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THE STRUGGLE AT BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL AGAINST POLICE ON CAMPUS:
HOW IT CONFIRMS THE LINE OF THE DRAFT POLITICAL RESOLUTION

By Tim Brooks, Berkeley-Oakland Local

The recent struggle at Berkeley High School around police on campus (Young Socialist, Dec. '73, Jan. '74) was an important struggle which bears out in practice the line of the draft political resolution and our evaluation of the current lull in the student movement. This article will try to show how the Berkeley local intervened in, built and led the fight against police on campus at Berkeley High School and also draw the important political lessons of the fight.

Berkeley High School, a Brief History

Besides being the key political High School in the East Bay Area, Berkeley High School (BHS) is the only High School in Berkeley. It has almost 3,000 students, the majority of whom are members of the oppressed nationalities, 45% Black, 3% Chicano, and 9% Asian. BHS is one of the most liberal High Schools in the country and is often held up as an example of how integration can work. Yet racial oppression is evident on the campus through unofficial de facto tracking and other programs of the administrators. The attempt to bring cops on campus stems from the campaign waged last year to whip up excitement over "school violence" by racist members of the school board and the right wing Berkeley Daily Gazette.

BHS has a long political history going back to the early days of the antiwar movement and the free speech movement at the University of California at Berkeley.

Because of the dominance of Cal over Berkeley politics and its close geographical proximity to BHS (only six blocks from the High School campus) Berkeley High has always taken its politics from Cal and has mirrored the ups and downs of the movement at the University.

One example of this is May 1970, when Cal was turned into an antiwar University. BHS had one of the most complete upsurges of any High School in the country and the High School strike committee worked very closely with the Cal strike committee and collaborated on joint actions.

BHS has also reflected the lull in activity that exists on the campus today.

The YSA's Work on the Campus Before the Upsurge

In line with our view that Berkeley High is the key political High School in the East Bay and the local's orientation to Berkeley we were in a position to have of our High School comrades transfer to BHS last January. BHS became the focus of our High School work. We projected for the remainder of the year to lay the basic ground work at Berkeley High and to establish the YSA on the campus. We were successful in this extent to a large degree. The comrade was able to obtain a position

on the school paper and became integrated into the political life of the school. Through the sales of the press, the campaign of Doug Hewell for Board of Education and the student government campaign we ran at the school we were able to lay this groundwork and establish relations with the important forces at the school.

This ground work enabled us to establish regular sales at the school this fall. Our sales were an important factor in our ability to intervene in and lead the struggle when it developed. For example I don't think it was a coincidence that some of the key leaders of the struggle were readers of the Young Socialist.

The Vanguard of the Struggle: How We Correctly Related To It

When we found out about the police department proposal to put cops on campus we immediately began feeling out the situation, talking to the contacts that we had to try to get a feel for the potential for action against the proposal.

In the course of doing this we came into contact with a group of radical students that were also in the process of trying to organize opposition to the police being brought onto campus.

I want to spend some time describing this group and how we related to it because I think it has some relevance to the current debate in the YSA and the Fourth International.

In my opinion, when put into the framework of the BHS campus population this group could fall into the general category, laid out first in the European perspectives document, of the "New Mass Vanguard."

This group is made up primarily of white students from petty-bourgeois backgrounds. As a whole they consider themselves anti-imperialists, supporters of the NLF (uncritically), and the April Coalition (sometimes critically), they think that Mao is pretty good yet are not organized Maoists. The main force among this group is a small organization called "Youth Liberation" which would fit into the characterization of being to the left of the CP.

Comrades shouldn't think that I'm trying to equate this group at Berkeley High with the "new mass vanguard" of Europe which I understand consists of a much broader milieu that is much more sophisticated and has as part of it many organized tendencies; however, it is helpful to look at how the YSA related to the mistakes, twists and turns, and political immaturity of this group at BHS in the light of how we would relate to the "new mass vanguard" because our method is basically the same.

The first action of this group was to form a committee to fight the police department proposal to bring cops onto the campus (Student Committee Against Police on Campus).

This move was absolutely correct and our comrades joined this committee. However, once inside this committee we had to fight for our perspective.

The committee, which contained little more than these "vanguard" elements and ourselves at the start, had no perspective for reaching out to other sectors of the campus population to broaden the committee. This was for different reasons. Some thought that while it would be good if more people were involved, there was no time to draw in these other forces. Others, because of their lack of political experience, did not know how to broaden the committee, while others were consciously opposed to expanding the committee at all but wanted to keep it small.

We fought against the first and third groups while at the same time explaining to those who didn't know, how larger forces could be drawn in. We subordinated the "concerns of the vanguard" (which I take to mean what they are in favor of or want) to the objective needs of the masses of students at BHS. If we had adapted to this "vanguard" group and not waged this fight it would have meant only the failure of the movement at Berkeley High.

It was primarily the YSA that was responsible for drawing in the BSU, teachers, the head of the Black studies department at BHS, etc.,...and for getting broad endorsement for the committee including that of Ron Delums, two City Council people, Elaine Brown and others.

This committee's first action was a rally that was called one day after it was formed (before the YSA had become involved) that was built very poorly by these narrow forces. However, 150 students attended the rally, which we characterized as a success. But this "vanguard" group totally missed the significance of the action. They assessed the rally as a total flop and from that experience were opposed to organizing any other type of mass action. Again we fought against this mistaken perspective, pushing for another rally with two weeks to build it. Our perspective eventually won out and the rally was widely endorsed and had an impressive speakers' list.

It was this broad movement that played a key role in defeating the police's attempts to bring cops onto the BHS campus. If it wasn't for the intervention of the YSA, counterposing our strategy for building the mass movements to the political immaturity and mistakes of this "vanguard" group the outcome would not have been the same.

The question that arises in my mind is how would the IEC majority tendency relate to the struggle at Berkeley

High School? Are we to assume that they would carry out the same basic kind of work, although obviously on a much smaller scale, that the former Ligue Communiste did around the Debre law struggle? If so, then that would certainly be correct, or would they have adapted to this "vanguard" group's weakness or perhaps send out a few High School comrades to fire bomb the Berkeley police station which is across the street from BHS? That certainly would have been a blow to the Berkeley Police department and even better would have corresponded to widespread sentiment against the police at Berkeley High School.

I realize that the fight for a correct strategy within the European "New Mass Vanguard" is more difficult and that our perspective will not always win out as it did at Berkeley High School. However, just because the correct strategy may be the hardest one to fight for does not mean that we chuck it out the nearest window!

Gains for the YSA

The YSA made a great many gains out of the struggle at BHS. We've now established the YSA and our comrades at BHS as political activists and leaders that are interested in the concerns of the broadest masses of students.

We've taken a giant step toward developing a real base at BHS. Through consistent YSA building activities such as sales, setting up meetings for national spokespeople of our movement, the 1974 statewide campaign in California, etc....we should be able to make real inroads in terms of recruitment at Berkeley High School. One of the most important gains from the struggle at BHS is that the comrades there have developed a very good working relationship with the BSU and the Black Studies Department.

The BSU at Berkeley high is still very small in terms of the Black population of the school, but it is a very important force for us to relate to. It is made up of a group of conscious nationalists and are very friendly to our politics. Some of the leaders of the BSU, for example, are readers of the Young Socialist. Secondly, in spite of their size they carry a lot of authority at the school.

Through our influence with the BSU and the Black Studies Department at BHS we hope to have Pathfinder titles adopted this winter and spring, especially such new titles as Blacks in America's Wars.

And finally as a result of the struggle the YSA has begun to be looked to for political leadership by sections of the school population and this will improve our ability to lead future struggles at Berkeley High School.

December 17, 1973

THE FIGHT AGAINST ZIONISM AND THE JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

By Mark Friedman, Brooklyn Local

New York City is unique in the United States for the size and scope of the city university school system. In 1968, through massive student struggles, particularly of Black and Latin students, the City University of New York (CUNY) was forced to grant open admissions. Open admissions made possible the admittance of tens of thousands of Black, Latin and poor white students to higher educational institutions that they could not previously attend for academic and financial reasons.

Prior to 1968, the student composition of the campuses in New York City was predominantly white. This was true especially at Brooklyn College (BC), located in the heart of the Brooklyn Jewish community.

The Jewish Defense League (JDL), a right-wing terrorist organization, was formed in response to rising Black militancy and was rapidly becoming the most powerful organization at BC. During their height in 1970-71, at BC alone they numbered 200-300 active members and had political and organizational hegemony among students. They controlled the newspapers and through the student government allotted themselves and their front groups \$40,000 per year.

In 1972 the Brooklyn YSA made a major orientation to the campus; our major task was to get the YSA into the center of campus political life. The major problem facing us was the predominance of Zionist ideology, and the JDL was the strongest Zionist group. The JDL represented the extreme right wing of the Zionist movement, which was organized into an umbrella group--the Jewish Student Union. The political atmosphere on campus was thus right-wing and anti-communist; overt racism was part of student government policies. Radical groups were denied funding and Black and Latin students were continually harassed verbally and at times physically beaten up.

At first the work of the fraction was very slow--sales of our press, literature tables, building the Student Mobilization Committee and the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition, and carrying out a very defensive campaign against the JDL, primarily a literary discussion in the pages of the campus paper.

The spring antiwar upsurge changed all that. As the recognized leadership of the antiwar movement, we were able to build broad united fronts involving Black, Latin and Jewish groups. The JSU was in a crisis since many of their members were antiwar; some leaders of the JDL were even forced to utter antiwar statements, causing a split in their own organization. The tail end of the upsurge coincided with student government elections. A coalition of Black and Latin students with the active support of the YSA, won the elections. This further cracked Zionist hegemony.

The SWP election campaigns, sales of The Militant, Young Socialist, ISR, and Pathfinder literature as well

as frequent forums further strengthened the YSA and weakened Zionism. In the spring of 1973 we organized a Middle East debate with pro- and anti-Zionist speakers. This teach-in which drew over 300 people, was the first of its kind at BC. After two years of organized propaganda and mass work we were able to force the right-wing into a debate. They suffered a major political defeat at the debate.

The recent October war in the Arab East opened up another opportunity to get out our ideas and to deal the JDL another blow. The YSA wanted to organize a pro-Arab forum amidst the war, totally unheard-of before. We realized that this meeting would be an open challenge to the JDL. Our speakers included the nationally famous Mohammed Mehdi, Chairman of the Arab-American Action Committee, and Mark Friedman from the Young Socialist Alliance. From the outset we knew that we could not carry out a successful meeting of this kind by ourselves --we would have to involve as many other groups as possible. We systematically approached campus groups for co-sponsorship and support. As a result the meeting on October 24 was co-sponsored by the Umoja Society (a Black group), the Dominican Student Group, Dar-ul Islam Muslims, Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) and the YSA. We secured a representative of the administration to chair the meeting, using the authority of the chair to prevent or stop any possible disruption.

The composition of the audience was predominantly white and Zionist with a core of about 30-40 members and supporters of the JDL. The YSA, as a precautionary measure organized a small security force of its own members, sympathizers, Arab students and a few members of the PSP.

Despite heckling during the first speaker, the forum continued. Dr. Mehdi had hardly begun his speech when chanting and yelling turned into a physical assault on the speakers platform and an unsuccessful attack on the speakers. In addition to the defense guard some Zionist students helped to defend the speakers as well as faculty, administrators, and campus security. The meeting was disrupted, a few people were injured, and the JDL then proceeded to have a rally in the room, vowing never to allow Mehdi to return.

Upon leaving the campus, an SWPer who helped in the defense of the meeting was ambushed by six JDL goons. James Mendieta, the SWP candidate for District Attorney in Brooklyn, was hit with a lead pipe and required several stitches in his head.

Immediately after the meeting we organized a political defense against these hooligan attacks. First we organized a news conference for the following day. All the newspapers, TV and radio were called and read a statement about the assault on the meeting and the SWPer, and told about the news conference. We tried to

broaden the news conference by getting statements of protest from the mayoral candidates, and Democratic and Republican politicians; only the SWP responded. The news conference was called by members of those groups which sponsored the campus meeting. The speakers at the news conference, which was held at the United Nations church, were the two speakers from the forum. Several newspapers, TV stations and the wire services attended. We made a special effort to get a statement to those stations not present and to the campus and high school radio stations and newspapers.

No bourgeois paper covered the story. The ruling class was trying to whip up U.S. sentiment for the Israeli state. They did not want to expose the real face of Zionism--the hooliganism of the JDL. Despite the lack of coverage, the news conference was important in putting pressure on the JDL, in reaffirming our support for the Arab struggle and our intention of holding the forum at BC again within a couple of weeks. We made the news media aware of what happened and were able to publicize a similar forum to be held the following day at Queens College where Dr. Mehdi would be speaking. Follow-up work after the news conference resulted in several articles in campus papers in NYC.

After the disruption at BC, YSAers at Queens College (where the JDL is also strong), launched an intensive effort to make sure that the meeting would be a success. A leaflet, distributed at Queens, for the democratic right of the meeting to take place was signed by the newspaper, student government, and faculty members. With the help of the Black and Latin groups we issued a special leaflet aimed at Black and Latin students. The leaflet briefly explained the role of Israel in crushing the Arab and African revolutions and urged Blacks and Latins to attend the meeting for educational reasons and to help insure the democratic right of the meeting to take place. About 300 people attended the meeting and a tight security was organized by the students. Members of the student government, professors and administrators attended the meeting and tried to keep order. Although 50 JDLers tried, they failed in their attempts to break up the meeting. The heckled and screamed, but both the speakers (Dr. Mehdi and Dave Frankel from The Militant) were able to continue. After the meeting JDLers tried to stop Mehdi from leaving the campus and several fights broke out; one JDLer was injured.

Our ability to involve more Black, Latin and Middle Eastern students in the defense and building of the meeting made it a success. Black and Latin students viewed the meeting as a victory and many volunteered to attend the rescheduled meeting at BC to help in the security of the speakers.

The day after the disruption at BC, the BC YSA issued a leaflet signed by Mehdi and Friedman entitled "Stop JDL Hooligan Attacks." The leaflet explained what happened at the meeting and the assault on Mendietta afterwards; it called upon all campus groups, faculty and administrators to condemn the tactics of the JDL and to issue public statements to this effect.

All of the work of the BC YSA was now concentrated on this defense campaign. The question was one of free speech. Does a pro-Arab speaker have a right to speak at BC? Will the faculty, students and administrators defend this right of free speech? Does a small group of thugs run the campus?

The YSA used every available means to bring pressure against the JDL and to create the type of atmosphere on campus so that Dr. Mehdi could return and a successful meeting could take place. We approached the Rabbi at the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation and asked him to issue a statement against the JDL; he refused, fearing the JDL, using the excuse that he would not take a public position against another Jewish group. The Judaic Studies Department, although they said they disagreed with the tactics of the JDL, said Mehdi had no right to speak.

Discussions with members of the administration forced the Dean of Students to issue a statement of condemnation of the disruption, and to make every effort in his power to prevent further disruptions. The role of the administration has always been to support the JDL against the Black and Latin students. When several years ago the JDL and other Zionists assaulted Blacks and Latins in the campus cafeteria, the Blacks and Latins were suspended and put on probation. The administration supported the JDL's racist attacks on the Third World Edition, the Black and Latin newspaper and gave tacit support to the freezing of student government funds to that newspaper. The administration has used the JDL to whip up racist sentiments against the hiring of more Blacks and Latins and to cut back the Black and Puerto Rican studies departments. Our ability to force the administration to take even a verbal stand in support of our democratic rights and against the JDL was a victory in itself. They did this despite the efforts of many Zionist students and groups to prohibit Mehdi from ever speaking on campus again.

The SWPer who was assaulted by the JDLers filed charges against them in civil court. This led to the positive identification of these two thugs and their being arrested and charged with third-degree assault. While we place no confidence in the courts and police to solve our problems, we were able to use them to maximize pressure on the JDL. It would force other Zionists to differentiate themselves and to take a stand--are you for or against the prosecution of these criminals? We also considered bringing these thugs up on charges in the student court but decided against it at this time because it might give them a handle on campus to organize against us claiming that we were out to get them.

This offensive against the JDL had a tremendous effect on other sectors of the BC community. First and foremost, it put the JDL on the defensive and the YSA on the offensive. It changed the political climate. Liberal Zionists were now more willing to stand up against the JDL, something which they were too scared to do before. It began to change the attitude of the Black and Latin students that one couldn't do anything about the JDL and that BC would always be a Zionist and racist

campus. The offensive catapulted the YSA into the center of all political discussion on campus. It gave the Arab students a means to speak out against Zionism and the expansionist racist policies of Israel and for the right of the Palestinians to self-determination.

The publication of the campus newspaper with an article against the JDL by Mehdi and Friedman and an editorial for the right of freedom of speech expanded the discussion of free speech campus-wide. Everyone was forced to take a position--for freedom of speech or against it. Liberal Zionists within the student government even put forward a motion to cut off all funds to the JDL. Although this was defeated because of JDL intimidation, the fact that such a debate took place in the student government was historical.

All of the YSA's activities at BC concentrated on building a second and successful Middle East meeting. The main task was to change the political atmosphere on the campus and to attract more Black and Puerto Rican students to the meeting. We had discussions with the administration and campus security and together arranged safe travel to and from the meeting for Mehdi.

We forced the administration to commit themselves to attending the meeting and play a mediating role with the Zionists and to let the students handle the bulk of the security for the meeting itself. Even as we were doing this the administration was trying to turn the situation around on us, saying that we could be blamed for inciting to riot by what might be said at the meeting. They "encouraged" us not to mention those things "which might arouse Jewish (sic) emotion." They were referring to the wild applause of support by Zionist youth at the first meeting for the massacre at Deir Yassin. The administration was obviously watching us more than it was watching the JDL, hoping that we would be unable to prevent disruption, that we could be blamed for it, and the YSA could be banned from campus. For these reasons we were all the more serious about a successful meeting--we were not going to fall into their trap.

Sponsors of the second meeting scheduled for November 12, in addition to those groups sponsoring the first meeting, included the International Student Organization. In addition to the sponsors we collected scores of signatures on petitions from faculty members, student government representatives, and officials from campus groups who endorsed the democratic right of the meeting to take place, although they did not necessarily agree with the viewpoints represented. This statement of support for free speech was printed on the back of the leaflet which announced the meeting. As pressure built for the right of the meeting to take place, the JDL put a motion before the student government to try to get it to cancel the meeting. The motion was soundly defeated.

The other aspect of the defense of the meeting was the necessary change in the composition of the audience. To help achieve this we printed a special leaflet directed at Black and Latin students (similar to that at Queens College)--explaining the role of Israel, the real charac-

ter of the JDL, and the successful defense of the meeting at Queens College because of the significant number of Black and Latin students present. This leaflet was distributed at the classes of the Black and Puerto Rican studies departments. This leaflet drove home the point to thousands of Black and Latin students that they had a stake in the right of this meeting to take place and that it was their interests that were being fought for. The smallness of our fraction made this task difficult but realizing the crucial importance of the mass education of the Black and Latin students we allotted the necessary forces and leadership to carry out the task. The lack of any real Black or Latin leadership with any following as well as the years of intimidation of Black and Latin students made our task all the more difficult. As a result of our work, Black and Latin students look to us for leadership first, above and beyond their own groups or their Black and Puerto Rican Studies Departments which abstained from the fight.

The JDL was at a complete loss for what to do during the campaign. On the one hand some of them were extremely polite and friendly; others would shout and yell at us and even threaten our lives in public, saying that they would "get" us and that we would "pay" for what we were doing. The day of the meeting itself an anonymous leaflet was issued calling upon all Jewish students to boycott the meeting--telling students not to waste their time on this "worthless Arab," or to let themselves be provoked by these "anti-semites" and "pro-terrorist goons."

Although a couple of other groups were involved in the planning and organization of the meeting, the main responsibility was with the YSA. YSAers wrote articles for the campus papers, spoke on the radio, discussed the issue of free speech in the classrooms, argued for hours with the JDL and other Zionists, sold The Militant and Young Socialist, Pathfinder literature, and distributed thousands of leaflets. We, a handful of revolutionary socialists, qualitatively changed the atmosphere on the campus through a conscious policy of mobilizing the masses of students in our defense.

Throughout the entirety of the campaign, the political defense of the campaign was our priority, and the physical defense secondary and completely subordinate to the first. We recognized that even the best defense possible would not stop a disruption if the majority of the meeting was against us holding the forum. This was the challenge to us--no meetings at BC had ever been successfully defended against a conscious assault by the JDL. Our policy was to build a broad united front defense guard; first, to inhibit any disruption, and second, to stop a disruption should it begin. We appealed to all groups sponsoring the meeting and individuals to help us in this effort.

Our movement's experience in the organization of political defense is far more complete and successful than any other organization in the country. Most groups have no concept of how to organize a political defense around democratic rights; their defense cases either being re-

formist or ultraleft and sectarian. It was through the discussions around the physical defense of the meeting that the real differences in defense policy between the organizations, particularly the YSA and the PSP came to the fore. PSP's idea of defense was to come to the meeting as an army, ready to do battle, that we should be ready for the worst and be prepared to crack skulls. To them, a confrontation was inevitable. Despite hours of discussion they could not understand how this would turn the tables on us, and make us look like the aggressors and the JDL the victims. This was exactly what the administration wanted. Although they disagreed with our defense policies, the PSP agreed to participate in the defense of the meeting under our direction.

The character of the second meeting was completely different. We organized comrades and supporters from throughout the city to help defend the meeting. We had a YSAer chair the meeting so as to set the political tone we wanted and to deal with possible disruptions. The presence of deans and faculty aided us but the primary force was the over 300 students present. There were more Black and Latin students and the majority of the audience was willing to take an active role in keeping the meeting peaceful, realizing they had a stake in the meeting. JDLers and their supporters tried to disrupt the meeting but the mass pressure from the audience prevented this. As the audience repeatedly told them to keep quiet and sit down, it began to split their ranks. The JDL leadership soon realized that they could not break up the meeting and they did not want their membership to hear the truth, so they got up and left before the question and answer period. They were divided from the other Zionists who wanted to stay and ask questions and debate. JDL was defeated in the eyes of hundreds of students at the meeting--not only Black and Latin but large numbers of pro-Zionist Jews. The meeting continued without disruption and at the end the students cheered for the victory they had won.

What was Accomplished

The victory against these reactionary JDL goons has several facets. First of all, the YSA established the fact that people whom the JDL and its supporters do not like have a right to speak on campus and that students have a right to hear them without fear of violence. Second, the meeting split the Zionist students on campus. Third, the meeting got out the truth on the Middle East not only to the 300 people at the meeting, but the thousands who read the campus paper. Fourth, the meeting helped to break Zionist domination of BC. Fifth, Black and Latin students realized that there was a group on campus--the YSA--that was fighting in their interests and leading the struggle against the JDL. Eighth, many students learned that the most effective defense of a meeting is a political defense, but when a physical defense is necessary, a combined united front defense of students is a necessity.

Already the gains that the YSA has made from the success of this defense campaign and of the Arab and Palestinian peoples is tremendous. The YSA is the center of

all political discussions on campus--from the Arab East, to the racist Shockley, to the coup in Chile and Watergate. Heated discussions and debates on the Middle East of up to 150 persons are frequent occurrences around our literature table. The YSA is seen as the best defender of the Arab and Palestinian people, the best educators and organizers, and the only organization taking up the defense of Blacks, Latins, and Arabs against the racist slanders and attacks of the JDL.

Growing respect for the YSA is most evident in the surge of Arab students to Trotskyist politics. This recruitment to Trotskyist ideas is being carried out through a series of classes held on a weekly basis and involving 6-10 Arab students and workers. The experience and education that we can give these revolutionaries is invaluable for our work here and the task of building the international movement in the Arab East.

This meeting was an important step in the continuing fight against the JDL. In itself it was a real victory, but it has also opened up new opportunities for us. We are trying to create more and deeper divisions within the Zionist movement, pitting the Rabbi (who was part of the disruption) against the JDL and the Judaic Studies Department, the Judaic Studies Department against the Zionist students who opposed the disruptions, etc. We issued a public challenge to the Judaic Studies Department to debate us; they refused. We linked their silence on the disruption to their support for it, and we called upon all BC students and faculty, especially those interested in Jewish Affairs, to voice their support for the democratic rights of all students; to condemn the hooligan attacks of the JDL, and to do their part in seeing that the JDL cannot carry out these terrorist activities in the future. The JDL has just seceded (or was thrown out) from the Jewish Student Union (the umbrella Jewish group) probably from this pressure. This will isolate them more from the mainstream of Zionist youth and will further their disintegration now that they no longer have the cover of the more "liberal" Zionist groups.

To further the politicalization of the Black and Latin students the YSA held a forum on Israel and South Africa. About 50 Blacks and Latins attended, we recruited one Puerto Rican woman to the YSA and used the forum to build our Student Government election campaign.

Student government elections have been a valuable tool in counterposing ourselves to the Zionist movement. This year our campaign has been greatly strengthened by our campaign against the JDL. Our slate of 20 candidates reflects the work that we have been able to do in getting out our ideas and in drawing people closer and finally into the YSA. Twelve out of the fourteen sympathizers on our slate are Black and Puerto Rican, six of them are planning to attend the YSA convention, and we will undoubtedly recruit a number of them to the YSA.

Significance for the International Movement

The success of the defense that was organized for the BC meeting has important ramifications for the work of the Trotskyist movement internationally. The main lesson to be learned is how the revolutionary party and youth organization defends itself. The question of the "new mass vanguard" and "minority violence" are also relevant if seen in their meaning to our work at BC.

The history of the SWP and the YSA is filled with examples of our defense policies put into practice. The examples of the Minneapolis Trials, the Kutcher Defense, the Bloomington students, the Fort Jackson 8, defending ourselves against the Legion of Justice and the Ku Klux Klan, and most recently our support to the Political Rights Defense Fund and the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners are all cases in which we have defended the right to free speech, assembly, and ultimately in some cases our own right to exist. Our experiences have taught us that the best defense is a mass defense. The best defense of the Vietnamese Revolution were the mass anti-war demonstrations. Our defense literature and appeals are directed at the masses, winning the support of groups and prominent individuals as a means of helping to draw the masses into action. We have never and will never depend upon an elite sector of the population, the so-called "new mass vanguard" to defend us--we go straight to the masses.

Where was the "new mass vanguard" at BC and what role did it play? From the first initial stages of the planning of the meeting, these elements of the organized and unorganized variety refused to endorse, co-sponsor, or support in any way whatsoever the meeting. Only one group helped out, and minimally at that, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. The "new mass vanguard" (NMV), would not help to distribute leaflets, in fact they told people to stay away from the meeting because it would be

a riot. When the time of the meeting came around, the NMV was as far away from the meeting as possible, they even went off campus.

The result was that the SWP, the Young Socialist Alliance, and the mass of BC students defended the right of the meeting to take place; defended the revolutionary socialist youth organization. Had we listened to the Internationalist Tendency and oriented to the NMV, the meeting might well have ended in catastrophe and the YSA could very easily have been banned and its leaders indicted for inciting to riot (reminiscent of the June 21 demonstration in France). So much for an orientation to the "new mass vanguard."

The concept of "minority violence" was also evidenced at BC. The PSP has the mistaken concept that it is up to an elite revolutionary vanguard to protect the masses. Their concept was to enter the meeting armed to the teeth so that we could "defend the masses" from the JDL goons. Isn't this the same concept of "minority violence," discussed by the Internationalist Tendency? Doesn't it sound like "initiatives in action," or "exemplary action" or "pilot projects"? Rather than spending their time educating and organizing large numbers of Black and Puerto Rican students to attend the meeting, the PSP was preoccupied with the "technical preparation for combat." In discussions with the PSPers, they likened their role to that of urban guerrillas.

In France, the belief in a "new mass vanguard" and "minority violence" led to their ultraleft June 21 demonstration which resulted in the arrest of our co-thinkers and the outlawing of their organization. Had we adopted the Internationalist Tendency's position in Brooklyn, the Brooklyn College YSA would probably not exist, and rather than reaping the recruits from our actions as we are now, we would be involved in extensive defense efforts.

At Brooklyn College we have seen the success of our concept of political defense. I strongly urge all comrades interested in building the Young Socialist Alliance to vote for the National Executive Committee draft resolution.

December 17, 1973

By John Holton (Internationalist Tendency), Madison Local

Barry Sheppard, a prominent leader of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction, recently denounced the Internationalist Tendency as the "Thermidor against the advances in program and practice the party has made in coming to grips with the new radicalization.... They would take us backward politically, saddling us with false and wrong positions on democratic demands, on the nature of the transitional program, on women's liberation...." (SWP DB Vol. 31, No. 27, p. 57). Illustrating these alleged "advances in program" Comrade Camejo tells us, for example, that a Black woman is triply blessed, because if one demand she is struggling for evaporates then she can always go into the grab bag and find another. If her demands as a Black prove unsuccessful, then let's try again with women's demands. The Madison supporters of the LTF have provided us with a good case study of where such eclecticism leads. Indeed, a real thermidor becomes readily apparent when one examines the Madison YSA Local's implementation of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction's line on Feminism.

In Madison there currently exist two active women's liberation groups, the Women's Action Movement (WAM) and the Women's Studies Group (WSG).

The Women's Studies Group began operation in the early months of this year and has as its principal focus the establishment of a women's studies department and a women's center on the University of Wisconsin (Madison) campus. The Woman's Action Movement (WAM) founded in 1969 largely by the YSA, developed into an organization that was able to begin bridging the gap between the community and the campus through a sound program and concrete actions. Through its leadership in the fight for Free 24-hour Day Care Centers, WAM was able to draw large numbers of women to its ranks and emerged as the major women's liberation group in the city. When the YSA made a national decision to push the "Repeal of all Abortion Laws" to the exclusion of all other work, a minority of the Madison local felt that WAM should have been the organizational framework in which to advance the struggle. With the community prestige it enjoyed and because it had an existing organization geared toward action campaigns, it was obviously the best vehicle for an abortion repeal campaign, or for that matter any other campaign around the issue of women's liberation. The majority of the local, however, opted instead to implement the WONAAC approach by creating a single-issue coalition that could relate only to the Anti-Abortion Law Repeal issue and nothing else. They hoped that WAM would go down the drain. However, because of its strong reputation, WAM was able to sustain itself through the years and continues to attract women despite its lack of a revolutionary leadership and direction.

The Women's Studies Group, as stated before, was formed around the "fight" to procure a women's center on the UW campus, a campus that was in the vanguard for the

fight for Afro-American and Native-American Programs and Centers in the United States. In the aftermath of a long and bitter student strike in February 1969, an Afro-American center was established. The Madison YSA played an important role in this struggle.

The establishment of these centers was a direct result of mass actions which put pressure on the UW officials to meet the Black students' demands. It was the ability of the strike leadership to solidify Black and white (and men and women as well) against the University administration that provided the motor force for the successful campaign that eventually led to the establishing of the Afro-Center.

Late this summer the UW administration announced plans to eliminate funding for the cultural centers and actually attempted to close the centers. This attempt was met with militant demonstrations in support of the demand "Open the Cultural Centers." After initial mass demonstrations the University administrators decided to play a waiting game. They refused to physically close the centers and chose instead to reassign all UW personnel in the centers to other departments. The Open Centers Committee (OCC) began preparations for a long struggle to keep the centers open.

Thus it was in this context that the women's center was originally projected in the spring of 1973. At the very time when the Black and Native American Centers were being closed the majority of the YSA (LTF supporters) felt that it would be acceptable to begin bargain-ing with the University to get a center for women with-out making any attempts to link the struggles together around the demand of maintaining the two existing centers, while at the same time creating a center for women.

Completely blinded by the transclass notion of "sisterhood" the Madison YSA leadership proceeded to implement their line of "consistent feminism." As a result the YSA led many women back into the University structure thus helping to defuse a large part of the struggle at precisely the moment when the university administration themselves were proving their inability to handle the situation. Instead, the YSA (LTF) comrades led the women involved in the fight for a women's center away from the struggle that was taking place in the streets around the demand of "Keep the Cultural Centers Open."

The actions of the Madison LTF comrades provide a rich illustration of the "advances in program" made by the LTF leadership. The Madison YSA's strategy led not to the "red university" but instead served to buttress and reinforce the traditional role of the University in bourgeois society.

The discussions that took place this fall between the

University and the YSA leadership of the Women's Studies Group embodied all of the rotten characteristics of a "Kissinger" secret negotiations session.

The Madison comrades involved in the women's studies work maintained that they could make real ties with the working class community by involving themselves with the University Extension. The extension is a division of the University that conducts correspondence and home-study courses throughout the state. This type of involvement was their brilliant idea of how the feminist struggle can become an integral part of the working class movement. However, it became clear this route was chosen simply because the Extension was "thinking" about "developing" their own women's study program. As it turned out, however, the women's study program at the Extension simply disappeared before it began. The University administrators, trusted by the YSA, simply said "No women's studies department in the Extension."

Regaining their composure after the confusion resulting from the Extension default, the YSA leadership quickly came to grips with the next important "political" question facing them. Should we expose the University publicly? (Madison YSA minutes Sept. 2) After a bitter debate in the YSA local meeting, in which a minority of the local opposed any attempts to hush up the perfidy of the University officials, the YSA leadership decided that any public exposures of their conduct would hurt the attempt at getting a program and center on the campus itself. This was the first of several maneuvers which effectively isolated the Women's Studies Group from the other struggles taking place while at the same time leading the independent Women's Studies Group into the structure of the University.

After getting burned on the periphery of the mega-university system the YSA then led the Women's Studies Group back to the main campus.

Before proceeding a bit of background information is needed: for several years the UW has employed an Assistant to the Chancellor for women's affairs. This office was created to fulfill several legal breaches after the federal government cracked down on the Universities' unfair hiring practices in relation to women professors. The Assistant Chancellors' office was created for the express purpose of acting as a safety valve to head off any dissent by women in the University system. The Assistant to the Chancellor has come to be hated by many of the leaders of campus unions, student leaders (most recently the OCC leadership) and others in the University system for her ruthless cut-throat tactics of defusing every bit of protest that came to her office. It was this person that the YSA-led Women's Studies Group tail-ended throughout the struggle.

The Assistant to the Chancellor began participating with the WSG in a common effort (Sisterhood is powerful?) which served as a basis for a long-lasting friendship with the YSA leaders in the WSG. The Assistant to the Chancellor, however, decided that the two demands: (1) Student and Faculty control over hiring and firing of all

department personnel and (2) student control over all subjects and subject matter taught, were too radical and she issued a call for a new committee to be set up. Did our comrades fight this blatant and bureaucratic attack on the WSG leadership? Did they recognize the reactionary nature of such an alliance with a University administrator? Hell no, they simply kept quiet and "volunteered" for slots on the new committee. They were allowed to fill seats on the new committee simply because there were few persons who even wanted to become administration puppets. As more bureaucratic machinations began to unfold, more and more women dropped out of the WSG. From the attendance reports we found that over one-half of the members simply stopped participating in the WSG. Could they possibly have been upset with the odious collaboration between the YSA leadership and the Assistant Chancellor for Women's Affairs? Leading women comrades at a local meeting explained that we should bring in the demands of student-faculty control of hiring and firing and student control over subjects taught and subject matter, and then bargain down with the Dean of Women's Affairs over these demands. They were quickly corrected by IT supporters in the local who explained the concept of mass decisions and referenda as opposed to "secret" negotiations. The leadership of the YSA LTF never admitted or corrected the mistake. Their silence can only mean their political agreement with such a deplorable strategy.

An Adaptation to Reformism

Comrades involved in women's liberation struggles must bring a Marxist analysis and program to those struggles. These struggles can only be correctly analyzed when placed between two coordinates, the workers' movement and the revolutionary vanguard. These struggles cannot be correctly understood if looked upon as a distinct entity from the class struggle. In the coming periods the women's struggle will directly involve the working class and the revolutionary vanguard has the responsibility to education women on the class nature of their oppression. It is precisely as class battles are beginning to unfold that the LTF is taking a step (many steps?) backward by preserving the anti-Marxist, petty-bourgeois ideology of feminism, an ideology that counterposes sex against sex rather than class against class.

In Madison, we saw correct analysis of the relationship of student oriented issues to the unfolding political situation completely rejected by the ardent followers of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. Instead they:

- (1) chased the University administrators around attempting to get demands accepted.
- (2) engaged in bargaining with these officials without attempting to involve women on campus;
- (3) refused to criticize the University administrators in the public press because they were afraid of not getting their demands if they incurred the administrators' wrath and
- (4) most importantly extended and exacerbated the

separation of men and women in struggle.

The above stated adaptation to reformism magnified itself as the struggle around the centers unfolded. The entire petty-bourgeois basis of feminism showed its face. The participation in the women's studies "struggle" became one of an inward focus, failing entirely to relate their struggle for open centers for the Afro-Americans and Native Americans to the demand for a center for women.

Under the leadership of the YSA, the Women's Studies Group not only failed to raise class demands but actually devised a strategy to insure that what happened to the other two centers would inevitably happen to the women's center. During the week of September 18, 1973, the idea to expand women's studies from a mere academic program into a full-fledged university department featuring BA, MA, and PhD programs was proposed. This was a full two weeks after the first demonstration in the struggle to open the cultural centers. Rather than exposing the University administrators as frauds for promising money for a women's center while at the same time closing the Afro- and Native American centers the YSA-led Women's Studies Group kept quiet and continued their secret bargaining for their own center. Thus was have a true confirmation of the absurdity of the SWP/YSA "advances in program" and "theory" of the "combined" revolution!!

A minority of comrades in the Madison local foresaw the women's studies "struggle" as potentially reformist. In a report given in the T&P prior to the fall work period, the minority pointed out that many other opportunities presented themselves for the YSA in the women's liberation movement including support for the unionization drive of the AFSCME clerical workers, 90% of whom are women who work on the Madison campus; work building contingents for the September 8 demonstration; recruitment on a Marxist program from women's week activities; the struggle for keeping the cultural centers open coupled with a call for a women's studies program; and a struggle around free 24-hour child care centers. The minority report pointed out that the vehicle that should be used for the many different struggles was the Women's Action Movement (WAM). Using WAM would have been the best way to mobilize both campus and community women around the above-stated issues. The minority in the local also proposed that male comrades participate and aid in all tasks in order to utilize all our cadre most effectively. This report was rejected without its detractors providing any political analysis of the situation facing the Madison women's liberation movement and without answering any of the minority's charges regarding the reformist path the women's studies "struggle" was on. Such a vote, then, was either factionally motivated or else the comrades actually felt reformism was acceptable.

Indeed, after successfully campaigning for a "Women's Week" in which a number of speakers would discuss subjects of interest to women, the YSA leadership failed to differentiate our speakers from the liberals. The

YSA secured honoraria for two SWP members, Comrades Reed and Tussey. The former spoke as a feminist anthropologist and the latter as a strike leader of the Typographical Workers Union. Never in any of the publicity for Women's Week was it stated that they were members of the Socialist Workers Party.

The large audience that greeted Comrade Reed, the keynote speaker of Women's Week, was told of her political affiliation only a few seconds before she reached the podium. Were our comrades embarrassed at her political affiliation or were they just opportunistically hoping that if they left the communist label off the turnout would be more "successful"? While it is not always tactically correct to identify our members as Trotskyists, and that such identification depends upon the particular circumstances involved, the IFF supporters in Madison clearly felt more at ease with a "noted" feminist anthropologist" and a "militant woman trade unionist" as their mentor than they might have felt sponsoring a Marxist, communist, or socialist, given the milieu that they had been operating in with its resultant peer group criticism.

We recruited no one from the Women's Week activities in all probability because any militants in the crowd could not distinguish the YSA from the liberal feminist groups.

Where the Real Blame Lies!

The real blame for the Madison IFFers' adaptationism lies with the national leadership of the SWP and YSA.

Through their embracing of feminism, stressing women "struggling" as women, rather than class against class (as Comrade Reed used to say) they have actively defended the concept of "all-women" actions. Leading YSA comrades in Madison voted for the exclusion of males at the last March 8th demonstration. The concept that women must struggle by themselves disregarding any link with the male members of the working class places sisterhood above class solidarity. Such an approach exacerbates the present division of the working class along sex lines and lessens the political impact of the women's liberation movement on the class as a whole.

As we stated the major blame for the Madison comrades' inability to correctly respond to material reality lies solely with the SWP and YSA leadership. For almost the entire period since women's liberation rose to the fore, the SWP and YSA leadership has put forth a minimalist, single-issue orientation.

The major lessons that can be drawn from the experience of carrying out the national line in Madison are (1) the YSA leadership has a fundamentally incorrect approach to the question of women's liberation; (2) the current line of the leadership leads inexorably toward reformism (as exemplified in Madison) and (3) the IFF supporters were completely incapable of even implementing their own line without falling into the reformist pitfall.

While women in capitalist American society do indeed suffer a special oppression, that oppression can only be eliminated through the context of class struggle, that

is, class against class, "sisterhood" notwithstanding.

December 17, 1973.

By William Balderston, New Brunswick Local

What is the nature of the Watergate crisis? Is it a simple quantitative problem -- a collection of assorted crimes by the bourgeois state, which creates the "obvious" qualitative (i.e., petty bourgeois cynicism) reaction in the masses? Or is it part of a process, which while including the above, is much more complex and is part of an unfolding political degeneration -- objective and subjective; and around which we should have a fuller and deeper educational and action strategy?

I believe the answer is the latter, though I feel that the YSA leadership has opted for the former -- a simplistic, pragmatic, mistaken perspective. Before discussing the errors of our line, let me project a fuller meaning of Watergate.

The Watergate expose, including not only the break-in and spying events, but the broader "expose" on massive state and corporate complicity, is, in the most general terms, a reflection of the process which Marxists understand as the growing weight of the executive in the bourgeois state. We know this is an irreversible phenomenon, which coincides with the rise of monopoly capital. In the age of more open competition between the bourgeois and petty bourgeois entrepreneurs, the legislature had a more dominant role, serving as a focus of struggle for different interests, a lever both inside and outside the government. However, the rapid concentration and centralization of capital (i.e., the second industrial revolution) called for a corresponding process within the state structure. This also projected great dialectical developments in economic policy and reaction to and involvement in international events.

Within the U.S. the need for the strong executive is first posed in the 1840's and 1850's by the Whigs in terms of solving the Southern agrarian problem, of gaining greater government involvement in the economy, and consolidating the federal governmental structure. The climax of this crisis was, of course, the Civil War and the following Reconstruction, which solved some problems (though it did not complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution in toto) and provided a great extension of executive power and impetus for industrialization.

This industrialization, obviously, began to create a search for raw materials and cheap labor which added the large dimension of imperialism to the executive role (though it had been posed earlier in the Mexican War and following interventions). The Spanish-American War is a qualitative leap forward for executive power and launched the U.S. on a new defense of the Monroe Doctrine and a slow but steady race for top dog spot of world imperial-

ism.

Under Roosevelt and Wilson (the "champion of self-determination"), this trend greatly increased in not only our Latin American interventions, but in growing designs on China and the Mideast (then under British and French imperialism). Our entry into World War I is the culmination of this and the results of the war, both in terms of new productivity and weakening of imperialist rivals, left the U.S. in a much stronger position and with a much stronger executive.

The growth of the presidency and many Shiva-like arms, was also manifested domestically in growing economic intervention -- limited anti-trust actions, new tariffs (designed more to boost prices than protect fledgling industries) and especially, the creation of the federal reserve system. However, within the rejuvenation of the economy (except the agricultural sector) following the post-war recession, the presidency momentarily and naively lessened its new economic powers, giving strength to banking interests both without (an ever present force) and within the executive (Mellon as Secretary of the Treasury, the new make-up of the Federal Reserve Board under Harding, Hoover's use of bankers for international policy making), which only accelerated the U.S. tumble into the world depression (which was inevitable in the long run).

The subjective effect that this bumbling had on the executive, along with the objective factors of a major depression and rapid growth of imperialist rivals, demanded a re-evaluation and resurgence of executive powers. The new rise of counter-cyclical planning by the executive (F.D.R.'s application of Keynesian economics), which included direct economic intervention and welfare mechanisms controlled by the president, combined with the betrayal of the working class by the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist leadership of the masses, prevented the pre-revolutionary situation from exploding (though important concessions were won by the class struggle). The inter-imperialist contradiction was resolved by F.D.R.'s forcing the question of alliance with Britain over ever great public opposition and finally, by entrance into World War II.

The post-war era continued the process of executive powers on the international front, specifically, by the use of nuclear weapons, and in general, with the launching of a counterrevolutionary offensive (tied in with the Yalta Pact). Domestically, a new recession had to be stemmed and counter-cyclical planning stepped up (culminating in Truman's attempt to nationalize the steel

industry).

However, with the growing success of U.S. imperialism politically with puppet governments, and economically with easy foreign penetration of U.S. capital and financial hegemony of the dollar (despite defeats in China, North Korea, and North Vietnam), and the increase in domestic economic stability (while certainly not eliminating the recurrent though limited recessions, i.e., 1956, 1959), the executive (under Eisenhower) again made a brief and not substantial turn in its assumption of power. As the 1960's started new contradictions arose -- the superexploited sectors at home (especially Blacks) and the superexploited peoples of the colonial world both drastically increased their offensive on U.S. power -- political and economic. This called for a counter-insurgency strategy which saw its zenith in Vietnam (also Cuba, Dominican Republic, Congo, etc.) and in the suppression of ghetto uprisings (both by troops and poverty pimps). The presidency again moved steadily forward under the needs created by these conditions. People once again talked of the president as a monarch. The crisis of Vietnam (especially with the Tet offensive) and the end to the unprecedented period of economic growth in 1968, forced the bourgeoisie to ditch Lyndon Baines Johnson (their decision, not his). The bourgeoisie searched around for someone who could help stabilize the situation by extending internal and domestic exploitation and repression without being too erratic (as might have been Bobby Kennedy, despite his ability to sow illusions amongst the masses). They found two men, a Tweedle Dum and a Tweedle Dee, Dick Nixon and Hubert Humphrey, with the former winning due to his more technically advanced unscrupulousness.

This brings us to the present epoch. With the entrance of Richard Nixon, the United States and world bourgeoisie fall upon newer and greater problems. The country is involved in the world recession and 1969 marks a qualitative downturn; Nixon, the great "anti-Keynesian" is forced to outspend his three predecessors combined in an inflationary attempt to solve the crisis of overproduction (especially through the use of the military budget). This, along with the growing strength of imperialist rivals, marks a major decline in the hegemony of the U.S. dollar. This dialectical relation between the domestic and international affairs is also evidenced by the continued crisis in Indochina, which creates massive, unprecedented protest and economic havoc at home, and new failure for U.S. counter-revolution and sub-imperialist designs. Richard Nixon now jettisons his anti-Communist rhetoric and appeals to the U.S.S.R. and P.R. of China to lend a helping hand -- in betrayal.

How does this translate into Watergate? Obviously, the executive must use extraordinary measures, both politically and economically (which is not to be confused with fascism -- a qualitative leap and a situation which cannot be imposed from the top, but only from the mobilization

of the petty bourgeoisie and the smashing of working class organization). Dissent must be stifled on many levels, both without and within the bourgeoisie. A new austerity program must be launched (both in terms of government budget and in attacking the working class through wage controls) and greater corporate complicity (the wheat deal, the "fuel crisis") to aid the recessionary program (productivity, layoffs, forced overtime, etc.), to harden the U.S. dollar, and to hurt other capitalist nations.

The liberals in the executive (i.e., State Department, CIA, FBI, and economic departments) are indiscernible from the conservatives and do not even mouth the pious platitudes of the congressional liberals. Nixon, and his political cretins, becoming unbalanced with their growing powers and unable to cope with the problems, resort to any and all unscrupulous acts -- which the bourgeoisie favor, but only demand that they be clandestine and successful. Nixon fails on both these counts. Thus he must be ditched, but again quietly. Yet the American people will not be silent about either the political or economic scandals and now challenge the authority of the executive directly, and the whole state, in a less direct manner.

How should we respond to this? Generally, I believe, with a broad defense against all forms of political repression and economic exploitation, and with a massive education campaign to turn the cynicism into a struggle which clarifies the nature of the executive actions and the nature of the state as well.

As regards the latter, while we do dispel the idea that there is a "progressive wing" of the bourgeoisie (not to be confused with petty-bourgeois dissidents in the state machinery) and that the return of legislative strength is regressive and impossible, we sow illusions about bourgeois justice with the Political Rights Defense Fund (P.R.D.F.). Though the strength of the courts has been under attack by the executive (as in the time of F.D.R.) and juries have responded to the growth of the consciousness and combativity of the masses, it does not justify this incorrect act.

Comrades criticize the leaders of the ex-League Communists for using a law against racist demonstrations while attempting to expose that law and the state apparatus. Yet we appeal to the bourgeoisie to recognize its crimes and compensate us. We are extremely sectarian in only dealing with our own organizations for the suit. We call this a focal point for the masses, while appealing almost solely to the liberal petty-bourgeoisie (McCarthy, Ellsberg, et. al.). It is also mainly a quantitative approach, piling violation upon violation as evidence.

In the meantime, we do not even fight against the Voorhis Act nor the continued ban on Comrade Ernest Mandel. More important, we do not link up with the principal targets of repression. We compare this action with the classic defense cases, which have always been

essential to our movement both in a functional sense in defending the left and the masses, and as an organizational tool. This appeal bears no similarity to these cases (though it is a democratic task in the most watered-down form) and will prove ineffective in mobilizing the masses. It is further evidence of the confusion by the leadership of democratic and transitional demands in advanced countries.

The NEC draft resolution and the Black Struggle Report each contain only one small paragraph on defense of third world political victims and prisoners, when people are moving en mass around these cases (i.e., Angela Davis, the Attica defense, Carlos Feliciano, George Merritt, etc.) and we leave this field to the Stalinists.

I counterpose (a) a program of massive intervention in such defense cases; (b) continued propaganda offensive and self-defense work against quasi-fascist groups utilized by the state; (c) a greater intervention into strategic areas of the working class around the new attack on their living standards and working conditions, as well as a renewed call for a labor party; and (d) a fuller educational intervention in all the mass democratic movements (women's liberation, Black struggles, etc.) around the whole nature of this bourgeois political degeneration and a class alternative.

December 17, 1973

THE YSA AND THE BLACK LIBERATION STRUGGLE

By Sally Rhett and Meg Rose, Upper West Side Local

The NEC Draft Political Resolution correctly sets forth the recruitment of Blacks to the Trotskyist movement as a priority task for the YSA. Because of our analysis of the coming American revolution as a combined revolution, with the working Black population of the United States playing the vanguard role, this task assumes much importance for the YSA. This contribution is designed to outline some steps that should be taken by YSA locals in areas of the country where opportunities for involvement in the Black struggle exist.

Many of the opportunities that the YSA can take advantage of in the Black struggle will be local struggles that arise on campuses and in Black communities. Except for African Liberation Support, there is no national political focus in the Black liberation movement. As the NEC Draft Political Resolution states, "We can expect that there will be many different local struggles in the next period. Each YSA local will have to take the initiative in seeking out and becoming involved in such developing struggles."

Concretely, as applied to Black work, this will mean that each YSA local should pay attention to struggles that crop up in the Black liberation movement. It may mean that a local (in consultation with a Socialist Workers Party branch, if one exists) should organize a probe of what is going on in the Black community and on campuses in a given city. Or it may mean that a local is faced with activities in the Black struggle that it can almost immediately become involved in, as the Atlanta local was able to become involved in the Black strikes or as the Detroit local was able to participate in the anti-STRESS campaign. In any case, before a local can become involved in any area of Black work, the local has to know what motion exists in the Black community and among Black students. In our opinion, this will mean the local executive committee will have to discuss out what opportunities exist in the Black movement and what steps the YSA should take to become involved in or to find out about these opportunities.

Although, because of our size, we will necessarily miss some opportunities, the local leaderships should discuss new ideas and situations and carefully weigh the possibility for our participation. We should view Black work as an ongoing task -- on whatever level it can be carried out in given cities -- and we should use contacts we make among Black organizations to increase our knowledge of the Black struggle on a local level and to increase our opportunities for direct intervention in various struggles wherever that is possible. It is through this contact and intervention that we will be able to draw Black activists to the YSA and recruit them to our movement.

Locals may find a full discussion and evaluation of their present position in relationship to the Black struggle useful, along with the discussion of openings in the Black liberation movement. If such a discussion is warranted, it is the responsibility of the local Executive Committee to thoroughly explore and think through such an evaluation, and to provide political direction for such a discussion. In any case, wherever we are able to carry out some level of Black work, regular reports should be made into the local executive committee and into the local, informing comrades of what struggles have developed and what tactical approach our movement should take at a given time. To put it more simply, Black work should be considered a real area of the YSA's work, whether it consists of selling the Young Socialist at a Black high school or being on the picket lines every morning in support of a Black strike.

Participation in the Movement

It should never be assumed that the only comrades who can carry out Black work are Black comrades. In Atlanta, the YSA and the SWP found that Black activists in the strikes there were open to white participation, and that they welcomed the support that the YSA and the Party offered. The extent of participation by white comrades in the Black struggle may be limited by healthy nationalist sentiment in the movement, which often excludes whites from meetings and direct participation. But, nevertheless, the entire burden of whatever work we are able to do should not fall solely on Black comrades. White comrades can and should feel as much responsibility for this work as Black comrades do -- from making picket signs for a demonstration to thinking out politically how the YSA should relate to a particular action in the Black struggle.

The entire Atlanta YSA was involved to some extent in our participation in the Black strike wave. Despite the nationalist character of these strikes, they offered us the concrete opportunity to demonstrate our support for the strikes in several ways. Our presence on the picket lines, not only to sell the Militant and the YS, but also to picket, was the first step in this process. We were able to introduce our perspective for building the strikes through consistent participation in mass strike meetings, and through building support on the campuses for the activities of the strikers. The sale of our press was an important factor. On one important picket line, over 100 Militants were sold, mostly by strikers at Rich's Department Store. These papers were sold on the basis of coverage of the strike. Through our mayoral campaign, we built strike actions, and our campaign gained the respect of the striking workers. And our forum series, whenever possible, included forums on one or another of the strikes. These

forums accomplished three major purposes: 1) the strikers themselves came to know the Militant Bookstore Forum as a consistent supporter of their struggles, 2) the forums greatly increased Black attendance at the forum series in general, and 3) the forums attracted a greater number of Blacks to the Militant Bookstore itself and gave us an opportunity to talk to them. So, the strike wave was something that every comrade participated in in one way or another, simply because it had such a great positive effect on the overall life of the branch and the local.

On the other hand, struggles such as African Liberation Support and the National Black Feminist Organization may be open to participation only by Blacks. But even when that is the case, it is important that all the comrades in the local be aware of what work is being done, what contacts are around the YSA as a result of that work, and so forth.

Recruitment

In addition, both white and Black comrades should

aggressively go about the business of presenting our politics to Black contacts who come around us through these struggles. The burden of Black recruitment is something that can also not be placed solely upon the shoulders of Black comrades. Recruitment to the YSA is the task of the entire YSA, and specific Black recruitment should not be viewed any differently. In order to do this, comrades must be prepared to and feel confident of presenting our ideas to Black YSA contacts -- most especially our views on Black nationalism and on the necessity for a multi-national Party and youth organization. We should be able to explain to young Black activists why they should join the Young Socialist Alliance, and we should be prepared to counter any attempts to "white-bait" the YSA.

We need to increase our Black cadre. We feel that through our involvement wherever possible in Black community and campus struggles, through an understanding of the absolute importance of this area of work, and through an aggressive approach in sales and recruitment. that we will be able to do this.

December 17, 1973

THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY COUNTER-RESOLUTION:
AN UNACCEPTABLE REJECTION OF THE CURRENT RADICALIZATION

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The Internationalist Tendency in the YSA has recently submitted to the discussion bulletin their counter-political resolution entitled: "The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America II--An Orientation for the YSA." This contribution to the YSA discussion was unfortunately submitted at such a late date that it is impossible for most members of our organization to read--let alone comment on--the IT's counter-resolution prior to the convention. (The resolution was received on December 12, only five days prior to the closing of the written discussion bulletin.)

Aside from a fairly brief summary of the IT's positions on the main disputed questions in the International discussion, the counter-resolution is divided into two sections: "The YSA and the Youth Radicalization" and "Tasks of the YSA." The document is characterized by a certain incompleteness which its authors explain in the first section: "We caution that our draft political counter-resolution is not a substitute for but rather an extension of the SWP--IT's political counter-resolution." Nonetheless, two supporters of the Internationalist Tendency (Comrades Gellert and S.) have contributed a fairly lengthy article to the discussion entitled: "For a Return to the Road of the Transitional Program" (also received December 12). This contribution deals more extensively with the Black and Chicano struggles, the women's liberation movement and various concrete aspects of the work of the YSA. The thrust of the Gellert and S. contribution is in accord with the political positions of the Internationalist Tendency on these questions.

The YSA and the Working Class: Setting the Record Straight

The Internationalist Tendency bases its analysis of the YSA's political orientation on an intricately-constructed but totally dishonest rendering of our real political positions. The counter-resolution states:

"The orientation of the YSA to the 'student movement' required certain modifications of Marxist theory, notably in a redefinition of the social nature of the student milieu. For the YSA leadership, students had come to take on the role Marx had assigned to the working class."

The Gellert and S. contribution echoes this gross caricature in the following manner:

"... the YSA leadership, on the other hand, brought forth a combined revolution theory. The combined revolution theory envisions a quantitative deepening of the existing social protest movements of the 1960s. It sees the coming American revolution developing out of the struggle of parallel social movements with the working class in them but not necessarily moving as workers. It

sees the working class moving primarily out of an identification with the existing social protest movements and sees these movements as representing 'the new forms the class struggle is taking.'"

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency seem to be operating on the false premise that the best way to present a convincing argument is through the distortion of the positions of those with whom you disagree. The ten years of YSA polemics against myriad "New Left" schemes to bypass the working class mean nothing to the Internationalist Tendency. The articles in the Young Socialist and The Militant refuting the theories of Mills, Marcuse and the proponents of half-a-dozen "new working classes"--all of this is ignored. The education--inside and outside the YSA--on the revolutionary potential of the working class (and the wide distribution of the pamphlet of the same title) was just "for the record," our critics in the IT would have us believe!

Most members of the YSA know that the accusations of the Internationalist Tendency on this score are entirely without basis. It has been the YSA more than any other youth organization on the American Left that has educated students about the strategic importance of the working class, and has presented a political orientation for linking their struggles to those of working people and the oppressed nationalities. But just to set the record straight, let's refer to the opening paragraphs of this year's NEC "Draft Political Resolution:"

"Since its founding in 1960, the Young Socialist Alliance has aspired to help provide the revolutionary leadership needed for the struggle to abolish capitalism and replace it with a socialist society democratically controlled by working people... We believe that the working class is the only force with the numerical strength and strategic social power to abolish capitalism and carry out the socialist transformation of society. To lead the working class to power, a mass revolutionary Leninist party must be constructed. The YSA supports and helps build the Socialist Workers Party as the nucleus of such a revolutionary party.

"The coming American revolution will combine the struggle of the working class for socialism with the struggles of Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities for self-determination. Afro-Americans, suffering both class and racist oppression, will play a vanguard role in the revolutionary transformation of society because of the size and social weight of the Black community, its overwhelmingly proletarian composition and concentration in the major urban centers"

The political resolution adopted by the YSA last year

clearly spelled out our understanding of the relationship of the current social struggles and the working class:

"A key question of concern to radical youth is the relation of the working class to the struggles that have come to the forefront of the current radicalization, which are at this time primarily carried out by students and others from the student milieu. The Young Socialist Alliance bases itself on the program of Marxism, affirming that the working class is the decisive force for social change. The problems facing women, Blacks, Chicanos, and students can only be solved in the long run by the working class winning state power and carrying out a socialist transformation of society. By joining the YSA, young people are helping to build the revolutionary socialist movement that is necessary to lead this transformation.

"The YSA's strategy for the student movement is one of mobilizing the greatest possible number of students around demands of immediate concern to them, while putting forward an approach of linking these struggles with the working class."

These paragraphs capture in their essence the position that has been outlined in all YSA documents and public propaganda material from our founding manifesto, "Where We Stand," through today. Anyone who tries to make a case to the contrary will find no material with which to bolster his or her contention.

A Sectarian Approach to the Current Radicalization

Behind the misrepresentation of YSA positions by the Internationalist Tendency, some authentic political differences begin to appear in their broad outlines. Grounded in a correct Marxist understanding of the centrality of the American working class, the YSA over the past three or four years has waged a vigorous political struggle against "workerist" tendencies which have recoiled from the forms that the current radicalization has taken in its opening stages. Almost all of our political opponents have taken a sectarian approach to the unfolding of the nationalist movements of oppressed Blacks and Chicanos, the women's liberation movement, the campus-based struggles around the war in Vietnam and other issues of concern to large numbers of American students. The anti-Marxism and "student powerism" of some young radicals in the mid-1960s has recently been transformed into its opposite: an often grotesque caricature of Marxism which rejects the crucial importance of sectors of the population other than the working class as such mobilizing in independent action around issues which affect them. These attitudes, which prevail on the sectarian and ultraleft fringes of the radicalization today, are reflected in the political positions held by the Internationalist Tendency.

In their counter-resolution the IT states:

"An identification with the oppressed, the underprivileged, the downtrodden did occur. In the early '60s most of this sentiment was channeled into the civil rights movement and such do-good diversions as the Peace Corps and social work. What transformed an inchoate scattering of episodic struggles into a genuine movement was the Vietnam war. The antiwar movement, during the course of its existence, produced a variety of spin-offs, including the revitalized feminist movement, the gay 'movement, the youth culture milieu. . . . Because the war was the major factor in coalescing the youth radicalization in the US, it quite naturally followed that once the war slipped from center stage, the conjunctural radicalization spawned by it dissipated and passed into history."

In the view of the Internationalist Tendency, what has occurred over the past decade is not a deep radicalization of youth rooted in the deepening contradictions of American capitalism and world imperialism, but instead a "variety of spin-offs," a "conjunctural" phenomenon, now "dissipated" and relegated to dust-covered history texts. In fact, the "World Political Resolution" of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency--which is supported by the YSA IT--goes even further than this in rejecting the significance of the current radicalization:

"The absence of a centripetal thrust of the working class also explains the sectoral fragmentation of the radicalization, which, in the absence of a solution of a total socio-economic alternative to monopoly capitalism, in turn delays a massive entry of the proletariat onto the political arena."

Not only has the radicalization been "episodic" and "conjunctural," you see, it has also been a force holding back the independent activity of the working class!

It is not "sectoralism," "poly-vanguardism" or "student powerism" which leads the majority of the YSA membership and its leadership to reject notions such as these. We hold a fundamentally different view of the radicalization of the 1960s and '70s. Far from seeing it as a passing fancy, pulled together momentarily by the war in Indochina, the YSA has analyzed this phenomenon as part of a permanent worldwide radicalization of youth rooted in the deepening crisis of imperialism, the rise of the colonial revolution, the re-awakening of struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities in the advanced capitalist countries and the weakening of the Stalinist and Social-Democratic bureaucracies. We believe that in spite of lulls and partial setbacks, the radicalization will deepen as long as these objective conditions prevail.

One of the clearest explanations of this important social phenomenon was presented in the political resolution adopted by the YSA in December, 1971:

"The American ruling class today faces the deepest radicalization of the twentieth century. . . . The proliferation and growth of social movements against various evils of capitalism prior to the mass radicalization of the working class will hasten its radicalization and cause it to begin on a higher level. In addition, as the radicalization extends to broad layers of the working class, it will bring powerful new forces into these movements and give them a mighty impetus.

"The demands fundamental to these emerging social movements cannot be met within the framework of capitalist society. Capitalism cannot end the national oppression of African-Americans, Chicanos, or Puerto Ricans. It cannot end the exploitation of workers which is the fundamental mainspring of the system itself. . . . And given the sharpening of the contradictions of world capitalism, it cannot grant the large-scale reforms necessary to decisively reverse the current radicalization."

This is the position of the YSA, and it stands in sharp contrast to that of the Internationalist Tendency. We believe that the approaching entrance of the working class into the radicalization in response to the attacks on their standard of living, their unions and their right to strike will be propelled, not retarded, by the social movements of the past decade. We believe that the radicalization of the working class will begin on a higher political level, with greater independence and combativity because of the existence of the student movement and the struggles of women, Blacks and Chicanos. And we are positive that the powerful motion of the working class will give added weight and dynamism to all of the independent struggles which have characterized the 1960s and early 1970s. The women's movement, the student movement and the movements of the oppressed nationalities will all benefit from the support and leadership given them by the awesome power of the American working class.

The 1973 NEC "Draft Political Resolution" analyzes the present world political situation, singling out the three most significant factors: (1) the deepening of the class struggle around the world; (2) the sharpening of inter-imperialist competition for shrinking markets, and the relative decline of American economic and political hegemony; and (3) the detente between US imperialism and the Moscow and Peking bureaucracies. Moving to a brief analysis of the current stage of the radicalization in the United States and its relationship to events of international importance--the Chilean coup, the war in the Arab East, Watergate--the resolution outlines a series of proposals to involve the YSA in unfolding struggles, disseminate socialist ideas to the widest possible audience among those involved in these struggles, and recruit the best of the activists to revolutionary socialism.

It is this approach to the current radicalization, the strategy of the "Red University," which the Internationalist Tendency rejects. The YSA's understanding of the strengths, as well as the limitations, of the student movement; our

strategy for linking up the struggles of students to issues of the general class struggle; our agitation around the need for a mass action perspective, self-organization, self-reliance, and political independence--these are the aspects of the work of the YSA which are all belittled as "Mickey Mouse" by our critics in the Internationalist Tendency who have "rediscovered" the centrality of the working class in the revolutionary process.

The Youth Radicalization: Is It Over?

The section of the IT counter political resolution which is sub-titled "The YSA and the Youth Radicalization" attempts to present a theoretical justification for their sectarian attitude toward the current radicalization. They point to the current lull in activity at this stage of the radicalization and the "decline of the mass movements" as a verification of what the IT claims is the YSA's political bankruptcy.

The IT resolution states:

"The pat phrases about 'deepening and broadening' could suffice for awhile, but definitely could not last forever. Finally it was suggested that the student movement was in a 'lull,' although it was never specifically spelled out what objectively constituted a 'lull,'"

"The irreversible radicalization of the '60s had for all intents and purposes been reversed. . . ."

And later on in their document:

"What has happened to the 'mass independent feminist movement,' the 'mass student movement,' the 'incipient mass movements for gay liberation and ecological reform'--all of which were supposed to be deepening, at the center of the radicalization, each backing up and pushing forward the others, etc.? . . . To this day, the leadership of the YSA has not provided answers for these questions, but persists in clinging to their mistaken assumptions in the face of an ever more pungent reality."

This line of argumentation has a peculiar logic to it. All around the world, the Internationalist Tendency contends (and we agree), there is a sharp intensification of the contradictions of world capitalism and a deepening of the class struggle. Yet in the United States, at the very heart of world imperialism, the social and political ferment among students, women, and the oppressed nationalities has been "reversed." The IT explains that the radicalization on the campuses during the 1960s resulted from the "crisis of bourgeois ideology," yet today--when American capitalism is battered by its worsening position in the world market, Watergate, an energy crisis, inflation, the threat of recession, and growing protests by working people and the oppressed nationalities--precisely at this time in United States history, the "crisis of bourgeois ideology" has been temporarily re-

solved! The radicalization of the '60's has been "reversed"!

The shallow arguments of the Internationalist Tendency do not hold up very well under scrutiny. At our convention last year we outlined our understanding of the radicalization as it has developed over the past decade: "Discontent with the functioning of American capitalist society is greater than at any time since the 1930s and continues to grow. A process of radicalization, that is, questioning of the established norms, beliefs, values, morals, customs and institutions, distrust of government [this was before Watergate--S.C., R.F.] and spokespeople for the status quo, disagreement with the general direction of society, and conviction that drastic changes are called for to right the situation, has deeply affected American youth, especially students. Broad layers of the population, notably among the oppressed nationalities, have also been deeply affected by this process.

"While the general trend is for radical consciousness to deepen and spread to new sectors of the population, there has been less activism on the campuses and in the high schools in the last two years than in the preceding period. This fluctuation has led many commentators to write premature obituaries of the student movement. The political mood of youth today is distinctly different not only from the 'silent generation' of the 1950s but also from the campus explosions of 1968-9 and from the vast antiwar upsurge of May 1970. In its evolution, the student movement has been passing through different phases of development. A clear-eyed and realistic assessment of where the radicalization and the student movement stand today is indispensable for revolutionary socialists. Our actions must be based on a correct understanding of the objective situation we face."

A few questions should be posed to the Internationalist Tendency before going further.

Does the IT contend that the "questioning of the established norms, beliefs, values..." of American capitalism has been "reversed" during the past three years?

If not, does the IT believe that this continuing percolation of radical ideas among women, students and other sectors of the population is an important phenomenon which ought to be oriented to by the YSA?

What is the State of the Current Radicalization?

In May of 1970 the invasion of Cambodia and murder of four students at Kent State University set off one of the deepest crises faced by the ruling class in this century--a generalized, nationwide student strike which sparked mass demonstrations against the war in Vietnam in major cities from coast to coast and brought important layers of the general population into activity. We believed then--and still do today--that the upshot of that strike was a crucially important legacy which has burned itself into the consciousness of many people who participated in it, and which the

YSA, as the conscious "memory" of the student movement, must seek to preserve and incorporate in its propaganda. Students used their campuses and campus facilities to reach out to the surrounding community--to the unions, the Black and Latino neighborhoods--and involve these sectors of the population in coordinated antiwar actions. At many colleges and universities very advanced, democratic forms of organization were created: mass decision-making councils involving students, faculty, staff, and sometimes even the surrounding community; democratically elected coordinating committees to carry out decisions, etc.

At the December convention following the May upsurge we made the following assessment of the impact of the strike: "The pattern established in May illustrated the potential for the next upsurge to succeed in drawing the participation of the organized working class, high school students, the Third World communities, and masses of women. The May events produced the first significant break in the trade union bureaucracy's monolithic backing of Nixon's war policy.... While the May events fell short of touching off a generalized social upheaval, it came close enough to let the ruling class see the outlines of a social revolution in this country."

The YSA knew that the radicalization would face ups and downs, but we generally expected that the period after May 1970 would see a continuation of campus and social struggles at a fairly high level. This prognosis was not without foundation, given the events of the following year: after a "slow" fall election period, 1971 saw the April 24 demonstration of nearly a million people, the MayDay events, the growth of women's liberation organizations on campuses all around the country, and frequent campus struggles on a smaller scale. Generally, however, the tempo was slower, and we took note of this at our 1971 convention in Houston: "In the year following the May upsurge there were no actions equivalent to the intense activism which swept the campuses and high schools then. There was, however, a great deal of student activism in the mass movements, which have their main base on the campuses."

All throughout this period the bourgeois press was whipping up a big propaganda campaign about the "death of the student movement" and the "return to the 50's." The little sectarian grouplets, which had rejected the radicalization from its inception, were more than happy to pick up the lead from the New York Times and proclaim the demise of "middle class protest movements"--and with them the demise of the "petty-bourgeois" YSA which had been their "champion." We, of course, refused to bend to this impressionistic campaign to convince the American people that "everything is all right now, just like the 50's!"

We understood that the deep-rooted objective conditions which had created the radicalization had not disappeared. On the other hand, in spite of April 24, and in spite of the campus upsurge at the time of the mining of

of Haiphong harbor in May 1972, there was a downturn in the general level of activity on the campuses and in the society as a whole. This downturn in activity was combined with a deepening of the radicalization of the student population, and the spread of that radicalization to increasing layers of the population outside of the student milieu. So instead of chiming in with the New York Times and the Spartacist League, we took a good hard look at the present state of the student movement and its relationship to American politics as a whole. The political resolution which was discussed and adopted at the convention in Cleveland last Thanksgiving (1972) was an important contribution to that sober evaluation, and the present NEC resolution carries it a step further.

The general thrust of that analysis is contained in the article written for the ISR by Andy Rose which is reprinted in #1 of this year's YSA discussion bulletin. What did we say? We pointed to the centrality of the issue of the war in Indochina as a force which galvanized the student movement, provided an action focus for it. With the signing of the accords (which was impending at the time of the convention), that focus slipped from center-stage and inevitably contributed to the demobilization of the student movement. The crisis of leadership in the Black community which had led to decreased activity in this sector of the radicalization was also reflected in the student movement, which had traditionally looked to this important social force for inspiration and a focus for its organization and activity.

We also looked at some more fundamental problems facing the student movement which are linked to the peculiar development of the radicalization in the United States. Andy Rose points out in his article that the radicalization of the 1960's and 70's had a definite impact on important sections of the working class--especially Black and Latino workers, women, and youth. But he points to another side of this phenomenon which has been a negative factor: "The prolonged delay of the labor movement entering the process of politicization and radicalization has had a serious detrimental effect on the other movements. Instead of taking the lead and adding its decisive weight to their struggles, the labor movement has acted as a brake on their development. An important part of the explanation for the current lull in student activism lies in this uneven development of the radicalization."

Elsewhere in the article, Rose points out: "May 1970 posed in concentrated form the limitations of even the most powerful student protest. The upsurge encompassed virtually the entire student movement. It was one of the most powerful series of actions students could ever hope to carry out....But the mass of workers did not join in the upsurge. The sustained mobilization of students alone could not be prolonged; it ended without having forced Nixon to end the war. This led to disappointment and frustration on the part of many activists who could not see that their actions had led anywhere.

"The present passivity of the working class is a very real and acutely felt phenomenon.... The change in consciousness in the student movement since May 1970 is largely a matter of growing skepticism that anything can be done and hesitancy to take action. Students tend to be more cautious, and question what tactics are effective. But the degree of discontent and desire for change has not lessened."

Given this analysis of the roots of the present stage of the radicalization, what is the YSA to do? Are we to say to students, as the IT advises us, "You are absolutely powerless outside of your relationship to workers' struggles?" Are we to present a program to the radicalized youth stressing primarily the limitations of their social power, or are we to present a more balanced approach educating the student movement in the necessity of linking their struggles to those of working people and the oppressed nationalities, and showing in action how to do just that? We choose the latter approach. It is the essence of the Red University strategy which still remains our approach to linking the struggles of students with the broader issues of the class struggle and the social forces that can be brought into action around them. We see the period ahead as a very promising one for the student movement. The attack by the capitalist class on the living standards of the American people and on their unions, the cutbacks in social services and the generalized deepening of the social crisis in this country indicate the variety and character of the struggles ahead.

Our general prognosis is outlined in the NEC Political Resolution: "At the present time, there is no single issue like the Vietnam war that is serving as a focus for mobilizing masses of people in action, but many varied struggles are occurring and receptivity to our ideas remains high. The willingness of thousands of students to listen to our ideas on the meaning of the coup in Chile, the conflict in the Arab East and Watergate illustrates the depth of radical thinking on the campuses.

"Among the major issues in U.S. politics today are questions that are coming to the fore as a result of the political and economic consequences of the Vietnam war. Both the Watergate crisis and rising prices, for example, are helping to deepen the radicalization and stimulate new struggles."

The openings in the Black struggle evidenced particularly in Detroit and Atlanta; the work in defense of the farmworkers; childcare struggles and other issues of interest to women in the United States; actions against inflation like the April 28 and Sept. 8 actions; struggles on many campuses against cutbacks and tuition hikes--these are signs of things to come. There are many opportunities for the intervention of YSA'ers in such struggles today armed with the understanding of the Red University approach, of the need to tie together struggles on and off the campus.

Did the Student Movement Ever Exist at All?

From their "analysis" of the death of the student movement, the Internationalist Tendency draws the conclusion that the Worldwide Youth Radicalization document supported by the YSA (and adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International in 1969) is totally outdated. We have seen that the IT's obituary for the American student movement is absolutely groundless. It is even more obvious that the "irreversible turn" in the international student movement which was so highly touted in the European Perspectives Document was also a slightly premature death notice. The events in Greece, Thailand and South Korea alone should give some pause for thought to the Internationalist Tendency--not to mention student struggles in Egypt, Puerto Rico, Belgium, France, Great Britain, and elsewhere.

"But all of these struggles weren't student struggles," the IT will protest. "And the masses of students mobilized in action--reaching out and involving the working class--didn't comprise a student movement!"

This aspect of the IT's political resolution is perhaps the most far-fetched. They say: "We take as a point of departure the misconception of the 'student movement' which the YSA leadership, most recently through the medium of Comrade Rose, maintains. Any students struggling around any issues for any period of time around any program--this is what constitutes the student movement for the YSA leadership. This generic use of the term 'student movement' is convenient, for it can serve as 'proof' that the student movement still exists by merely pointing to all the struggles which have been going on over the past period. (Aren't we crafty?!!--S.C., R.F.) However, using this definition of 'student movement' one could say that there has always been a student movement, for students have in every period struggled around issues which affect them. But moreover, by using the definition in this way, the leadership robs it of any precise meaning, and only serves to confuse certain criticisms...made by the European comrades...."

So you see, to define the student movement as a social movement based on students is to "rob the term of any precise meaning." How does the IT wish us to characterize the meaning of the term "student movement"? They give us a clue in the following passages: "Indeed, it is possible to make a case that a 'student movement' per se never existed in the U.S. What did occur was a massive antiwar movement, composed in the main of students, which included within its ranks an increasingly large layer of radicalized students, students who went beyond merely protesting the war itself and acquired first an 'anti-imperialist' consciousness, and later a concrete identification with the domestic struggles of the working class...." And later: "The new rise of the youth radicalization, however, will occur in the context of the radicalization of the American working class as a whole; it can only be defined by its rela-

tionship to this radicalization; and it will not then be a student movement."

It is the incredible muddle-headedness of such reasoning which would in reality deprive us of any useful analysis of the student movement as it exists. The Internationalist Tendency has a narrow concept of student struggles limited to situations in which students mobilize insignificant actions around campus issues in isolation from a deep concern about important questions of the class struggle as a whole! This has hardly ever been the case. The student movement of the 1930's revolved around the questions of war and the struggles of the working class, and campus issues arose in that context. The questions of university autonomy which have sparked the recent struggles in Greece, Egypt, South Korea and elsewhere have all from their inception been inseparably tied to broader class issues!

The growing tendency is for student struggles to take place around issues of the world revolution itself and to have an increasing impact on the class struggle. Struggles around dormitory hours, cafeteria food and student rights would not be ignored by our movement; but we certainly would not have placed such importance on student struggles if they had taken these forms primarily! What does the Worldwide Youth Radicalization have to say on this question: "The new wave of radicalization began during the late fifties in response to the upsurge of the colonial revolution, the new rise in the Afro-American struggle in the U.S., and in reaction to the Khrushchev revelations...the Algerian revolution...Cuba...Vietnam...the issues posed by youth in revolt are not due primarily to age differences. They clearly reflect the major class conflicts of our time. The fundamental significance (our emphasis) of the unprecedented radicalization of the youth is the emergence of new forces, ready, willing and able to enter the arena of class struggle on the side of the colonial peoples and the working class and to give battle to world imperialism and its accomplices, who falsely claim to speak in the name of the working class and its allies."

This point has been stressed in every resolution of the YSA for the past six or seven years; it is the foundation stone of our orientation to the student movement. We do see the student movement and the youth radicalization as a permanent feature of the world situation today, and we believe that the renewal of workers' struggles, first in Europe and soon in the United States, will spur this movement of students, not displace it.

Is the Youth Radicalization Document Outmoded?

The Internationalist Tendency raises another argument which once again undermines, rather than bolsters, their sectarian attitude towards the student movement. They write: "...the Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International, contains a description of the change in the structure of the universities, recognized

by nearly everyone as a product of the post-war economic expansion, and then projects a strategy for 'youth' (read students) based upon this analysis/description... we think that rather than appear utterly ridiculous, the YSA leadership will hold to the mistaken analysis and projections... even though the contradiction between what was projected and what the reality is becomes more and more glaring."

There are several weaknesses to this argument. First, the Youth Radicalization document is not predicated on the continuing expansion of world capitalism, but on changes in the educational system around the world which resulted from the increased technological requirements of the capitalist economies after World War II. Capitalism today still demands that the university provide it with skilled intellectual labor.

The downturn in the capitalist economy serves to force the ruling class to further "rationalize" the education system to more closely fit the needs of "Big Business," trimming off as much of the "fat" (liberal arts, etc.) as possible. This process of rationalization requires attacks on the student population and the desires of students to shape their own educational goals. It lay behind the struggle against the Claes-Hurez laws in Belgium, the recent upsurge in the French student movement, the rise in struggles among apprentices and students in trade schools, etc.

The struggles which result from the attacks on the availability of higher education, grants and scholarship programs, tuition hikes, etc., were anticipated by the Youth Radicalization document. In fact, a whole series of demands around the question of free public higher education, stipends for students, and guaranteed jobs upon graduation all take on more explosive content in the present historical period. They also provide a linkup quite directly with the struggles of workers against wage freezes, anti-strike legislation, and cutbacks in social services. This question is dealt with at some length in the present NEC Political Resolution, and the recent article in the Dec.-Jan. YS by Jerry Freiwrth, "Assault on Education: Behind the Great Tuition Rip-off," develops this theme in even greater detail.

Freiwrth writes: "The combination of the cutbacks and tuition hikes has forced many students out of school and discouraged others from even applying. College enrollment, which climbed to unprecedented heights in the 1960's has begun to level off and even decline. Especially hard hit are the schools that attract low income students.... The tuition hikes and budget cutbacks are only the beginning of a long-term 'game plan' for higher education held by the capitalist rulers of this country.... their 'game plan' intends to cope with the financial crunch facing U.S. colleges. This crunch is tied to the crisis hitting the American economy as a whole."

So the argument of the Internationalist Tendency does not hold up. The attempts of the ruling class to cut back

college enrollment, "streamline and rationalize" higher education, and foist the cost for education more and more onto the backs of individual working class families--all of this portends a resurgence of the student movement around issues closely tied, as always, to the issues of the overall class struggle.

A Final Comment on the Student Movement

The student movement must, of course, be analyzed in the context of the situation of the working class as a whole and its revolutionary leadership. Contrary to the IT, however, the context of the international class struggle, the colonial revolution, student struggles in other countries, and the role of the university in bourgeois society itself are also integral components of any such analysis. The understanding we have of the increased social weight and importance of the student population (an analysis which we shared with comrades of the IEC majority until recently) has motivated us to enrich our Transitional Program with an analysis of this important new factor in the world revolution and an application of the transitional method to outline an approach and series of demands specifically aimed at tying its dynamic to that of the broader class struggle. Trotsky urged the organizations of the Fourth International to expand the Transitional Program in this manner to prepare the revolutionary socialist movement to take the leadership in the worldwide struggle for socialism. The Transitional Program itself began such a process by outlining brief approaches to the coordination of the struggles of women and youth with that of the working class.

Today the Worldwide Youth Radicalization document more than ever is a necessary guide to the work of the YSA and our co-thinkers around the world.

Black Nationalism, Chicano Nationalism, and Feminism

The Internationalist Tendency does not take up the questions of Black nationalism, Chicano nationalism and feminism in their counter-political resolution, but the article by Comrades S. and Gellert deals with these issues at some length. Given the late submission date of both articles, time does not allow us to deal with these questions at great length. However, the positions held by the Internationalist Tendency on feminism and the nationalism of the oppressed in this country are concrete examples of the conservative direction they are pursuing in their rejection of the forms of the current radicalization.

What does the IT say about Black and Chicano nationalism, for instance? First of all, they expand in some detail on the question of nationalism in general and the approach they believe Marxists should take towards it. Comrade Gus Horowitz takes up this question in far more detail than I could hope to in a contribution to the International Discussion Bulletin which is available to all members of the YSA. Comrades wishing to pursue the question

should study this article and other contributions made in the course of the SWP discussion this summer.

In reality, the discussion can be carried on at much more mundane a level. The question is not that the IT supports the struggle for national rights of Black and Latino Americans, but insists on opposition to the "multi-class ideology of nationalism." No! The simple fact is that the Internationalist Tendency counterposes their own abstract concept of "class solidarity" to many of the concrete nationalist demands which express the aspirations of Black and Latino Americans, help mobilize them in struggle, and upon which genuine class solidarity must be based.

Comrades Gellert and S. state that self-determination in the Marxist vocabulary means solely the right of an oppressed nationality to secede and establish its own state. Short of that, they argue, Marxists have no responsibility to respect or champion the legitimate aspirations of the oppressed nationalities to control the institutions in their communities. This is a complete caricature of the Leninist position. Lenin argued that without granting the ultimate right to secede, all talk of self-determination was just empty huffing and puffing. Nowhere did Lenin or Trotsky argue that only the right to secession was worthy of defense by revolutionists. To the contrary, in the Action Program for France written by Trotsky in 1934 he states that the French Trotskyists must uphold unconditionally the right of self-determination for the Algerians, Moroccans and Vietnamese, "up to and including the right of separation, if they desire it."

The YSA stands firmly behind our position that the nationalist struggles of the Blacks and Chicanos in this country are progressive and must be championed by the revolutionary youth organization. We stand firmly on our position that the only real internationalists in the American working class movement are those who are 100% in support of the nationalist aspirations of the oppressed Black and Latino masses.

Where does the position of the IT lead it in practice? Gellert and S. ridicule our raising of the demand: "Exempt Black Youth from the Military Draft." They contend that we should not raise the demand for "Preferential Hiring and upgrading of Blacks," because it "divides" the working class, and pits whites against Blacks in the scramble for jobs! How far off base can you get? Preferential hiring for whites already exists! What pits whites against Blacks is not the demands by Blacks for preferential measures to overcome inequality--but the racist demand by whites who insist on retaining their privileges. The IT's line on this question is an adaptation to liberalism and the trade union bureaucracy --the counter-position of abstract "equality" to the concrete steps which must be taken to make up for the super-exploitation of Black workers. Comrade Barry Sheppard deals with these questions in much greater detail in his reply to the counter-political resolution of the Internationalist Tendency in the SWP (Vol. 31, #27). I encourage comrades to go

back and read his article. I must add, however, that it is not surprising that the IT always fails to mention the struggle going on today in New York School District #1 around the question of the right of the Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Asians in that community to control their own schools. Perhaps they are embarrassed to admit that their backward position on Black nationalism would lead the YSA to abandon our present position of active support and intervention in the struggle.

The error of the Internationalist Tendency on feminism is of a similar character. I cannot deal with this question at great length, but I encourage comrades to read the resolutions on the women's liberation movement passed at the 1970 and 1971 YSA conventions, as well as the contributions to the Party discussion this summer by comrades Stone, Waters, Reed, Lamont and Smith. Comrades of the Internationalist Tendency in the name of "orthodoxy" would have us abandon our perspective of building united front coalitions around issues of concern to women with the goal of mobilizing the broadest forces possible in struggle around these issues. They would have us abandon our approach towards orienting the struggles of women towards the working class by fighting for a political line of mass, independent action which can reach out and involve increasing numbers of working women, women in trade unions and working class housewives. Instead, they propose that we orient towards the women's movement with the orientation of splitting it "along class lines," drawing around us the "more advanced elements" who understand the need to "go to the working class." What this would mean concretely, they fail to tell us. How it would change the work we are doing in some areas around the childcare question, or on campuses in building women's liberation organizations is left extremely abstract. The only hint we can pick up is that, in their opinion, it would have been more correct for us to intervene in WONAAC fighting for the line of "Free Abortion," before abortion was even legal; although this would have inevitably weakened and narrowed the social impact of the abortion movement. The advantage, I suppose, would have been that, weaker or not, we would have divided the abortion movement "along class lines," drawing the "more advanced elements" (primarily other socialist women from IS, Spartacist League, etc.) to our banner. The YSA must stand firm in its rejection of such an orientation.

Tasks of the YSA

At the beginning of the section on "Tasks" in the counter-resolution of the Internationalist Tendency they present a brief analysis of the character of the present world situation. The NEC resolution and comrade Mirelowitz's contribution on the IEC Majority Tendency's Draft World Political Resolution indicate our points of disagreement on these questions.

One point in particular deserves comment. The Inter-

nationalist Tendency applies the formalistic methodology picked up from the European Perspectives Document and the 1969 Latin America Resolution with some facility. They state several correct generalizations. "While it is true that the working class in the U.S. has yet to move on a decisive scale as its counterpart in Europe is presently doing, it must be recognized that the fundamental tendencies at work in capitalist Europe over the next period are also at work in the United States." True. "The ruling class is finding it necessary to openly attack the living standards of the entire working class, as well as waging a campaign against the right to strike, bargain, etc." Also true.

But the conclusion they draw does not follow from this analysis: "What this concretely means is that the immediate next period will see an explosive thrust of workers struggles, set in motion in reaction to inflation, unemployment, ..." It is certainly true that the attack on the standard of living of the working class will lead in the coming period to important struggles inside and outside the trade unions. The April 28 and Sept. 8 demonstrations, the meat boycott, the "Right to Strike" activity in the United Steelworkers Union are examples of the struggles which lie ahead. We have participated in many of these actions already, and covered them in our press. But we take our concrete political orientation--our tactics--not from an analysis of what is most probably "going to happen" given our "characterization of the period," but from a careful evaluation of the openings which exist for political intervention and recruitment, and the forces available within our movement to most fruitfully exploit those opportunities. As such openings occur in the trade unions, our movement has taken advantage of them, and will continue to do so. YSA'ers employed in work situations where political work can be done collaborate with the SWP to obtain guidance and direction. If any YSA member feels that there are specific important openings which we are missing today, their suggestions will be seriously evaluated.

Concrete suggestions, however, are not what we are offered by the Internationalist Tendency. In fact, for self-asserted champions of a proletarian orientation, the ITers seem to be among the least informed and least involved in the genuine openings that we are taking advantage of today in the labor movement. Instead, the complex questions of our intervention today, taking realistic account of what openings exist and of our available forces, are all subsumed under their blanket proposal calling for a "policy of implantation into selected industries to prepare for the realities of the period ahead."

United Farmworkers Support Work

The Internationalist Tendency correctly states that strike support work on the campuses and among youth in general will be an important area of YSA work in the years ahead. Let us take a look, however, at how the IT would have us intervene into such strike support committees. Take, for

example, the United Farmworkers boycott campaign in which many YSA locals, if not most, are active today. What does the IT propose?

First of all, they distort the actual record of the YSA on the question of UFWU work. They state that the YSA relates only to the nationalist aspects of the struggle, downplaying the class issues at stake--unionization, primarily. This is simply not true. What is true is that the YSA recognizes an important feature of the farmworkers' struggle that the IT misses completely: the manner in which the nationalist awakening of the Chicano people propelled their sense of class identification and gave a militant character to the unionization drive above and beyond that characteristic of the typical contemporary union.

The IT claims that the YSA has been content to simply "tail-end" the Chavez leadership, and be the "best builders" of a "doomed" boycott campaign. The truth of the matter is somewhat different. Has the YSA uncritically supported the Chavez leadership? Let's turn to the recently published pamphlet Viva la Huelga! by Jose Perez. It explains the class nature of the Democratic Party and its complete duplicity in relation to the struggles of farmworkers, concluding: "The struggle of the farm workers would take a big step forward if their union also took the road of political independence." On the question of self-defense: "But in elevating nonviolence to an absolute principle, the union's leadership has unfortunately given up the right of the union to physically defend itself in any circumstances." On undocumented workers: "For years the UFW relied on the federal government to prevent growers from bringing in strike-breakers from Mexico. But in 1973 the UFW took a new stand on the 'illegal alien' question, joining the rest of the Chicano movement in declaring Mexican workers 'not aliens, but brothers' and opposing the Rodino bill aimed at victimizing undocumented workers. This position recognizes that the key to union strength is solidarity, and lays the basis for the UFW to defend the rights of Mexican workers and to organize them into the union."

The claim by the IT that the YSA did not take up Chavez on the question of undocumented workers is simply incredible! For nearly two years we have been running articles in The Militant, and more recently in the YS, on the situation of undocumented workers, calling on the UFW to change its position. When it finally changed its position, we hailed their new position prominently in a two-page spread in The Militant. We have actively supported and built the anti-deportation movement in the Southwest.

The crux of the IT's complaint is not that the YSA doesn't raise its differences with the Chavez leadership. They know that they are distorting the truth when they make such claims. Their real difference is over how we should intervene in the movement itself on a day-to-day basis. They contend: "A correct approach would combine militant class solidarity with political criticism of the

Chavez leadership. This approach would require marching in the picket lines of the farmworkers, but under our own slogans which not merely show our support for the union pickets and the economic boycott, but that are also designed to heighten the consciousness of the workers and supporters, and help lead to their break with Chavez."

We have a different approach. For instance, the YSA believes that the kind of boycott campaign projected up until now by the UFWU leadership is not the kind of massive campaign that can have an economic or political impact capable of bringing the growers to their knees or scandalizing the trade union bureaucracy into giving more than lip-service to the farm workers' struggle. Our approach is not, however, to intervene in picket lines with YSA posters and banners declaring "Build a Bigger Boycott to Scandalize the Bureaucrats!" Instead, first and foremost, we show to the farm worker activists through our unconditional and unswerving support our seriousness about their struggle. But we do much more. Where possible, we propose building meetings such as the huge rally at Hunter College in New York, or mass picket lines at one or two selected targets. We discuss with the activists our ideas about how to broaden out the boycott and make it more powerful; and whenever we are able to do so, we devote some of our resources to build actions which are examples of our concept of a mass boycott campaign. In the YS and The Militant we have been focusing more and more of our coverage of the farmworkers' struggle on the kind of campaign necessary to win. We have worked in unions where we are active to build farmworkers support committees, and urged the local boycott committees to be more aggressive in seeking trade union support and participation. This is the approach of the YSA. The suggestions of the Internationalist Tendency would isolate us within the boycott committees, precluding any ability of the Trotskyists to influence the development of that struggle or to make us a pole of attraction for the "more advanced elements."

Watergate Offensive

The most glaring example of the ultraleft and sectarian politics of the Internationalist Tendency is apparent in their belittling of the YSA's Watergate suit and our support of the Political Rights Defense Fund. The IT does agree with us on some of the political lessons which we can bring to the American people around the Watergate suit: the thorough bankruptcy and corruption of capitalist government; the fact that the ruling class has always used legal and extralegal violence, provocateurs, and illegal surveillance against the struggles of working people and the oppressed; the need for working people to take government into their own hands and break with the two parties of Big Business; etc. But they reject the vehicle which the YSA and the SWP have chosen to provide a focus for the involvement of broad forces in a concrete counter-offensive.

What does the IT say about the Watergate offensive:

"reeks of a fetish for bourgeois legality...By suing the government in the bourgeois courts, no matter how revolutionary one may sound or claim to be, the YSA does little to widen this (credibility) gap, but rather objectively assists the ruling class in this task."

The political level of this criticism is ultraleft infantilism par excellence! The campaign around the Watergate lawsuit can set an example for the entire radical movement on how to rally broad support for democratic rights of movement activists. It exposes the fact that the main victims of Watergating are not the McGoverns or the Muskies, but working people, Blacks and Chicanos, antiwar activists, and radical organizations. It provides a concrete focus for activity and an arena in which to explain our socialist analysis of Watergate to large numbers of people. The immature rejection of this campaign by the Internationalist Tendency is just one more example of their political adaptation to sectarian and ultraleft currents on the fringes of the American left.

Conclusion

The political positions of the Internationalist Tendency in the YSA are characterized by several threads which run throughout all of their documents and contributions to the discussion.

1. A sectarian rejection of the current radicalization and the forms that it has taken in this country. This is apparent in their rejection of the importance of the nationalist awakening of the Black and Latino masses, their attitude towards the women's liberation movement, and their bizarre theories about the "irreversible" demise of the student movement in the United States and around the world.

2. An adaptation to workerism which fails to recognize the complex unfolding of the class struggle and the necessity to intervene in and coordinate the struggles of all the oppressed layers of the population--even in the absence of a mass workers' radicalization. In practice, this leads to a failure to understand the rounded political program around which we project the development of a principled class struggle left wing in the labor movement.

3. A serious misunderstanding of the Transitional Program and the method which it employs. This is clearly illustrated in the "vanguardist" approach advocated by the IT for the abortion movement and the comments towards the end of their document on Vietnam work and Chilean defense activity. The approach of the Internationalist Tendency constantly leads them to reject the strategy of mass action, and adapt to the concerns of supposedly "more advanced elements" in the radicalized milieu. In their comments on the antiwar movement, they criticize the YSA for our failure to combine mass work with the construction of an "explicitly anti-imperialist, pro-solidarity wing." They attack our work in USLA, arguing that the YSA should intervene in demonstrations with signs that say "Only

Road, Armed Road," rather than slogans focusing on the defense of Chilean political prisoners and the role of U.S. intervention.

These political positions, if adopted, would represent a serious step backwards for the work of the YSA. They would --over time-- reduce us to little more than an ultraleft group-- let totally unable to influence and lead the mass struggles of student and working class youth which lie ahead. In fact, the analysis of the student and youth movement offered up by the Internationalist Tendency clearly poses the questions: "Should the YSA exist at all? Is there anything worthwhile for YSA ers to do which could not be done more productively

by the Socialist Workers Party?" The IT's co-thinkers in Europe have dissolved practically every youth organization on that continent. The IT owes the YSA membership a clear statement of their position on these questions.

The counter-political resolution of the Internationalist Tendency must be rejected by the upcoming convention of the Young Socialist Alliance if we are to advance towards our historic mission of helping to lead American youth in the victorious socialist revolution.

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