

# CAMPUS SPARTACIST

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## SDS At the Crossroads

The nation-wide student strike against the Cambodian invasion and the Kent State murders demonstrated the need for militant leadership of the student and radical movement. Many young people are groping leftward in a search for meaningful politics and are finding only the liberalism and mushed-over socialism pandered by the SMC and YSA. As a result of this leadership crisis, many potential socialists become disillusioned or diverted by ruling class schemes such as amendments against the war, lobbying and support for "peace candidates."

Much of the blame for this lies upon the shoulders of SDS. At a time when much of the student movement is turning to the working class as a source of real social power, the sterile leadership of SDS not only cannot furnish a systematic program for reaching the labor movement, but continues to promulgate a missionary/social work approach to the working class. As a result, SDS finds itself out of touch with the rest of the movement and, as a viable group, withering.

Credit for an ailing SDS goes to the fabled Campus Worker-Student Alliance, which the PL/WSA-dominated leadership embraced as a virtual single tactic for SDS some months ago. This program, which calls for students to get campus jobs and then behave like social workers, was adopted last fall by the Worker-Student Alliance Caucus. Its adoption was all the more pathetic in view of the fact that it was the pro-working class militancy of this same caucus which caused the right-wing Revolutionary Youth Movement to split from SDS last summer, thus leaving the Progressive Labor-led WSA with an opportunity to lead a major part of the student movement in a revolutionary direction. But the politics that were sufficient to cause an unprincipled split within SDS weren't good enough for developing an SDS program. In the modern world of racism, war and poverty, the misled WSA caucus could think of nothing better than the ingrown, campus-oriented CWSA as a program for the (then) largest student organization in the country. Further they emphasized reformism in CWSA work.

In response to this, the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC) of SDS was formed as a revolutionary alternative to the leadership of SDS and its reformist CWSA. At SDS councils and regional meetings in New Haven, Los Angeles and Memphis, the RMC presented its political alternatives in the form of resolutions on the labor movement, racial oppression, women's liberation, terrorism and other major issues. But the SDS leaders have pushed ahead with eight months of single-minded CWSA'ism, and as a result, SDS is isolated and dying.

## CWSA Repudiated

The situation is so serious that even the SDS leadership has begun to heed our criticisms of the CWSA. The June, 1970 New Left Notes contains a NIC statement, titled "SDS, An Evaluation", which bills itself as the product of discussion of recent anti-war activities and planning for the summer. This "perspectives document", written by people who just a few months ago were giving big spreads to articles bannered "Fight Male Chauvinism-- Build the CWSA", does not mention the CWSA even once, and mentions campus workers only in passing. Moreover it states: "We need to re-evaluate our work and work styles to make some important changes in ourselves and in SDS this summer", and "We should struggle with people who want to reach beyond the student movement" and "the real solution to the problem of building SDS is to get involved in more day-to-day political activities with more people." What is this but an admission that the single-tactic CWSA has been the miserable failure we predicted? What is this but an admission that RMC criticisms of the CWSA, put forth last December in New Haven, were absolutely correct?

The RMC resolution presented at the New Haven conference stated that "The CWSA's 'on campus' orientation repels many politically conscious students who want to involve themselves in the major social struggles currently taking place." The SDS leadership has finally admitted the validity of this view. But we don't expect any credit in

New Left Notes. As observed in the May-June issue of the RMC Newsletter:

"Throughout the year, the WSA leadership has acted in a totally irresponsible way. The CWSA was launched as the major activity for SDS without any discussion by the membership. It was also abandoned without any discussion or evaluation, or even acknowledgement that it was being abandoned. In New Haven, we were accused of being anti-working class, wreckers and racists when we criticized the CWSA as the main activity of SDS. Yet, a mere three months later, the same people who criticized us... were forced to turn from the campus cafeteria to the mainstream of the student movement... Given the very short time between New Haven and the de-emphasis of the CWSA, some of the people who viciously attacked us must have known that the CWSA might not last much longer. A leadership that is unwilling to face its own mistakes and attacks its critics when it knows them to be right is politically bankrupt and morally corrupt. The present SDS leadership must be replaced by healthy revolutionary forces."

And as noted in the same issue of the Newsletter: "In pushing the CWSA, the WSA leadership frittered away eight valuable months during which right wing forces have strengthened their control of the student anti-war movement."

What About Austin?

Here in Austin we are faced with a WSA grouping so befuddled that it cannot keep up with its own rotten leadership. On the eve of the nation-wide scuttling of the CWSA program, the local WSA has made public its regroupment into the CWSA Caucus and presumably intends to fight for the CWSA at UT while national SDS moves on into the mainstream of the student movement.

The sad fact is that Austin CWSA will follow its now rueful comrades in learning that the CWSA is the dull, apolitical program we've always known it was. It calls for a missionary-like attentiveness to the problems of campus workers, specifically maids, janitors and cafeteria workers-- and instead of calling for unionization as RMC does, it urges students to demand wage increases and benefits from the administration in the name of these workers. The whole CWSA program pretends that campus workers are better off allying with students than unionizing and organizing around their own demands, even worse, ignores the strength (far, far greater than that of any CWSA) embodied in the trade unions.

Another repugnant aspect of the CWSA is the manner in which it is touted as group therapy for SDS. Note PL member, Bob Leonhardt's article in the Feb. 1970 issue of PL magazine: "... most of us believe in our hearts that the claptrap that passes for 'knowledge' under capitalism makes us superior to workers... We must be conscious at all times that a protracted and arduous ideological struggle with ourselves will be required if we are to transform our old habits." The protracted and arduous struggle takes the form of purging ourselves by "making friends" with campus workers.

It is clear that the emphasis is on what the CWSA will do for students, rather than how it can aid working class struggles. We believe that the role of the revolutionary is not to make friends with workers (although friendships inevitably develop) nor to restrict the struggle to minimum, non-political demands (i.e. wage increases, shop conditions). The role of the revolutionary is to win the most militant sections of the working class over to a political program which leads to revolutionary consciousness.

Lenin foresaw and ultimately led a broad-based political movement of the working class and its allies. He saw the proletariat as the defenders of all those oppressed by the state, including students, and as the champion of workers' power and workers' democracy. This means that the proletariat must take a decisive stand on all issues facing the people. In our leaflets, articles and all of our documents we put forward positions

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which we would like to see the working class eventually adopt and champion, whereas programs like the CWSA ignore them or reduce them to purely economist terms. CWSA is a dust-bin dead-end. We hope that serious radicals in Austin will not be misled by it.

#### Austin and the Work-In

At the beginning of this summer, Austin RMC proposed a program for the SDS summer work-in on a local scale. The chief aim of this program is to broaden the work-in and extend it beyond the summer, carrying it past the narrow, passive non-struggle orientation characteristic of the local (and national) WSA. Our program points are (1) a labor history forum series; (2) an attempt to initiate a trade union organizing drive in Austin (beginning in those places where there are SDS'ers working, and the situation warrants); (3) strike support for any strikers (transit, etc.) with a perspective of bringing our politics to them; (4) the possible development, from among workers and students involved in work-in activities, of a labor newspaper; and (5) the longer perspective of building a Committee for a Labor Party in Texas, as a first step in organizing an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist working class political party.

The CWSA work-in proposal has called for discussion groups to talk about work experiences, with nothing political even implied. While it is not a bad idea to discuss work experiences, such a program by itself fails to raise the consciousness of those involved any higher than it already is-- and that's just the way CWSA feels most comfortable. We counterpose the idea that SDS has a program and SDS students have a revolutionary duty to carry it to the working class.

We are eager to argue our program point for point with anyone and we do so often at SDS meetings. We have proposed a series of forums on labor history because education is so big a part of revolutionary struggle. The forum would create among workers and students involved in the work-in a grasp of labor movement history, a part of revolutionary education too often neglected. At the same time, a labor history forum would help to instill theoretical knowledge and recognition of the need for theory

as well as practice (the history of the labor movement is filled with examples of the need for theory!)

The RMC recognizes that we must fight for certain reforms in order to alleviate immediate oppression and to win (and build) the confidence of the working class. The unionizing drive is one form of this activity. Workers must be organized in order to win reforms, and the trade unions (not the students) have the necessary resources and experience to organize. In the South and in Austin we should place great emphasis on "organizing the unorganized" (the one major reason for lower wages in the South is lack of trade union organization) while not forgetting that the present trade union leadership is generally rotten and bureaucratic. And because of the nature of the union leadership, RMC calls for rank-and-file trade unionists to struggle and develop an alternative militant leadership around a transitional program.

The strike support incorporated into our work-in program is seen as real support. Not only material aid but political and organizational support must be extended to strikers-- and we should bring our politics to them at every opportunity. The strike situation is one where workers are most directly involved in class struggle and are most open to radical politics. Contrast this approach to CWSA's program of giving striking GE workers 75 chickens in a New Jersey plant.

The perspective of developing a labor paper is a key factor in broadening and extending the work-in. This paper would bring ideas, politics and program to a much wider audience than the one-to-one individual contacting advocated by the CWSA. A newspaper is a means by which ideas can be discussed, and it serves as an excellent tool for political development. Students have the skills and resources to put out such a paper and, with contributions from on and off campus, everyone's consciousness would be raised.

Finally, the long-range perspective of building a Committee for a Labor Party in Texas brings the long-postulated worker-student alliance into the realm of reality. A mass party, based in the trade unions, with a working class

program, anti-capitalist and independent of the Democratic and Republican parties, will sharpen the class struggle and bring workers into direct political confrontation with the ruling class.

The chief argument advanced by the CWSA caucus against the RMC work-in proposal is the claim that students should play no role in organizing workers. But Lenin, in What Is to be Done? made it quite clear that socialist theory is not a genetically working class product-- rather, it originated with the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, mostly with people who had had some formal higher education in bourgeois schools. Socialist theory must be injected into the proletariat, in the course of their struggles, including trade union struggles, and the proletariat itself must fight for the knowledge it needs to develop socialist consciousness. The RMC program for the Austin work-in requires that students inject revolutionary politics into those sections of the working class that they come into contact with. This is superior to the purely student orientation that CWSA brings to the work-in, and, indeed, to all of SDS. The future will prove that the RMC program is correct and that the restricted, ingrown work-in of the CWSA caucus, like the CWSA program itself, will fall by the wayside.

As stated in the June issue of the RMC Newsletter:

"If the CWSA is no longer the main activity of SDS, what is? In a sense, nothing is. No single activity has replaced the CWSA as the characteristic action of SDS. Rather, chapters have been encouraged to engage in those activities likely to bring in the maximum number of students. This policy leads to

the political fragmentation of SDS and an adaptation to mainstream student radicalism, as SDS tail-ends the sentiments of most student activists. Thus, some chapters concentrate on abolishing ROTC, others on defending the Panthers, etc.... Such activities are surely desirable and necessary for a healthy SDS. But they indicate no orientation to the labor movement and, in themselves, cannot revolutionize American society. The present leadership of SDS, or rather lack of it, is abandoning the positions won last July and re-creating the SDS of a few years ago."

The RMC condemns this aimless rightward drift! We, as Marxists, see the working class as the only force capable of building communism and to accomplish this historical mission, the class must achieve consciousness of itself and its tasks. We believe that SDS should attempt to aid this struggle by recruiting young workers to socialist ideas, and to SDS. SDS must win students, not to allying with the working class, but to identifying their interests with those of the only consistently revolutionary class-- the proletariat. This is the essence of a revolutionary Marxist orientation for SDS.

Last spring, when everyone in Austin was saying that SDS was dead we stated in our March issue of Campus Spartacist: "We must show our real strength by building a broad-based, non-exclusionist, pro-working class, militant SDS-- an organization that will unite students, non-students and all militant youth against our common enemies." We now repeat this statement, with the addition that the WSA has become an obstacle to rebuilding SDS. They must be fought politically and organizationally. Build the RMC! Build SDS!

<p>Enclosed is a dollar, I want to join the RMC.</p> <p>Name _____          SDS Chapter _____          Address _____          City, State, Zip _____</p> <p>(Return to <u>RMC Newsletter</u>, c/o          Helen Cantrell, 161 E. 99 St.,          apt. 2B, New York, N.Y. 10029)</p>	<p>I want a free subscription          to <u>Campus Spartacist</u></p> <p>Name _____          Address _____          City, State, Zip _____</p> <p>(Return to P.O. Box 8165 UT Sta.,          Austin, Texas 78712)</p>
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