as J. Edgar Hoover's "Open Letter to College Students" must be met with an effective rebuttal. Today's student movement will not be cowed by the threadbare scare tactics of Joe McCarthy's 1950s. Audacity must be the rule in answering such attacks.

One of the most important cases calling for an effective stand to be taken by the student antiwar movement is the government attempt to frame up the Kent State activists and justify the murder of four students by the Ohio National Guard. A loud and clear response from the mass antiwar movement can set the example for others who come under attack elsewhere in the country.

### High School Students

High school antiwar activists are a vital and rapidly growing part of the SMC's membership. Without any serious political competition from other radical groups, the SMC is able to attract the allegiance of militant high school students who are among the most committed to a mass action perspective.

An important part of the SMC program is the fight for the High School Bill of Rights. High school activists face arbitrary regulations which severely restrict their ability to organize antiwar activity in their schools. High school students can win in fights against these restrictions by waging serious struggles to organize broad public support for their civil liberties.

Through the High School Bill of Rights, SMCers can combine their fight for civil liberties with the fight against the war.

High school students are an important part of the antiwar movement not only because of their militancy and energy but because their social composition means that high school students act as a direct link between the antiwar movement and young workers, the Third World communities, and GIs. High school students will take their antiwar ideas and experience with them into the armed forces, factories, and campuses after they graduate.

In addition, the fight for high school rights and against tracking can be linked directly to the struggles of the Black and Brown communities for control over their own education.

High school students made up a large part of most of the October 31 actions, demonstrating that they are among the sectors of the movement least susceptible to ruling class pressure at election time.

The SMC has taken account of the importance of this section of the movement and the growth of the high school rights struggle by assigning East and West Coast national high school coordinators. The national SMC will be paying more and more attention to the vital role of high school students.

### Third World Opposition to the War

Antiwar sentiment is deeper in the Black and Brown communities than in any other sector of the population. Third World youth form a disproportionately large part of the draftees, frontline troops, and GI casualties. The oppressed

nationalities' living conditions are the most adversely affected by the misallocation of society's resources for the war. Black and Brown people, fighting for their own national liberation from racist oppression in the United States, share no stake in the war of U.S. imperialism against the Vietnamese national liberation struggle. They are made to sacrifice the most for a war which is directly opposed to their interests.

Despite the fact that antiwar sentiment is so deep in every sector of the Third World communities, there has not yet been participation in the organized antiwar movement on a scale corresponding to the potential. The antiwar movement has the important task of creating the conditions which will enable the potential for mass Black and Brown participation in antiwar action to be realized.

The SMC, through its GI Press Service, through organizing Third World committees of the SMC, through collaboration with Third World student organizations and through the fight for high school rights, can play a big role in increasing the active involvement of oppressed nationalities in antiwar activity.

Third World YSAers have an important task in explaining the importance of the antiwar movement to the struggles of the Third World communities.

The increased breadth of NPAC-- including the support of a number of Third World organizations along with the support of labor officials--puts it in a good position also to draw increased participation from the Third World community in mass demonstrations.

A major development during the past year was the organization of mass Chicano antiwar protests which set the example for the kind of action possible by the oppressed nationalities in the U.S. On August 29, 30,000 Chicanos demonstrated in Los Angeles in the largest antiwar action ever held in that city. There has been a general increase in Chicano activity all over the West and Southwest, and while the Chicano Moratorium has since suffered setbacks, it illustrated dramatically the potential for mass Third World antiwar action.

### Organized Labor

One of the main signs of labor's opposition to the war until now has been its refusal to sacrifice its standard of living for the sake of the war. This is extremely significant because in past wars the government has been able to dampen labor militancy with patriotic

appeals. During the Vietnam war, however, there has been a militant strike wave. As inflation has grown, so has the intensity of labor militancy, as seen, for example, in the strikes against General Electric and General Motors, as well as in the strike against the government by the postal workers.

The SMC has correctly projected the policy of responding to such strikes by pointing out the relationship between the war-caused inflation and the struggles of the labor movement. By organizing on-campus anti-complicity campaigns directed at war corporations such as GE and GM, the SMC can put itself in a better position to make links with the labor movement. YSAers in the SMC should be ready to respond quickly to similar strike situations in the future, especially where the unions involved have indicated opposition to the war or made overtures for such student support.

More workers--especially young workers--have participated in the antiwar movement as individuals during 1969 and 1970 than previously, but the organized labor movement as such has not participated yet to any appreciable extent. However, especially since May, there have been signs of increasing interest in the antiwar movement from important sections of the labor bureaucracy. Within the trade union bureaucracy, there has been a publicly-voiced break with Meany's pro-war position. Many more labor officials appeared on antiwar platforms on October 31 than ever previously. There was also a good deal of official labor support for the antiwar referenda in November. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the largest union in the AFL-CIO, passed a resolution for immediate withdrawal at its national convention last spring. A trade union antiwar demonstration was held in New York City in May. A considerable number of trade union officials have formally associated with NPAC.

All of these signs point to increasing opportunities for the antiwar movement to reach the decisively powerful social layer in the trade unions. The endorsement of labor officials and formal antiwar resolutions help open the door to the antiwar movement's approach of the ranks in the unions. Efforts in this direction will be an important part of the work of antiwar coalitions and SMC chapters in local areas.

As revolutionary socialists who understand the social power of the organized working class, we seek out and welcome the participation of trade union officials in the antiwar movement as a means of bringing in the trade unions as a whole. At the same time, we realize that the labor bureaucrats will attempt

to exert pressure from the right to jettison the fundamental principles of the movement. The SMC will be the largest and best-organized force to fight for participation in the antiwar movement by labor and all other antiwar forces.

### Women and the War

The growing women's liberation movement and the antiwar movement are objective allies in the common fight against the capitalist government. More than that, opposition to the war was clearly expressed along with the demands around equal job and educational opportunity, childcare, and free abortion in many of the rallies and demonstrations on August 26. In some cities, women's liberation contingents were organized in the October 31 demonstrations. During May, campus women's liberation groups played an initiating role in the fight for the antiwar university at some schools.

As an independent movement with its own demands, the women's liberation movement must be viewed as more than merely a section of the antiwar movement. However, women are affected by the war like every other sector of the population. One of the most obvious ways in which the war affects women is the way money is wasted on destroying lives while women go without adequate facilities for childcare or free, safe abortion. Women's liberation groups should be encouraged to build support for antiwar actions along with their other activities.

### GIs and the Antiwar Movement

Nixon's promises of a speedy end to the war backfire most powerfully among one of the most strategic components of the antiwar movement--the GIs who are asked to die in a war that is supposed to be "winding down." Consequently, antiwar sentiment among GIs has continued to increase in the face of the government's phony "peace" maneuvers.

Increasing GI activity takes a variety of forms, both spontaneous and organized, including signing petitions, distributing antiwar newspapers, participating in antiwar demonstrations, fighting for constitutional rights to oppose the war while in the armed forces, wearing peace insignia, and forming antiwar discussion groups.

GI and civilian antiwar sentiment are closely interlinked, and eventual development of massive GI antiwar actions can only occur in conjunction with a

large and powerful civilian antiwar movement. The YSA has taken the lead in the antiwar movement from the very beginning in arguing for the importance of forging links with GIs. YSAers who were drafted have taken leading roles in organizing GI antiwar activity, especially in the historic struggles at Fort Jackson and Fort Bragg.

There are three essential points in a policy enabling effective antiwar activity to be carried out by GIs:

- 1) The activity must be open and collective and aimed at becoming mass activity. Individual acts of conscience or so-called "underground" activity only isolates those who carry it out from the masses of their fellow GIs and makes them easy targets for victimization by the brass.
- 2) The activity needs to be carried out together with a fight to defend the constitutional rights of GIs, who are citizen-soldiers, against the attempts of the brass to deny these rights. Important victories have been won in this fight, but maintaining and extending GI rights requires a continuing struggle.
- 3) The central issue of concern to GIs is the war and the central demand of the GI antiwar movement should be the same as in the civilian movement--the demand for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Indochina.

The SMC's GI Press Service is a valuable tool for circulating antiwar views and putting forward an effective strategy among GIs, and of aiding locally-produced GI antiwar newspapers.

SMC defends GIs in the struggle for their rights and works to build GI participation in antiwar demonstrations.

\* \* \*

### Strategies Opposed to Mass Action

The two major alternatives which continue to be presented in opposition to the revolutionary mass action strategy put forth by the YSA in the antiwar movement are:

- 1) Reliance on capitalist politicians which blunts the thrust and independence of the antiwar movement. The most persistent advocate of this line within the antiwar movement has been the CP.
- 2) The substitution of individual acts of resistance or small adventurist confrontations for mass mobilizations. The

main advocates of this line have been the pacifists and the ultralefts.

Most of the other disagreements in the antiwar movement ultimately stem from disagreement along one of these two lines. What both of them have in common is their hostility to the mass actions which have been responsible for the growth and influence of the antiwar movement.

### Ultraleftism

The ultralefts and the pacifists put forward their alternative in the name of militancy, but the strategy of isolated acts undercuts the organization of real militancy--the militancy of masses in motion against the government.

One of the best aspects of the May upsurge was the general rejection of ultraleft adventurism which has arisen in the student movement over the past several years. The rejection of adventurism by the masses of students clearly showed the validity of our line on the effectiveness of militant mass action as contrasted to the adventurist policy that had been carried out by many SDS chapters in the heyday of SDS. The October 31 demonstrations gave further confirmation of the declining support to ultraleftism in the student movement. We should continue to hammer away at the lessons of May on the effectiveness of mass action and the futility of adventurism.

### Reformism

The strongest threat to the independent mass action line has come and will continue to come from the reformists--the Communist Party and the liberals who attempt to draw the movement into dependence on a section of the capitalist class. This threat becomes the strongest during election periods when all sorts of capitalist politicians present themselves as "peace" candidates.

The YSA and the militant left wing of the antiwar movement have helped maintain the independence of the antiwar movement by opposing support to capitalist candidates and continuing to project mass actions during the election periods.

The YSA has urged antiwar activists to support the candidates of the Socialist Workers Party as an alternative to the capitalist candidates during the elections. But we have consistently resisted the idea of the antiwar organizations giving their endorsement to any candidate because that would cut across the ability to mobilize maximum support for the continuing mass demonstrations. The SWP candidates have aided the fight to continue organizing mass demonstrations during election periods.

### A "Multi-Issue Movement"?

One of the forms the dispute between the independent mass action strategy and the strategy of reliance on liberal capitalists has taken is the controversy over whether the antiwar movement should continue to concentrate on the central demand for immediate withdrawal or adopt an all-purpose program. The political heterogeneity of the antiwar movement means that it could not adopt a general program without flying apart. The CP has been one of the main proponents of the antiwar movement adopting such a program. In reality, this proposal is designed to dissolve the antiwar movement into a campaign organization for capitalist "doves," primarily in the Democratic Party.

One example of what happens to attempts to form such multi-issue groups is the fate that befell the forces which walked out of the SMC in 1968. The CP and pacifists walked out announcing their intention to form a multi-issue group which would surpass the SMC in size and influence. The group they formed, the Radical Organizing Committee (ROC), never got off the ground. Another example is the National Coalition Against War, Racism and Repression, organized by the CP and remnants of the New Mobe this past summer. NCAWRR has not been able to organize any significant actions since its formation, nor has it been able to broaden the narrow organizational base on which it rests--the CP and a handful of ultralefts.

With the preparatory campaigning for the 1972 presidential elections likely to start around the fall of 1971, this approach will be pushed vigorously by the CP and others. As in the past, it will most likely be accompanied by a lot of demagoguery about the antiwar movement being "racist" or ignoring the oppression of Black and Brown people.

The antiwar movement cannot substitute for the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, women's liberation or labor movements, nor can these other movements, acting separately, accomplish the tasks of the antiwar movement. In practice, the antiwar movement does not and never has ignored other social issues. The Indochina war has affected all sectors of the society and the struggle against the war has affected all of the other social struggles. By raising the relationship of the war to all other social issues through its independent mass mobilizations, the antiwar movement points out that the common interest of all oppressed and exploited sectors is advanced by its united struggle against the government.

### An "Anti-Imperialist Movement"?

A variant of the argument that the antiwar movement should adopt a "multi-issue" program is the argument of some sectarians and ultralefts that it should become an "anti-imperialist movement." By this they mean that the antiwar movement should verbally state its opposition to imperialism by advancing such slogans as "Defeat Imperialism!" In reality, imperialism will not be defeated by rhetoric. The antiwar movement is based on opposition to a concrete instance of imperialist aggression at the center of the international class struggle--the Indochina war. It is objectively anti-imperialist in its actions, actions which both do real damage to imperialism and help to educate masses of people about imperialism. Slogans opposing imperialism in the abstract, which cannot unite and mobilize masses of people, neither harm imperialism nor educate the masses.

#### Negotiations versus Withdrawal

The demand for immediate withdrawal has been counterposed to the demand for negotiations or limited demands such as "Stop the Bombing!" New variations of the demand for negotiations call for the phased withdrawal of troops or withdrawal by some specified future date. None of these demands conforms to the principle of self-determination for the Vietnamese, since they all imply that U.S. imperialism has some right to continue its presence in Indochina.

The calls to support the programs of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam or of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam ultimately compromise the right to self-determination as well. The primary concern of the antiwar movement must be to oppose the presence of U.S. troops in Southeast Asia. As long as U.S. troops remain, the self-determination of Vietnam is violated, whether the U.S. government recognizes the NLF or the PRG or not.

#### "Victory for the NLF"

Variations of the demand for victory for the NLF do not represent a demand directed at the capitalist U.S. government. If they are aimed at anyone, they seem to be aimed at the Vietnamese who are already valiantly holding up their end of the struggle. The task of those who support the Vietnamese revolution in this country is to join with others who oppose the war in mobilizing masses behind the concrete demand that the U.S. get its forces out of Indochina now.

## The Draft

The draft law comes up for renewal in Congress in 1971. It is possible that the draft issue will consequently assume more prominence than it has in the most recent period.

The YSA favors mass action against the draft opposing the whole policy of capitalist conscription, its discriminatory nature and its enforcement by the schools. Such mass actions can be best organized and most effective by linking the draft to the Indochina war and opposing the draft as a device used to further U.S. aggression. It would be a grave mistake for the antiwar movement to shift its central focus away from immediate withdrawal; it is the war which has exacerbated the oppressive nature of the draft and made it an issue which can move masses into action.

The YSA does not advocate individual draft refusal because it is not an effective tactic--it isolates the individual involved and subjects him to easy victimization. While we support the right of those who refuse the draft for reasons of conscience to do so and oppose their imprisonment, our own members accept induction if drafted and insist on their constitutional rights to oppose the war while in the armed forces. We urge others to do the same.

In addition to individual acts of resistance, another policy opposed to the YSA's approach is that of relying on capitalist politicians to abolish the draft or eliminate the inequities in it. This policy is not an effective means of opposing the draft.

## The Middle East

The antiwar movement has sensitized millions of people to the possibility of the U.S. imperialists creating new wars like the one in Indochina. The antiwar movement must be ready to respond quickly and decisively to the threat of any such actions. The central issue around which the antiwar movement is organized is opposition to the use of U.S. troops for wars of aggression. The focus on Indochina is politically, not geographically, determined. Indochina is the place where U.S. troops are carrying out a shooting war of aggression at the present time. Should similar aggression threaten anywhere else outside the Indochinese peninsula, the antiwar movement has a responsibility to act to prevent such aggression; this does not change the central issue of the focus on Indochina.

During the civil war in Jordan the

imperialists were ready to use the U.S. Air Force and U.S. troops if they determined it had become necessary in order to maintain Hussein in power. The danger continues to exist that the U.S. will directly intervene with troops in the Middle East. Although there is wide disagreement in the antiwar movement over the issues in the Mideast conflict, broad unity can be won for the demand, "No More Vietnams! No U.S. Troops to the Mideast!" This demand expresses the best way of bringing masses of Americans into action which could affect the ruling class' decision in the event that the question of a U.S. invasion should be immediately posed again. Moreover, the demand that the U.S. keep its troops out of the Middle East conforms to the tasks dictated to us as revolutionary socialists by our obligation to defend the Arab revolution. The YSA will argue within the antiwar movement for support to this demand.

## The Role of the YSA

We have been the most consistent fighters from the first days of the antiwar movement for the perspective which has brought about its powerful growth. We have been among the most energetic activists in putting that perspective into practice. As a result, the antiwar movement has continued to increase in size and influence to the point where today it possesses the potential power to force the withdrawal of troops. Another result has been the winning of many of the best antiwar activists to the program of revolutionary socialism and to membership in the YSA.

Our tasks in 1971 are to continue to build the membership and activities of the Student Mobilization Committee, the local antiwar coalitions, and the National Peace Action Coalition. Our central task in the coming months is to mobilize support for the spring antiwar action. We will do this by bringing the maximum numbers of activists to the national SMC conference, by working in local SMC chapters to continue the antiwar university, the fight for high school rights and support for the GI antiwar movement, by working in local coalitions affiliated with NPAC to reach support in the trade unions and Third World communities. Through all of this activity we will be consciously preparing for another revolt like the one last May.

The YSA's participation in and orientation toward the fight against the war have been central to the antiwar movement's development as a force which has raised the radicalization to a qualitatively higher stage, and which today has the real potential for being able to force Washington to end its bloody aggression in Indochina.

The antiwar movement has helped to produce in masses of radicalizing young people the willingness to fight against the misery and oppression dealt out by the capitalist government--for many of them the first step toward joining the revolutionary socialist movement. In the course of building the antiwar movement as one of its main tasks, the YSA has

grown significantly, strengthening the international revolutionary socialist movement of which we are a part. We will continue making the antiwar movement central to all of our activities in the period ahead, realizing that by doing so we are bringing closer the day when we will be able to abolish the cause of war itself--capitalism.

**Young Socialist Alliance  
P. O. Box 471, Cooper Station  
New York, New York 10003**

... I plan to attend the Convention. Please send me details on housing, transportation, etc.

... Please send me a set of the discussion bulletins prepared for the Convention, and bill me.

... Send me more information on the Convention.

**Name** . . . . .

**Address** . . . . .

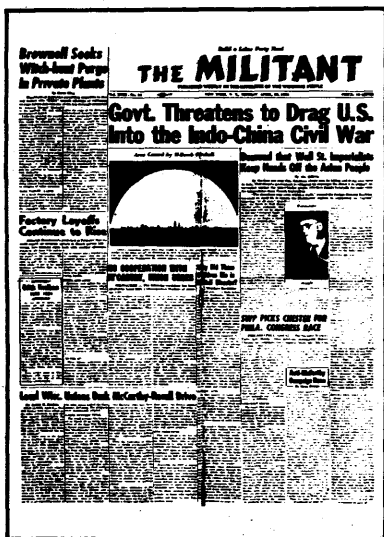
**City** . . . . . **State** . . . . . **Zip** . . . . .



# The Militant fights for the withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Indochina now!

(and we've been fighting for it for a long time)

The Militant has consistently opposed American intervention in Indochina since the U.S. stepped in to crush the Vietnamese revolution following World War II. For the most truthful, thorough analysis of the war and for the most complete coverage of the opposition to the war, don't miss a single issue. A 10-week introductory subscription costs only \$1.



Front page of the April 19, 1954, issue in which The Militant condemned the latest plans of U.S. government to intervene in Southeast Asia.

Clip and mail

- Enclosed is \$1 for 10 weeks of THE MILITANT.
- Enclosed is \$2 for 3 months of INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW and 10 weeks of THE MILITANT.
- Send me a full year of THE MILITANT for \$6.
- I'm a GI. Send me 6 months of THE MILITANT for \$1.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make all checks payable to THE MILITANT, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003

**Come to the YSA Convention**

**Organize the  
socialist  
revolution**



**ATTEND THE YOUNG SOCIALIST NATIONAL CONVENTION  
NEW YORK CITY DECEMBER 27-31, 1970**

FOR INFORMATION, HOUSING, DAYCARE, REGISTRATION WRITE: YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE,  
P.O. BOX 471, COOPER STATION, N.Y., N.Y. 10003. TELEPHONE (212) 989-7570.