

REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST CAUCUS Newsletter

Number 6

March 1971

FINAL SDS CONVENTION?

Faction-ridden and impotent, crippled by lack of a working class program, SDS limps on, its continued existence as a national organization looking ever more doubtful. That at least is the conclusion we are forced to draw from the recent SDS national convention held in Chicago over Christmas, 1970, which was poorly attended and tightly controlled organizationally by the Worker-Student Alliance and Progressive Labor. The first SDS national convention since the split convention of '69 (over a year ago), it exposed clearly the disastrous consequences of PL-WSA's bad politics and misleadership.

Forced by membership pressure to finally call the convention, the existing PL-WSA leadership could not avoid confronting two distinct oppositional currents which it has tried to smother and ignore for over a year--a large, heterogeneous rightward moving group of ex-WSA'ers and ex-PL'ers, and the left-wing Revolutionary Marxist Caucus. Any analysis of the new rightward movement in SDS must begin from the basic point that these groups have emerged directly because of the failure of the PL-WSA leadership to provide a militant and consistently working class program for SDS, as well as its stupidly bureaucratic handling of political opposition.

The right wing forces, although comprising about 30% of the total attendance (about 650 at most sessions, although registration was over 900), certainly a sizeable minority, were unable to agree on any common program except opposition to PL, and managed to discredit themselves thoroughly by their inability to handle the political issues
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DEMONSTRATE AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT!

PROGRAM FOR THE ECONOMIC CRISIS :

The current economic crisis continues to deepen. Unemployment has risen drastically, welfare cutbacks continue, while inflation proceeds unchecked. The bosses and their politicians have no answer, except to broaden their attacks on the union movement through anti-strike laws and proposals for wage control. They claim they could stop inflation if working people would "all be a little less piggy". They encourage white workers to believe it is the black and Puerto Rican people's efforts to find jobs and decent housing which are threatening their own living standards. They continue their reign of terror and repression against the Black Panthers. They appeal to patriotism and anti-communism, telling workers to support the Vietnam war which massacres working people abroad while causing economic hardships for working people at home.

But dissatisfaction with these so-called "answers" is rising. Many workers and students recognize that the Vietnamese peasants and workers fighting for liberation are our allies, not our enemies. And we know that the government's attacks on anti-war students, on black militants like Angela Davis and the Panthers, on striking unionists, on squatters fighting for decent housing for their families--these are attacks on all working people and must be fought and defeated by all of us.

The most powerful weapon which working people have is the strength and militancy of their unions. But these unions, controlled by a
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raised during the convention. The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus fought consistently for its proletarian socialist program, emerging as the only serious left alternative to the old leadership.

The Right Wing--Moralism, Liberal Guilt, Maoism

The right wing, although forming a loose coalition among themselves during the convention, nevertheless actually represented two distinct trends; one, a growing trend back to old New Leftism--the swamp which can go no further than moral horror at burned babies. The proponents of this guilt-ridden, reformist liberal orientation were primarily the Rosoff group from NYC, the remnants of the Hacks and supporters in Chicago, and The Midnight Special group from New Orleans. The other trend was the newly emerged orthodox Maoist Columbia-Barnard split from the WSA, which at least had the virtues of being more vocal, better organized, and politically more consistent than the softer New Leftists. Ed Clark, editor of The Midnight Special, former PLer, speculated in endless rightwing caucuses on the advisability of splitting from SDS entirely, and was only dissuaded then by the realization that, if the right wing split from SDS, since opposition to PL was the only thing holding them loosely together, they would promptly fall apart. These right wingers decided to make their main fight on organizational, mostly agenda points, since, as Rosoff pointed out, they obviously couldn't agree among themselves about anything else.

Clark Makes His Move--And Blows It

Ed Clark, well known crusader for democracy (particularly when finding himself in a minority), whose pre-convention writings indicated a desire to lead SDS back to the non-existent "good old days" of participatory democracy, chose only two organizational points to fight on: 1) that agenda time slotted for mass leafleting be given over to political discussion, which he capitulated on at the last minute, withdrawing his originally correct motion, which the RMC had supported, and 2) a cynical maneuver, obviously destined to failure before a clear WSA majority, to attempt to disqualify a WSA proposal. After the failure of both these proposals, The Midnight Special crew spent most of its remaining time at the convention sulking in the back of the hall. Upon returning to New Orleans, they pronounced SDS dead and washed their hands of it, thus continuing the avoidance of political struggle which has been the hallmark of this group since its inception. (see TMS, Feb. '71)

Some Other Disasters

The Rosoff mini-group was virtually ignored by the leadership, while the similar Roger-Coffield tendency from the West Coast was conciliated with election to the NIC--an apparent indication that PL control over west coast SDS is slipping. The Revolutionary People's Caucus from Boston (who prior to the convention convened a motley meeting of White Panthers, nationalists, hippies and yuppies, supposedly to "free SDS"; an explicitly anti-working class meeting which the WSA and RMC walked out of), distinguished itself by quoting that "great revolutionary leader", Bernadette Dohrn, getting only derisive laughter and booing from the floor. After that debacle, the RPC also retreated, maintaining pristine silence (except for some heckling) on all political questions.

Staying in SDS for basically opportunist reasons, these New Lefters attempt to use the Worker-Student Alliance verbiage with an entirely different content, challenging the correct SDS line of non-alliance with liberals. Their utopian belief is that linking up SDS with any and all organizations (primarily campus), regardless of rotten politics, will build SDS in some way. This demonstrates complete naivete concerning political development--with such a strategy, SDS would at best become the left cover for liberal politics, and more probably, be completely lost within the morass of liberalism. The right wing cynically covers up its opportunist maneuvering by denying that the basis for political alliance must be agreement on program. Sinking to the lowest common denominator of anti-Nixonism is nothing more than a betrayal of the left. We note that Gi Schafer, of New Orleans SDS, is sponsoring the National Peace Action Coalition (another one of those SWP-YSA-SMC

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peace fronts) in the name of New Orleans SDS! This only a few months after The Midnight Special denounced the YSA-SMC, proclaiming that they are "being used as or are tools of the bosses... they should be given the same treatment that one would give a cop." (TMS, Dec. '70). Apparently The Midnight Special and/or New Orleans SDS considers the proper way to treat cops is to support their actions! Or is this a new split in The Midnight Special group?

Columbia-Barnard Maoists

The most important of the right wing oppositional groups is the Columbia-Barnard group, led by former PLers and WSAers. Their proposals received the largest number of votes of any of the oppositional tendencies. PL-WSA continually attempted to conciliate this group in an attempt to maintain organizational control of the New York region (a conciliation which later developments show has not worked very well). Columbia-Barnard split from the WSA in the name of orthodox Maoism, a development which points out most clearly PL's unique position of being neither fish nor fowl--a Stalinist tendency that would rather not talk about Stalin, an ex-Maoist sect that refuses to define its difference with Mao--i.e., a political tendency with no other base than empiricism. In donning the mantle of orthodox Maoism and "serve-the-people"ism, Columbia-Barnard demands SDS support of the Black Panther Party, an organization which calls the working class, both black and white, sell-outs to capitalism and states that the only revolutionary force in America is the lumpen proletariat, the "street people", whose relation to the means of production is non-existent, therefore rendering them impotent in undertaking any struggle for power in this society. While the Black Panther Party and other militant organizations on the left must be defended against the capitalist class's attempt to smash them, extending this defense to political support denies the central role the working class must play in revolution, and paves the way for the complete abandonment of a working class program for SDS. Nevertheless, Columbia-Barnard's criticism of PL's vulgar analysis of the black question has some validity. Blacks are not merely more economically exploited than whites, but are subject to direct political oppression, such as pervasive police brutality against ghetto residents, as well as the psychological oppression of living in a racist society. However, it is around such class issues as unemployment that black workers can lead the entire class and thereby win white workers to oppose the extra-economic aspects of black oppression. Columbia-Barnard has no strategy for fighting racism other than moralistic propaganda that racism is bad.

Columbia-Barnard's position on the Vietnam war has a similar thrust. Rather than calling for the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, as does the RMC, they call for support of and victory to the NLF, the popular front of the Vietnamese Communist Party, whose program calls for the development of indigenous capitalism in Vietnam! Calling for the political victory of such a program means abandoning the Vietnamese workers and peasants to exploitation by their own ruling class. Considering that the Vietnamese national bourgeoisie is one of the most despicable collections of war profiteers, gangsters, grafters, shysters, gougers and pimps assembled in one place since the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek, that is not much of a reward for thirty odd years of fighting. The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus is for the military victory of the NLF and North Vietnamese forces against the American and South Vietnamese puppet troops. We would urge genuine revolutionary socialists to fight for the leadership of the Vietnamese masses against the existing NLF leadership, while combatting the imperialist forces. The principle of actively supporting mass struggles while opposing an opportunist leadership is the ABC of revolutionary strategy. On innumerable occasions, SDS members have instinctively realized this. Thus, SDS supported the General Electric and General Motors strikes, despite the class traitor Jennings and Woodcock union leaderships. SDS members have actively and correctly supported student anti-war strikes, even when these were led by liberal forces.

PL's Responsibility for This Mess

The defection of Columbia-Barnard and the loss of control by PL-WSA of the N.Y. region is one of the most serious political defeats which SDS has sustained, while the WSA controlled the national organization. Columbia-Barnard ranks with Harvard-Radcliffe as one of the

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most important chapters which SDS has had. The responsibility for this defeat lies squarely on the shoulders of PL-WSA and is directly caused by the methodology and outlook of PL. It is no accident that all the recent splits from PL have been to the right--Fraser, Papert and the Labor Committee, Epton, and Columbia-Barnard. PL's repudiation of the essential theoretical conceptions of Stalinism and Maoism--the popular front, the stage theory of revolution, tail-ending of black nationalism--has not been based on an historical and theoretical re-assessment of the havoc wrought by Stalinism in the world working class movement, but an empirical response to the bankruptcy of these doctrines necessitated by the Vietnamese war and the rise of black nationalism. (In addition, PL finds it difficult to move itself to the right, since the SWP-YSA has effectively monopolized the old Stalinist popular front positions.) In justifying these moves PL can only exonerate itself on the grounds of the particular situation or on its authority as the (self-proclaimed) revolutionary communist party. By attempting to build on social guilt, moralism, and empiricism, the three most obnoxious and defective characteristics of the American left, PL creates the conditions for its own defeat and the continuous splits to the right. The standard argument that failures are the result of "our own racism, male chauvinism, etc." is, of course, routine method which PL employs to explain the failure of one or another of its opportunist gambits to demoralized WSA'ers while keeping the authority of PL as "revolutionary communist party" (infallible guide) intact. Rosoff and Rogers have had the ingenuity to utilize this tactic from the right for their own purposes. Once WSA'ers and PL'ers begin to doubt, once they begin to realize CWSA and Challenge selling doesn't work and is a lot of eyewash, they are unable to bring these criticisms to the party or WSA since the inherited Stalinist authoritarianism brooks no opposition. To date they have either looked for a new source of authority, i.e., back to Maoism, or retreated into New Leftism covered only by the fig leaf of verbal endorsement of WSA. Without a clearly reasoned theoretical explanation for its break with Stalinist theory, without an institution of real inner party democracy, and without a transitional program which bridges the gap between 'rubber mats' and the dictatorship of the proletariat, PL is bound to create within itself right wing splits and transmit the same process to SDS.

On The Floor: Organizational Hassles

PL-WSA has a hard time handling political criticism, so getting proposals discussed was difficult as always. The convention was oriented primarily towards endless pseudo-democratic workshops (where no votes are ever taken on anything), mass leafleting and demonstration-building, a rat-troupe skit, and the necessary but time-consuming election of officers.

PL-WSA's general tactic toward the right wing was attempted conciliation. The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus received different treatment. Political antagonisms were intensified by PL-WSA, which erupted during the election proceedings into open hostility and near violence. The RMC ran candidates for all national positions. Our first two candidates were booed, hissed and pelted with wads of paper during their speeches by WSAers. The third candidate reacted badly to this provocation by making irrelevant, distorted and personal criticisms of PL and its leader, Milt Rosen, rather than insisting on the correctness of the RMC program. This weakness displayed by the candidate was not an accident; as part of his continuing political breakdown, he shortly broke entirely away from RMC politics.

Tempers were running short by the last day of the convention; PL-WSA was able to impose a 30-second time limit on all RMC speakers, making it impossible for us to present our proposals on women's liberation and racism. In effectively silencing the RMC during the last day, the leadership made itself more vulnerable to the right wing, with whom it found itself working against the RMC. The right was quick to take advantage of this by calling for the election of an additional NIC member. Their candidate was an ex-SDSer from Columbia-Barnard who no longer attended SDS meetings. He was duly elected.

We have pointed out before, and we repeat: These bureaucratic and undemocratic procedures can only drive potentially radical students

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away from SDS. Trampling on minority rights creates only hostility and anti-communist attitudes toward SDS.

The Left Opposition: The RMC Program

Our general proposal for future SDS orientation and work--Program for the Economic Crisis--is a transitional program designed to increase the intensity of class struggle in this country through conscious radical intervention--SDS posing demands related to the current concerns of the working class; inflation, layoffs, lack of direct political power, etc. The RMC proposed that SDS agitate among the working class with demands for strike action against layoffs; a sliding scale of hours and wages, i.e., a shorter work week with no loss in pay, pay to be controlled by the cost of living; price control (without wage control); expropriation of industry under workers' control (if Penn Central can't make it, let the workers control it); and a workers' party based on the rank and file of the trade unions, a break with the Democratic party. Such a program taken politically to the working class as a way to implement their present struggles for survival would not only intensify the workers' struggles against the capitalist class, but would discredit the misleadership of the trade unions, the sell-out bureaucrats, among the rank and file.

The general proposal put forward by the WSA leadership was to build a worker-student alliance on the same general 'support' basis that existed before the convention, which won a majority of the vote. The proposal made no mention of any program to implement working class struggles, but concentrated on the vague 'ally with' tactic that has rendered SDS's working class orientation ineffective in the past. The programmatic points such as "30 for 40" adopted by PL (but not SDS) and "End Racist Unemployment" must be confronted head on as minor improvements in PL's program which appear to, but are actually insufficient to, replace this basic method. The WSA denies, in effect, that radical students can and must advance the class struggle through assisting the working class to achieve revolutionary socialist consciousness.

During the first part of the convention, the RMC was forced once again to fight for the basic democratic right of proportional representation on the panels, a fight which won the RMC a speaker on only the women's liberation panel. The question of the oppression of women has been an extremely confusing one for SDS, ever since the topic first came up for discussion at the December 1969 New Haven Conference. That conference found PL-WSA endorsing an anti-abortion line, for no discernible reason apart from the grounds that large numbers of the working class are Catholic and therefore opposed to abortion.

The problems of carrying out such a line while attempting to win radical students to SDS created a quick reversal--to part of the program of the RMC, newly formed at that conference. The sudden switch was done empirically, with no theoretical analysis of women's oppression, which allowed the PL-WSA leadership to continue to refuse to recognize the central role of the family in the oppression of women--part of a basic Marxist analysis. Rather, their position remained that the socio-economic institution of the family could be made into "a fighting unit for socialism". With such a pro-family perspective, SDS has had to concentrate on merely the economic aspects of women's oppression, giving them an extremely crude approach to a central contradiction of capitalism. The SDS position can be summed up as "women are oppressed because they are paid less, and they are paid less because they are oppressed"--with the supra-natural agency of "male chauvinism" as the prime mover behind the circle. The RMC speaker on the panel emphasized the central role of the family as an agency of oppression. The family is an economic necessity under capitalism as it provides for unpaid, socially necessary labor; further, it is a prime agency for the internalization of oppression, teaching women to seek the sole meaning of life in their children and husband, for example.

The main thrust of the RMC intervention on all questions was the attempt to bring about the fundamental recognition by SDS of its need for an openly socialist perspective, program, and internal organization, open to all political tendencies to fight for their programs. SDS had the responsibility, as the only mass-based working class

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oriented youth group in the country, to be the arena where young student and working class revolutionaries can become conscious of their tasks and test out their theories in political debate and practice. In refusing to call itself socialist and work for a socialist perspective, SDS has backpedalled its role as the leadership of the youth movement, from which must come the next generation of political leadership for the class struggle in America.

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conservative union bureaucracy which hates to antagonize supposed "friends of labor" politicians and the bosses themselves by strikes, have traditionally limited themselves to defensive economic struggles, narrowly focused on the conditions in each industry. By such sell-out policies, the unions have cut themselves off from their potential allies among un-organized workers, welfare recipients, etc. who now believe unionized workers are indifferent to their plight. They have opened themselves up to attacks from many black, Latin and women workers who see the conservatized unions as obstacles to their own struggles for equality. The Black Panthers have gone so far as to conclude that any worker, black or white, who has a job has been "bought off" by the bosses and can play no part in the struggle. This theory is wrong, and we must oppose it, but we must also recognize that it is the narrow "business unionism" of the bureaucrats and their refusal to undertake political struggles as well which has caused sections of the oppressed to view the entire union movement with suspicion.

The organized workers have also been hurt by the bureaucrats' conservative policies. Unemployment always hits the most oppressed sections of the working class first: black and Latin workers, women workers, young workers and other low-skilled workers have the hardest time finding a job and are the first to be laid off. These workers have little social power and often are not organized in unions at all. The bureaucratized union movement has mainly stood by passively while preaching support to liberal politicians to "solve" the problem of unemployment. But it should be obvious that such a pool of reserve labor, forced to work for low wages when they can find a job at all, is a constant threat to the living standards of all workers, because the boss (posing as a humanitarian, of course) can threaten any striking worker with being replaced by someone who is forced to work for less.

And now, as the economic crisis deepens, more and more skilled and unionized workers are being directly hit by unemployment. Workers who thought they were safe and secure--electronics workers, teachers, air-craft workers, even scientific technicians--are finding themselves thrown out of their jobs. Even workers with many years' seniority are no longer immune. Workers are finding out the hard way that no worker, who has nothing but his labor power to sell to a boss, will ever be "middle class", no matter how much money he makes in good times.

The fake "leaders" of the union movement have shown they cannot be counted on to fight for the workers' interests. By refusing to struggle for the interests of all workers--black and white, women and men, unorganized as well as union members--they allow the working class to be split up, fighting among itself for a bigger slice of the same economic "pie". By refusing to struggle over political issues, they limit the unions to a defensive war against the bosses' attacks, with each partial gain constantly threatened by inflation, unemployment and direct union-busting. Specifically, the Vietnam war, which is at the root of the current economic situation, directly reveals the bureaucrats' treason. Millions of U.S. workers oppose the war, for political as well as economic reasons. Yet AFL-CIO head George Meany continues to be Nixon's most blatant ally, while "progressive" union heads like David Livingston, Victor Gotbaum and Leon Davis claim they oppose the war but deliberately resist all efforts to mobilize the power of the unions themselves against it. They preach confidence in the liberal politicians whose fundamental aim is to maintain the system, and in the middle-class anti-war movement which supports these politicians. The war cannot be ended by these politics, and it cannot be ended by endless student demonstrations. Only the working class, relying on its own strength (its power to stop production) and on its real allies, not on the liberals, can really challenge the Vietnam

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war and the system that produced it.

To mount a real struggle against the economic crisis, the Vietnam war and the government's attacks on militants all over the country, the phony union "leaders" must be thrown out and replaced by militant rank-and-file control of the unions around a program of class struggle. Many workers have formed caucuses inside their unions and are struggling to implement a militant strategy to fight for the short-term and long-term interests of all working people. We support these workers! We demand:

1. Control Prices, Not Wages: The policy of wage-price control, being pushed particularly by the liberals, is a deadly serious threat to the workers' right to fight their exploiters. Government control over the unions, compulsory arbitration, anti-strike laws must be opposed. We want to fight inflation, but at the bosses' expense, with price controls on consumer goods, rent control, free quality medical care, etc.
2. For Strikes Against Layoffs; and a Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours: Enough jobs could be created instantly if the basic work week were shortened with no loss in pay. This is clearly in the interests of all workers, who now compete among themselves for jobs in a shrinking job market. A sliding scale of wages in relation to the cost of living would safeguard the gains already won against erosion by inflation.
3. Expropriation of Industry Under Workers' Control: At the heart of this society's economic ills is production for private profit and not social use. We reject the idea of nationalization under the bosses' control, like in England, where bankrupt monopolies are the only industries nationalized, so that the workers' taxes pay the bosses' debts.
4. For a Workers' Political Party: The Democratic and Republican Parties stand more exposed and hated than ever, but workers, seeing no alternative, vote for the "lesser evil" or not at all. Clearly, workers need a political party to represent their interests, in which the competing policies of working-class leaders and misleaders can be argued and tested in practice. The needs and interests of working people cannot be won and protected by economic militancy alone; we need political action by the working class to fight for workers' power.
5. End Government Repression: No U.S. worker can afford to think that the slaughter of students at Kent State, or the persecution of Black Panthers and other radical groups, is not part of an attack on all working people. The same troops which killed student protesters are used to break strikes; the same cops who persecute ghetto residents also smash picket lines; the same courts which "punish" radicals will fine and jail strike leaders. No matter what our disagreements with them, we must defend Angela Davis, the Black Panthers and Young Lords, terroristic radicals like the U.S. Weathermen or the Quebec nationalists, against the government repression and the racist cops.
6. For Strikes Against the War: Millions of workers oppose the Vietnam war, but the union fakers channel this discontent into empty statements and weekend demonstrations. Students all over the U.S. closed down their schools after the Cambodia invasion--workers can do far more to fight Nixon's war policies by closing down the factories themselves. Anti-war workers should fight within their unions to have the unions call a one-day strike against the war.

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT! SDS has called for a mass demonstration to show the solidarity between students and workers in fighting unemployment. SDS is a national organization of students who believe we must build a worker-student alliance to fight against racism, imperialism and male chauvinism.

COME TO WASHINGTON MARCH 20!

<p>Defend Angela Davis! Defend the Panther 21! Defend Juan Farinas, socialist draft protester! Defend Fraser and Borgman, Rizzo frame-up victims! Defend Carol Graves, Don Nicholas, Frank Fiorito and the Newark Teachers!</p>
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To the Young Socialist Alliance-Student Mobilization Committee:

BRING WORKING CLASS POWER AGAINST THE WAR!

It is an absolute necessity that anti-war militants learn the proper lessons from the puppet South Vietnamese army's invasion of Laos under the direction and protection of U.S. military forces. It is not only that the Vietnamese people have not achieved an iota of self-determination under the Thieu-Ky dictatorship; as is well known, the decision to cross the Laotian border was dictated by Nixon, who held up the invasion for several days while he tested the domestic political climate and ascertained whether the USSR and China were inclined to do anything more than scream epithets. They weren't, of course. And, despite rhetoric to the contrary, it pointed up again that the Yankee goal in Southeast Asia continues to be military victory over North Vietnam.

But it showed something more--the lack of any domestic response to this new atrocity in Indochina, something unique over the past five years, points up the virtual decimation of the anti-war movement in the U.S. This process began in 1968 with the defection of the majority of its ranks into the Eugene McCarthy 'peace' campaign, and through that straight back into the bourgeois Democratic Party. For the past two years, the 'movement' has had largely a ritualistic character, as it became manifestly obvious that the traditional SMC-directed semi-annual peace crawls had absolutely no consequential impact on Administration policy.

The SMC and the Cambodia Upsurge

At about this point in the argument the enraged YSA-SMC leadership usually point to the disorders over Cambodia and related campus massacres of last spring as a self-serving vindication of the vitality of the anti-war movement. But these events--spontaneous and arising independently--can in no way be confused with the SMC's "planned actions"; if anything, the returned quiescence (even in the face of a new invasion) points to the fundamental lack of any program coming from the YSA-SMC leadership, save only more of the same maintain-the-bloc-with-the-liberals-at-any-cost brand of class collaboration.

A related and cynical argument which originates from YSA honcho Pete Camejo is that no matter what the program of the movement, such protests and demonstrations are "objectively anti-imperialist". This is as nonsensical as the recent YSA contention that the Jackson State-Kent State killings and attendant protests represented the "American Student 1905" (if that is so, save us from the "American student 1917"!) We recall the YSA made the same claim for the "defeat" of Johnson in 1968. Strange arguments for self-proclaimed Marxists, to confuse an individual with his class program--that "defeat" brought us Richard Nixon as Commander-in-Chief and four more years of the Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon Indochina doctrine! We would ask Comrade Camejo: Was the Ohio National Guard being "objectively anti-imperialist" last spring when it breathed new life into the anti-war struggle? If so, what else do you have in mind for us?

With increasing political and military swagger, the Nixon administration widens the war in Indochina knowing full well the impotence of the domestic anti-war movement to check the aggression. Only the development of a program based upon the working class with a perspective of struggle aimed at the bourgeoisie and their lackeys, the union bureaucrats, and linked to the other social issues can bring an end to the specter of endless imperialist war!

WEST COAST RMC REPORT:

CALIFORNIA--San Francisco State SDS has taken on a totally new character. Progressive Labor has lost control of the chapter, which is rapidly moving towards the positions of the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus.

After the SDS National Convention in Chicago, SDSers came home feeling disgruntled and dissatisfied. At the first meeting following the convention, dissatisfied people listed several organizational points on which they objected, among them PL's dominance and control of the convention and especially the rally and demonstration, as well as instances where PL members had overextended the chapter's finances by pledging impossible sums of money to the National Headquarters. The

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independents concluded that PL has been dishonest in its relations with SDS, stemming from a lack of faith in the rank and file SDSer. This is true to an extent; however, the independents raising these grievances failed to point out the real implications of these acts. They dealt with political problems in an organizational instead of political way. Yes, PL is manipulative and undemocratic, but the reasons why are more than a lack of faith in people; they stem from PL's incorrect politics, from PL's roots in Stalinism. SDSers must come to grips with this reality and deal with PL in a political manner.

At another more recent SDS meeting, independents in SDS pointed out that there is no political discussion in SDS, that PL attempts to maintain SDS on a level of mindless activism and slogan shouting. SDS programs and even leaflets and slogans aren't discussed for their political content, a practice PL encourages. To alleviate this serious weakness at S.F. State, the independents proposed weekly political discussion groups, open to all SDSers to discuss such questions as "Should SDS become a socialist youth organization?", "What is National Liberation?", "Do we defend all of the left against attack?", "What is a Labor Party and should we support it?", "What are transitional demands?", "What is Stalinism and what is Trotskyism and how are they opposed to each other?". The PLers countered this with a motion to discuss such issues as "Where to have the unemployment demonstration?", "Why have an anti-Jensen campaign?", etc. The RMC voted for the independents' motion, which passed 9 to 8.

The latest SDS meeting clarified the real political differences with PL in SDS. The meeting was called to discuss the "Smash Racist Unemployment" demonstration planned for March 20. The independents felt that unemployment should be more directly linked to the war and imperialism and workers' struggles in other countries. PL supported the demonstration as it was, with the additional slogan, "For Preferential Hiring of Blacks, Chicanos and Asians." The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus is opposed to that slogan, because preferential hiring in fact works against the interests of the working class. It creates divisions and competitiveness among black and white workers, as white workers feel their jobs are threatened. The ruling class uses preferential hiring to create divisions in the working class, i.e. the Philadelphia Plan. The same consequences would result if PL won their demand under this system. The independents also pointed out how the slogan "Fight Racist Unemployment" was misleading, incorrect and had the same drawbacks as the preferential hiring demand. The RMC supported the basic thrust of the independent's motions, but added the transitional demands "30 for 40" (shorting the work week with no loss in pay, thus creating more jobs to end unemployment) and "Strikes Against Layoffs."

A dangerous tendency rampant among the independents is to say, "We're in the majority now, so let's kick PL out...we voted out their ideas and now they serve no constructive function in SDS." The RMC opposes attempts by any groups in SDS to exclude or deny minority rights to any tendency within SDS! We believe that only from full and open political discussion can differences be resolved and people won to correct politics. Political differences cannot be dealt with by organizational maneuvering or exclusions as RYM and PL both have done in the past. Bad political ideas must be beaten through open political discussion or they will crop up again.

Lesley Cohen, S.F. State SDS, RMC, Spartacist

LETTERS: (The RMC Newsletter welcomes letters, criticisms and comments from its readers. We will print as many as we have room for. Correction: In the last letter column, we incorrectly identified as "a candidate member of PL" a comrade who was in fact only a member of PL's Challenge-selling collective.)

San Diego, California

9 Jan. 1971

Dear Comrades:

My first contact with RMC came at a regional YSA conference in Boston last spring. At that time I had been in SMC for about six months but had become progressively disenchanted with the organization. Your analysis of SMC ("The Four Unprinciples of SMC")--and subsequent articles in Spartacist--did much to add political clarity to my feelings of frustration, which eventually led me to abandon SMC and join

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TROTSKYISM BOGGLES THE MAOIST MIND (cont. from pg. 11)...

people have to understand nothing. The Maothink attitude toward history would lead us to suspect that they may soon discover the value of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" in exposing reactionary Zionism. Or maybe Lenin was a German spy...

Re sexism: Do the Maoists condemn it when attitudes of sexual oppression are propounded under an "anti-imperialist" label? Or are the Black Panthers, for example, exempt in this regard? Do the Maoists oppose the brutal treatment of homosexuals in Cuba and elsewhere? Do Chinese women have the right to decide the question of abortion whatever the bureaucracy's attitude of the moment?

Labor Party: We "have no understanding of where the American worker is at today." Seems obvious that where he is "at" is bourgeois parties and bourgeois ideology; where he is not "at" is awareness of his need to have his own party to fight the capitalist parties. The Maoists (and PL) would have him stay there until he magically is swept from his oppressor's parties into revolutionary consciousness with no experience of fighting for militant class politics in his own organization. This is partly wishful thinking: if things did happen that way, the Maoists would have the sort of politically inexperienced working class which they could lead in the Chairman's way.

The first responsibilities of a revolutionary are to learn to think and to tell the truth. The comrades Maoists raise ignorance to principle ("esoterica," recent history's "musty pages" etc.). Compounding their appeal to ignorance with murderous impulses ("they will be offed!") they fully qualify for Trotsky's description of Stalinism as "the syphilis of the workers' movement."

LETTERS (cont. from pg. 9)

SDS when I moved from Boston to San Diego,

Many people in SDS were not happy with the San Jose "national action", and a sizeable group eventually split and is attempting to form a new group, so far apparently dominated by Revolutionary Union politics. As SDS membership has dropped to about 15, other political activity on campus has reached a low ebb also... liberal groups such as SMC are virtually non-existent.

In any case, the need for theoretical discussion leading to a (socialist) political program has become rather obvious to a number of us who still remain in SDS. I find myself in agreement with the RMC that the main focus of SDS should be intervention in off-campus social struggles with a proletarian political program.

Fraternally,
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<u>RMC Newsletter</u>	
No. 6	March 1971
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consciousness. Upon whom must the Maoists rely for support in keeping SDS free from the revolutionary socialism which draws in its wake the taint of Trotskyism with its "millions of esoteric questions" (Indonesia and China, for example)? Obviously upon the non-socialists (the ignorant) and their natural leaders, the anti-socialists (the principled).

The policy of defeating Trotskyism by undercutting its socialist foundation is no unusual piece of right-Maoist anti-communism. Progressive Labor still opposes the demand for an openly socialist student movement, while at the same time endlessly proclaiming PL's "revolutionary communism." Perhaps they regard any explicitly socialist consciousness outside of PL itself as a threat to the hegemony of the Party; for an organization which has reversed itself on major questions in as short a time as PL has, their fears of outside competition on their own socialist ground are of course fully justified. In any case, the Maoist opposition has learned much from its experience in and around PL, among other things the tactic of the "Bloc of Lowered Consciousness" by which self-proclaimed communists bloc with declared anti-communists to defeat revolutionary criticism from the left. PL is more "Trotskyist" than its orthodox Maoist opposition in that it has empirically recoiled from the class betrayals toward which their earlier positions, especially on nationalism, have led them. A systematic understanding of their admittedly lousy positions does of course lead straight toward Trotskyism, a direction which they can resist only by systematic anti-theory and enthusiasm-mongering. But the confusion is there; PL has been knocked off its Stalinist-Maoist base, and they find their unavoidable episodic closeness to the SL-RMC exquisitely embarrassing. Those most embarrassed, of course, have fled back to Mao-thought and classless serve-the-people rhetoric for which PL's Worker-Student Alliance role prepared them. PL is of course not so stupid as to admit their fears that explicit socialism on the part of SDS will make the job of the Trotskyists easier.

The contention that "socialist groups don't exist in the abstract" --i.e., there are different conceptions with different practical implications which must be sorted out in political struggle--is correct. What neither PL nor its right-wing opponents mention is that a non-socialist organization doesn't exist in the abstract, either. It faces continually the choice of concrete bourgeois policies, random confused policies, or hidden socialist policies. Presumably the latter is what PL and its opponents desire; but hidden socialism is a fragile thing to defend--presumably by organizational means--against the all-pervasive onslaught of bourgeois ideology. Plenty of liberals know how to harvest the organizing work of those radicals who resist the step from essentially protest politics (anti-racism, anti-sexism, etc.) to a unifying socialist consciousness.

Some of the more imbecilic charges in the leaflet deserve some attention. All issues of Spartacist are available, because it has no positions it has dumped or become ashamed of. We defy phrase-mongering idiots, Maoist or otherwise, to find one word of condemnation of the struggle against imperialism by the Indonesians or anybody else. One will find plenty of condemnation of the policies of no struggle, of alliance with imperialism and its agents (such as the gangster Sukarno) imposed by privileged political elites (including the Chinese) which again and again have turned the masses of revolutionary fighters over to their enemies to be butchered. We do not condemn our "Indonesian sisters and brothers" for being murdered. We condemn the leaders who ordered them to stand defenseless before the reactionary slaughters; the authors of that policy, Mao and Aidit, are not our "sisters and brothers". Our "sisters and brothers" were the German workers and Communists crushed by Hitler, not Stalin and his henchmen who did not let them fire a shot in their own defense. We didn't like the Hitler-Stalin deal either--presumably an instance of opposition to the anti-fascist struggle! Of poor fly-blown Algeria, sold back to imperialism by their "revolutionary" "leaders" after years of bloody struggle, we need say nothing. The list goes on. We supported the Japanese in China (according to Mao) in the same degree that Lenin was a German agent (according to the Mensheviks, et al.) and that we and virtually all the Old Bolsheviks spied for Hitler and the Mikado (according to Stalin).

In other words, some people never learn and abuse whatever right
(cont. on pg. 10)

TROTSKYISM BOGGLES THE MAOIST MIND
(A reply to the Mao Tsetung Thought Collective)

The untitled leaflet distributed at an Illinois campus by the "Mao Tsetung Thought Collective" represents more than evident preoccupation with the Spartacist League and Revolutionary Marxist Caucus by some Maoists on a campus where, so far as we know, we enjoy no particular influence. The thinking expressed in the leaflet is typical of a number of groups which have split away from the Progressive Labor Party and its WSA-dominated SDS chapters. The leaflet is a good example of why revolutionary Marxists continue to analyze and condemn the Stalinist betrayals of past decades, since without an awareness of Stalinism's historical role, would-be revolutionaries will continue to be duped and ruined by the sort of Moscow trials-style no-think expressed in the Maospeak of this leaflet. Admittedly it is unusually vulgar, but it should be useful to those whose main experience with Trotsky-baiting has come from the simultaneously more sophisticated and more confused supporters of PL.

For people accustomed to the Thought of Chairman Mao (perhaps earlier attempting to digest the Thought of Milt Rosen) the pages of Spartacist must be very difficult reading indeed. But if our Comrades Maoists find a Trotskyist theoretical organ negative and "esoteric", they had better drop the pretence of familiarity with Lenin's work. The writings of Lenin and all the important Bolsheviks (most of them "offed" by our Collective's earlier co-thinkers) are mostly long, bitter, tightly reasoned attacks on all varieties of enemies of revolutionary Marxism. To paraphrase the leaflet, Lenin's struggle was with other organizations, not with imperialism and Tsarism. Then as now the burning question was not primarily of cataloguing the evils of imperialism, but understanding them and how to smash them. The Maoists do not of course attack Lenin for his "sectarianism" as his enemies of the time did. Even the rotten Communist Parties (are we destructive in denouncing them, too, Cdes. Maoists?) cover their betrayals by verbal reverence for the names of Marx and Lenin. Far easier to attack Trotsky and his followers who, unlike Lenin, lived to be hounded and killed by the usurpers of Bolshevism's revolutionary mantle. The class traitors of Lenin's time attempted to use Marx against Lenin in the same way that today's bogus Marxists attempt to invoke a betrayed, hollow "Leninism" against the modern continuation of Leninism's uncompromising revolutionary essence--Trotskyism.

The Maoists' leaflet implies throughout that the Trotskyists have inflicted actual damage on the broad anti-imperialist, anti-fascist, etc., movement. Simple annoyance of other sections of the radical movement would not seem to warrant the opprobrium they lavish on us. Well--did the Trotskyists smash up SDS in June of '69 or create either Progressive Labor's misleadership or the right-wing, third-worldist opposition to it? Was it Trotskyists which forced the Epton group away from PL? Did Trotskyist criticism put the Panthers in their present disarray, or is that the responsibility of the Panthers themselves, depending on a combination of terror and glamor to maintain their organization and win sympathy? Uncritical enthusiasm for the Panthers has been one of the few unifying factors for the Third-World, New Leftish hero-worshippers. Now no one seems to know who the real Panthers are, or which side to take in a faction fight dominated by political unclarity and personal vilification. The Panthers' current crisis demonstrates again (or for the first time to those not believing in history) the inherent weaknesses of an organization built upon a left-wing gang ethos. We will not be surprised, of course, if one anti-Trotskyist faction of the Panthers denounces a politically equivalent rival faction as "Trotskyist" and even wins a number of liberals and confused radicals to its side until another fad comes along. We ask of both the Panthers and their enthusiasts: will one anti-Trotskyist wing of the Panthers now deserve to be rubbed out by the other for their "counterrevolutionary Trotskyism"?

Ironically, yet logically, the Maoists' attitude toward conscious socialism is akin to their hatred for Trotskyism: at least for the student movement, both are held to be divisive, anti-struggle, factionalist influences. The leaflet maintains that in an openly socialist student organization the Spartacist and their supporters will excel in winning people to their "esoterica". The writers understand that Trotskyism is most successful where there is socialist consciousness. They are right. It is not enough for them to exclude (off?) the "Sparts". They must also eliminate the medium in which they thrive--socialist
(cont. on p. 11)

THE MAOIST STRAIN OF SYPHILIS IN THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT

This boxed leaflet was recently distributed by the Mao Tsetung Thought Collective (Chicago). RMC reply beginning on page 12.

The Spartacist League has a short and inglorious history in the American left. Essentially the Spartacists have done absolutely nothing to build the left in this country. In fact, they have built no struggles against imperialism anyplace! They represent a pro-imperialist line and try to cover it over with pages of "Marxist" rhetoric. Their newspaper reads like the National Enquirer of the left; "exposing" other left groups and carrying on esoteric debates. To analyze what the Sparts say there is nothing good happening on the left, organizations are being sold out, a labor party is not being built (see below), only a few struggles are being carried out and none of those are any good.

When evaluating an organization one must look at its history, its theory, and its program. The history of the Sparts is one of factionalizing, raising secondary questions into primary ones and trying to destroy other organizations; i.e. New School SDS, Memphis SDS, NCEWVN and others. Their struggles are with other organizations not against US capitalism. Their practice, in other words, is nothing!

Their theory is based on Trotsky. Trotsky, denounced by Lenin (for examples see V.20-22 of Collected Works especially arguments against national chauvinists and V.9 of Selected Works among others) and a major adversary of revolution in Russia. Trotsky does not, however, occupy a major portion of Lenin's polemics because, like the followers of Trotsky since, his influence on the revolutionary movement was almost nil. Trotskyism has never played a good role in any anti-imperialist struggle; they have been on the wrong side of every revolutionary movement. They have opposed every revolution since 1917 and attack every revolutionary country; they opposed the struggle against fascism in WW2; they even supported the Japanese in China because Japan would raise the level of productive forces (Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, V.3,p.221). The list could go on and on about Trotsky's line and the sellouts of the people by his followers.

The Spartacist program is to build a labor party. They have no understanding of where the American worker is at today; their program means we should spend our time winning workers to a new type of reformism instead of revolution. In the student movement their line is to make SDS a "socialist" student group. While this sounds good what does it mean in practice? What demands will we organize around? What is our long range strategy? Will we become a Leninist party without the workers or will we look to another party for political leadership? In other words will we become another YSA except with a more militant cover and Spartacist as the "adult" group? We think it becomes more clear what the Spart demand for a socialist youth group means in practice--only that SDS will become subservient to Spartacists! (or to PL which has essentially the same politics). Our demands and our struggles will be the same--against sexism, racism and imperialism whether we call ourselves socialist or not.

The socialist student movement demand is just a trap--socialist groups don't exist in the abstract; we will be called on to take positions on millions of esoteric questions: just the area where Spartacist excels--esoterica. We will be called on to condemn our Chinese comrades, our Indonesian sisters and brothers plus many others for mistakes they have already recognized and started to correct plus others they never made. In other words we will spend all of our time in the musty pages of the history of the left instead of building the fight against US imperialism. It is true we must learn from past experiences but the primary source of knowledge is practice and the primary way to evaluate theory is practice; the Sparts learn nothing because they have no practice and will lead SDS into the same trap, of objectively supporting imperialism because we will devote our time attacking all groups that are fighting with it as the Sparts and PL do now. In the end Trotskyites of all shades will be dealt with by the revolutionary masses of the US as has happened in every struggle against imperialism and capitalism (i.e. Vietnam, Korea, China, Cuba, Algeria and many others)-they will be offed! For now we must end the bullshit and go out and smash imperialism and their Trotskyite and other revisionist lackies.