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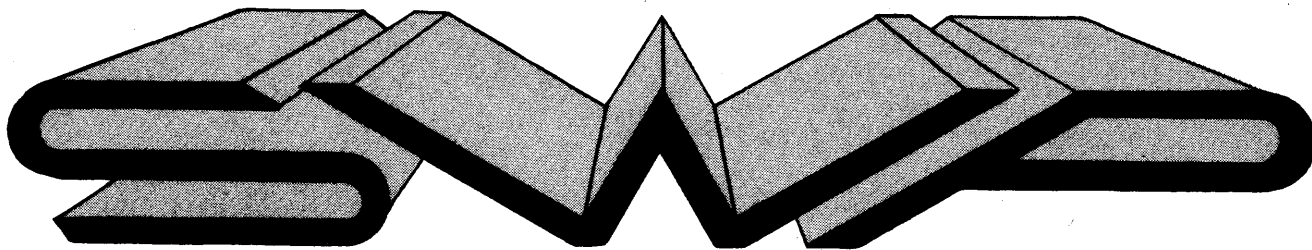
October, 1967

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(Adopted by the March 1967 YSA Convention)
2. Discussion on Antiwar Work by Chase, Meseke,
Barzman and Sherrill, March 1967
3. The Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill Antiwar
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The following three documents are reprinted from discussion bulletins issued by the Young Socialist Alliance during the pre-convention discussion period preceding its 1967 national convention. They have been made available to the party membership by the YSA as a fraternal courtesy.

These YSA documents are being included in the party's pre-convention discussion bulletin series to provide information and background material relating to questions raised in Comrade David Fender's "Remarks on the Antiwar Movement" (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 26, No. 9). Comrade Fender quotes at length from these sources in his article.

Ed Shaw

ANTIWAR RESOLUTION

(NEC Draft)

I. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Since the United States government began bombing north Vietnam over two years ago, the Vietnam war has been the central issue in world politics. It is one of the largest wars in the history of the world and is already in many respects larger than the Korean War. It has spurred an international antiwar protest movement that continues to grow while the imperialist powers, the workers' states, and the colonial countries all focus their attention on this question.

Vietnam is presently the central confrontation between imperialism and the world socialist revolution, testing the relationship of forces between these two antagonists of the twentieth century. In this sense Vietnam is similar to Spain in the 1930's where all political forces were tested and where the outcome meant either a socialist Spain and a defeat for fascism or, as it turned out, a fascist Spain and an open door to World War II.

American aggression against north Vietnam is an attack on a workers' state, the first attack of such magnitude since the Korean War, and U.S. intervention in south Vietnam is an attempt to crush a popular revolution for land reform and national independence. This aggression is part and parcel of imperialism's global strategy of seeking to dominate and police the world in the interests of the capitalist system by crushing the colonial revolution and eventually rolling back the workers' states.

American aggression in Vietnam is primarily motivated by the political need for imperialism to maintain south Vietnam as a link in a ring of strategic bases encircling China. The inspirational effect an American defeat would have on revolutionaries around the world is also a motivating factor for U.S. imperialism.

Although the ruling circles in this country are in agreement on the overall strategic aims of American imperialism in the world and in Asia, there are tactical differences over the present course in Vietnam -- differences deep enough to create a permissive atmosphere for the antiwar movement. The sustained resistance of the Vietnamese people, which is the most important component of the international antiwar movement, and a never-ending escalation that risks a confrontation with China and the possibility of nuclear war with the USSR has created real doubts among a section of the ruling class about the wisdom of the present policy in Vietnam. These differences also exist on an international scale and have made it difficult for Johnson, unlike Truman during the attack on Korea, to convince the rulers in the other advanced capitalist countries to furnish troops.

The extent of the differences within the ruling circles is exemplified by the dispatches written from north Vietnam by Harrison Salisbury, an Assistant Managing Editor of the New York Times. Salisbury, one of the first Western newsmen, authoritative in the eyes of the ruling class, to get into north Vietnam, has written article after article, sharply exposing President Johnson's lies about civilian bombing in north Vietnam. The impact of these articles is adding substantially to the already growing doubts and confusion about the war.

The Vietnam war is another confrontation in the post World War II period in which the American rulers are forced to test their capacity to deal with popular revolutions at a time when the basic relationship of forces vis-a-vis the world socialist revolution is becoming less favorable to them. The conjunctural defeats of the colonial revolution in the past couple of years particularly in Indonesia, Algeria, and Brazil has emboldened the American imperialists to take their present course in Vietnam.

If Vietnam is a test for American imperialism it is an even greater test for all segments of the world socialist movement and the governments of the workers' states. It is a test of their ability to defend the Vietnamese revolution.

Moscow's ruling circles, whose line is followed by most of the world's Communist parties, have not conducted an aggressive defense of the Vietnamese revolution. In the interests of their long-standing policy of peaceful coexistence between the USSR and western imperialism, the Soviet bureaucrats place their narrow "national" interests above the world revolution.

They have the power to halt Johnson's escalation in Vietnam if they choose to do so. American escalation in Vietnam is limited solely by the risk of a major confrontation with the Soviet Union. This is indicated by the pattern of U.S. escalation which is marked by acts of aggression followed by pauses to measure Chinese and Soviet response, and when no resistance is met, the aggression is stepped up. American capitalism is not at present in an extreme economic or political crisis that would make the rulers willing to risk a nuclear showdown over Vietnam with the USSR. If the USSR were to carry out a more militant defense of Vietnam they would in all likelihood be able to force the U.S. to halt its continued escalation.

They should first of all make it explicitly clear to American imperialism that the Soviet Union is ready to come to the immediate assistance of China if the latter is attacked. The USSR's failure to do this has placed a question mark over Soviet solidarity with China and provides the basis for America's calculated escalation that may lead to an attack on China.

Secondly, north Vietnam should be furnished with whatever it needs in the way of technicians and anti-aircraft power to make their country into what Fidel Castro calls a "graveyard for American planes."

Thirdly, a calculated "counter-escalation" should be initiated to match, step by step, the continued escalation of the war by the American government. Johnson's present policy of continued escalation is a probing action and is possible due to the absence of serious resistance from the Soviet Union and China. If each time the United States took a new step in escalating the war, the Soviet Union were to respond with an action of similar weight, it would remove the question mark that now exists over how far the U.S. can go before the Kremlin will act.

Fourth, the Soviet regime should consider the defense of the Vietnamese revolution as its foremost task and initiate a campaign around the world to organize as large an antiwar movement as possible. This would substantially strengthen movements in other countries as well as involve millions of trade unionists in countries like Italy and France where there exist mass Communist parties.

The Chinese regime has also carried out a narrow and ineffective campaign against the aggression in Vietnam. They maintain the sectarian policy of refusing to join in a united front in defense of Vietnam with countries and parties who do not line up against Soviet "revisionism." One of the consequences of this policy is to leave unchallenged Moscow's assertion that it supports a united front. By agreeing to join a united front the Chinese leaders could expose the hypocrisy of the Kremlin's assertion as well as put pressure on them to defend the Vietnamese revolution north and south, and China itself.

The brutality of U.S. aggression in Vietnam on the one hand and the failure of both Peking and Moscow to formulate a truly internationalist perspective on the other hand has generated currents of dissent and independence both inside and outside the Communist parties of the world.

Cuba and north Korea have published a join communique calling for a united front defense of Vietnam and there are indications that there is growing pressure, especially among young people, in Eastern Europe for a more aggressive campaign against the war. For example, nearly 10,000 Yugoslav students recently demonstrated against U.S. bombing attacks on north Vietnamese civilians. The use of tear gas and water hoses by police to break up the demonstrations can only serve to widen the cleavage between the youthful antiwar fighters and the Yugoslav regime.

The outspoken positions of Jean Paul Sartre and Bertrand Russell, which implicitly differ fundamentally with those of

Moscow, has led to a debate within the radical circles of Europe. The International War Crimes Tribunal with which both of these men are associated has attracted considerable attention in Europe and is putting pressure on the Communist parties both in Western Europe and in the workers' states.

This differentiation from the Moscow and Peking lines was also manifested at Liege, Belgium, in October when nearly 4,000 socialist and communist youth from all over Europe came to express their solidarity with the Vietnamese. Many of these youth came despite the violent opposition of the Communist party leaderships in their countries, and some were expelled from Communist party youth groups for participating.

This demonstration is a good example of the general growth and development of the opposition to the Vietnam war among young people in Western Europe -- an opposition that at this point surpasses the antiwar opposition in Eastern Europe. This can be seen in the formation and growth of the French Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Youth). The J.C.R. is a communist youth group formed after the leadership of the Communist party expelled a number of CP youth for their refusal to support capitalist candidates and which is leading an aggressive campaign against the Vietnam war.

With the exception of Japan where the Socialist party has been actively involved in the anti-Vietnam war movement, the social-democrats have made a miserable showing against the war. They either support the war outright as does the Labor party leadership in England or remain aloof from the organized movement criticizing it for its position of immediate withdrawal and its non-exclusionist policies as does the Socialist party in this country.

The world Trotskyist movement with its consistently internationalist approach has on a world scale been the foremost defender of the Vietnamese revolution and the most persistent campaigner against the war. We have helped to move the rank and file of the communist and social-democratic organizations because of our position against the war. An open confrontation between our ideas and those of these organizations has won valuable forces to revolutionary socialism.

The tactics of each national antiwar movement varies according to the level of political development. For example, in Japan where the labor movement is actively behind the antiwar struggle, the tactics employed differ from this country where the trade union movement is not yet involved and the political level is lower. Our orientation here is toward building a mass movement to bring the troops home now which is the best defense and display of solidarity we can offer the Vietnamese people.

II. SITUATION IN AMERICAN ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

Accomplishments

The antiwar movement in the United States emerged two years ago as a reaction against the bombing attacks on north Vietnam. Since then the movement has grown considerably and gone through numerous experiences.

The antiwar movement should be viewed within the general objective framework marked by the Negro struggle, divisions within the ruling class, rising prices, economic problems facing American capitalism, and new stirrings in the labor movement.

Many people in the movement underestimate what the anti-Vietnam war movement has accomplished and it's our responsibility to present a clear picture of this.

First, the antiwar movement has helped to prevent the re-establishment of wartime hysteria and to roll back most of the witch hunt atmosphere that existed in the 1950's and even into the early 1960's. This is demonstrated by the wide acceptance of non-exclusionism, and the outspoken attitude of some university professors. In addition the movement has undermined the legitimacy of the anti-communist myth created and fostered by the ruling class, has set a precedent for opposition to and questioning of government policy, and has helped shake public confidence in the government. As this process continues, it becomes progressively more difficult for the Administration to clamp down on any protest movement.

Secondly, it has been the principal catalyst in generating the significant current radicalization in this country.

Thirdly, the antiwar movement in the United States is an important stimulant for creating antiwar movements in other countries. To have a large and militant antiwar movement in the United States, which has for so long been viewed abroad as a homogeneous mass of reaction, has been a genuine inspiration.

Fourthly, the organized antiwar movement, despite its small size relative to the general population, has had an impact far greater than most of its participants realize. Its visibility and the scope of its activities has forced millions of Americans to note that an organized opposition to the war does exist. This has helped stir up doubts and questioning about the war among millions of people. The movement also serves to articulate and furnish clarity to the masses of people who have vague doubts and feelings about the war. Leaflets, pamphlets, books, speeches, etc. that tell the truth about the war find their way into the hands of thousands of people.

The grass roots effect of the war and the antiwar movement

is manifested by the fact that the militant wing of the Negro struggle is playing a more and more active role in the opposition to the war. It is also indicated by numerous individual G.I.'s who are defying the war in one way or another. Many of them have received literature from or heard about the antiwar movement.

Most important are the effects that the antiwar movement is having on the labor movement. SANE's creation of a trade union division which brought 6,000 people to the Madison Square Garden rally in New York, is a conscious attempt to open avenues to and create a dialogue with the labor movement.

The Chicago trade unionists conference for peace in Vietnam held in December, where close to 300 mid-western trade union officials and activists came together to talk about the war, is symptomatic of the discussion that the antiwar movement is helping to stimulate within the labor movement.

Most significant is the conflict that is developing between Walter Reuther and George Meany -- a conflict that has made possible the expression of antiwar views in the unions. This rift reflects in a distorted way the influence of the antiwar movement and the war on the ranks of labor, and is an indication that the militant, organized antiwar opposition provides elbow room for trade unionists who are cautiously taking the first steps toward open activity against the war.

Fifth, emerging at the beginning of the war and continuing to grow as the war grows larger, the organized antiwar movement has been able to sustain and prepare itself to take advantage of openings in the labor movement and collaborate with the militant wing of the Negro struggle. The fight in the antiwar movement, as a movement, to maintain its independence from class collaborationist politics has been decisive for its sustained existence and continuous growth. The failure of the movement to maintain this independence would have in all probability meant its absorption into Democratic party politics, losing its effectiveness and the possibility of reaching broader layers of the population.

Sixth, the organized antiwar movement has been a testing ground for the various currents of the socialist movement. From our point of view, it has been an opportunity to test our principled positions and our strategy to advance and build the antiwar movement. At the same time it has provided opportunities for advancing the program of revolutionary socialism and winning new members. On both of these scores we have fared well.

Our major opponents in the antiwar movement, the W.E.B. DuBois Club and the Communist party youth, have not been involved in the movement as long as we have and are not as integrated into it. However, their participation in the Chicago student conference is an indication that they do not

intend to ignore it. They are becoming more involved in the movement now in the hopes that they can help channel it into liberal capitalist politics as the 1968 elections draw near.

The sectarian groups -- Spartacist League and the Workers League (formerly American Committee for the Fourth International)--- are for all practical purposes not involved in the antiwar movement.

Youth Against War and Fascism, in the few places that they exist, participate to a limited extent in the organized antiwar movement, but their small size and sectarian politics prevents them from carrying any influence.

The Progressive Labor party, although somewhat larger than these groups, participates in the organized movement only in a few areas, primarily through S.D.S.

Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.), nationally, has remained relatively aloof from the organized antiwar movement since their April, 1965 March on Washington. This was objectively a result of a shift to the right in S.D.S. away from direct political confrontation with the Administration at its most sensitive point. Now, however, there is a discussion going on within S.D.S. about their orientation toward the national antiwar movement and the Spring mobilization. We should participate in this discussion and with our arguments strengthen the tendency that is pushing for greater involvement. We should encourage them to join with us and other youth groups in united front activity whenever it is possible.

The pacifists have split on the question of the Vietnam war with the right wing taking their traditional "plague on both your houses" line, and the left wing sympathetic to the liberation struggle. The position of the left wing pacifists is an unprecedented one for pacifism, at least in the midst of a war, and has laid the basis for fruitful united front work with them. They have played an important role in the life of the antiwar movement and in the formation of the November 8th and Spring mobilization committees.

The Future of the Movement

First of all, every day the war continues the working class feels the effects more and more deeply. These effects take the form of a rise in the cost of living, cutbacks in public spending, rising taxes, Johnson's attempt to freeze wages, and the threat of imposing more antilabor legislation. The consequences of the war are also brought home by the increasing shipment of relatives and friends to Vietnam and the rising rate of casualties. These war-imposed conditions are beginning to generate a resistance within the ranks of labor which may grow into something much larger. The transit strike in New York, the airline mechanics strike and the electrical workers strike are all symptoms of this mood.

The rift between Walter Reuther and George Meany is also a distorted reflection of ferment in the labor movement and will itself stimulate more motion. It is significant that the Vietnam war is raised as a result of this conflict just as it was the issue that brought over 300 trade unionists together in Chicago in December. This conference was the first time in years trade union officials came together to discuss a major political issue and how they could encourage similar discussions within their unions.

The workers in the draftee army are also feeling the impact of the war. There is a deep going cynicism felt by most American soldiers and a number of them even refuse to go along with military policy.

These openings in the political situation come at a time when the organized antiwar movement has called a major mobilization on April 15 in San Francisco and New York. This mobilization has the opportunity not only to draw in a broader cross section of the population than ever before--including some sections of the labor movement--but more important to affect significantly the political situation in this country. Previous national mobilizations have been extremely important for sustaining the movement by providing focal points of activity or by getting it through rough periods like the November elections. However, the Spring mobilization as it is currently envisioned is more than a focal point or a sustaining action. If the mobilization is anywhere near successful in inspiring a March on Washington-type-of-spirit and in concentrating a large number of people in two cities, the impact will be both visible and significant enough to help stimulate broader sections of the population into more open opposition against the war.

The Spring mobilization, within the framework of the changes that are developing in the objective situation especially in the labor movement, has the potential of bringing new forces into organized and visible antiwar activity that can qualitatively alter the character and scope of the antiwar movement in this country.

The basic contradiction that faces the antiwar movement in this country is that there does not exist a radicalized working class or mass working class political organizations for it to support. As a middle class movement it is limited by its size, by its inability to develop its own independent political alternative, and by the pessimism resulting from the inaction of the working class. The middle class composition and characteristics of the movement are also in contradiction to the generally independent and anti-imperialist direction of the movement as a whole.

As the political tendency which expresses the working class outlook in the antiwar movement we are in constant political conflict with the middle class currents in the

in the movement as well as its middle class character. This can be demonstrated by examining the major disputes in which we are continually engaged.

Electoral Action

As the movement is presently constituted we are absolutely opposed to it taking up, as a movement, electoral politics. As a middle class movement in the absence of any working class political formations such as a labor party or mass socialist party, it views electoral politics within the framework of capitalist politics. It sees its role as that of a pressure group within the framework of either of the existing major parties. At best it might project a Wallace-type third party--which is not a break with capitalist politics. As a working class tendency which does everything in its power to point the way away from capitalist politics and toward independent labor political action, we must fight these attempts to divert the antiwar movement into capitalist politics.

We should urge individuals from the movement to support our socialist campaigns which are independent of liberal or reformist gimmickry like the Committee for Independent Political Action (C.I.P.A.) campaigns, etc. and point the way toward independent working class electoral action.

The 1966 elections were not marked by a large movement in support of "peace candidates." However, ~~the discussion has~~ already begun, around the 1968 elections, about the possibility of a third party or a pressure movement for Robert Kennedy or some other liberal Democratic contender. We must arm ourselves against these proposals and participate vigorously with our ideas in the debate that will increase with intensity as the nominating conventions draw nearer.

"Multi-issue" vs "Single-issue"

Like most of the disputes in the antiwar movement such as the fight for non-exclusion and for immediate withdrawal of troops, the question of "multi-issuism" will continually come up in some form or another.

The dichotomy between the "multi-issue" and "single-issue" orientations for the antiwar movement is often a smokescreen created by reformists without a political organization of their own who want to create such an organization; or even more common it is an attempt by some elements to form reformist pressure groups that will divert the movement into Democratic party politics. Those who attempt to get the antiwar movement to adopt a program of social reform are objectively building a bridge to reformist electoral politics. In other words they are pointing away from, not toward, independent working class political action in the broadest sense.

However, the connections between the antiwar opposition

and genuine struggles by the working class and Negroes against inflation, higher taxes, antilabor legislation, racism, etc. are something qualitatively different from the attempt to turn the movement and its organizations into a middle class based reform movement. The Vietnam war cuts deep politically, raising many fundamental questions about our society, about imperialism and the state--questions that have not been posed as profoundly since the labor struggles in the 1930's and 1940's. It is natural that as the various class and minority struggles increase they will gravitate towards the deepest and most fundamental question in American politics today--and we should do everything possible to encourage this.

It is natural that many new radicals in the antiwar movement would like to see the movement fundamentally change society. Its inability to do this will lead many of these youth into reformist politics and some to revolutionary socialism.

Some proponents of a "multi-issue" orientation for the movement are also strong opponents of mass demonstrations. They would have the movement blunt the sharp and direct confrontation with Johnson's imperialist policies through massive mobilizations. These direct confrontations with the Administration remain the most important common denominator for mobilizing the most people against the war and for building the movement.

The Draft

The class divisions within the antiwar movement are also evident on the question of the draft. We view seriously the possibility of building the antiwar movement into a mass movement and therefore determine our tactics on the draft according to their effectiveness in mobilizing the working class.

The capitalist draft is the means by which the ruling class obtains the men they need to fight their wars against the rising colonial revolution and the workers' states. It is part and parcel of America's imperialist foreign policy and consequently we are opposed to it and call for its abolition.

Our disagreement with many middle class students and radicals on this question lies in our view that a campaign against the draft or to reform the draft is not an effective way of building a movement to end the war. The two major approaches suggested by those who want to wage a campaign against the draft are; 1) individual acts of civil disobedience against the draft and 2) lobbying liberal congressmen to reform or abolish the draft.

The first approach might be considered if it would generate a mass movement that would not go along with the draft. However, a few isolated acts of conscience against the draft,

no matter how sincerely motivated are ineffective in mobilizing mass support against the war. The working class will not go along with a proposal that means stiff jail sentences and connotes cowardice and draft-dodging.

The second approach is merely a means of trying to divert the movement into the familiar groove of "pressure politics" on liberal capitalist politicians. We cannot go along with any proposal that would sacrifice the movement's present anti-imperialist thrust in order to link it up with capitalist politics regardless of the label.

The radicals and students who push for an antidraft campaign feel the limitations of a middle class movement and are searching for ways to overcome this relative sense of powerlessness. A campaign against the draft however, does not open an avenue of effective action. The best approach is to build a "bring the troops home now" movement that can take advantage of the openings that are developing in the labor movement. This is the road toward creating a mass movement that will help to end the Vietnam war and strike a blow against all forms of American militarism including the draft.

Although an antidraft campaign is not an effective way of building a mass movement against the Vietnam war we should make our opposition to the draft clear and explain the origins and purpose of it. Furthermore, we should be a part of campus activities that oppose university complicity with the draft. University complicity with the draft as well as all other aspects of the war is a reflection of the subservient role played by universities and colleges in the interests of American imperialism. The draft issue can be an important bridge for bringing people into the antiwar and radical movements.

We are also opposed to the racism and class prejudice, products of capitalist society, which are reflected in the Selective Service System. The II-S student deferment is an example of how the wealthier, more privileged strata of youth who are able to attend college are deferred from military service while working class and Negro youth must go and fight. Although there are no reforms that can improve the draft, the purposes of which are reactionary, we unconditionally oppose II-S as a blatant form of racial and class prejudice.

The number of black draftees and casualties for the war are much higher proportionately than those for the rest of the population. Bitterness against this is recorded in the militant stands taken by many Negro organizations and leaders against the draft. When Stokely Carmichael of SNCC urges Negroes to say "hell no" to their draft boards he is expressing a sentiment that exists widely in the ghetto. It also indicates a searching for solutions that will get Negroes out of this racist war and if individual acts of defiance won't

do it other methods will be tried until the most effective are found.

G.I.'s

The question of how the antiwar movement should view the G.I.'s is also a class question. There is a tendency for some students and radicals to look at G.I.'s as mercenaries. The fact is that G.I.'s are for the most part working class youth who have been conscripted into an armed force that does not serve their interests.

From the point of view of the ruling class, a conscript army primarily composed of workers is the least reliable kind of army. The soldiers are that segment of the population who are the most directly affected by the war. The rising rate of casualties, the brutal butchery of Vietnamese civilians and the unpopularity of the war at home are all factors that affect the attitudes of the G.I.

It is very important that the antiwar movement view soldiers as an important part of the population with whom to discuss the facts of the war. In order to have effective communication between the antiwar movement and G.I.'s it is necessary that the movement develop the kind of image that is attractive to G.I.'s. An image of draft card burning, draft dodging, ineffective acts of individual martyrdom, and pacifism is alienating to soldiers.

The most significant aspect of the Fort Hood Three case has been the effect it has had in convincing more sections of the antiwar movement to view G.I.'s as legitimate and receptive recipients of the truth about the war. The fact that the Fort Hood Three are soldiers has made G.I.'s more receptive to the facts about the war and their rights as soldiers.

We defend the constitutional right of all soldiers as citizens to express their views on the Vietnam war. We defend the right of soldiers to receive, read, and discuss materials and information about the war and conversely the right of civilians to distribute and discuss facts about the war with G.I.'s. We sharply oppose any abridgements of these constitutional rights.

Campus Complicity

The campus has been and still remains the central source of activists for the organized antiwar movement. The fresh new forces that continually flow into the movement from the campus are not only the dynamo but the vanguard of the movement.

The campus antiwar movement developed as part of a general student radicalization loosely referred to as the "student movement." This radicalization is a reaction to the

stifling and paternalistic authority of university administrations and has been stimulated by the Negro struggle and the colonial revolution. Students object to tuition hikes, infringements of student organizations, restraints on social life, use of university facilities for military recruiters, compliance of the university with the draft and the war, and general lack of student participation in university policy. These are all struggles against a university system that reflects and serves the needs of American capitalism.

Most of these campus struggles can be linked up in some way with the Vietnam war and the natural tendency for students that begin to move against their college administrations on one or another issue is to gravitate towards the nation's central political question--the Vietnam war.

S.D.S. has been extensively involved in and is looked to as a leader of this student movement but its turn away from antiwar activity after the April 17, 1965 March on Washington has seriously curtailed the potential strength of the campus antiwar movement. We have the responsibility as YSAers and antiwar fighters of identifying ourselves with and becoming a part of the student movement while convincing more students to become actively involved in the fight against the war.

Organizational Aspects of the Movement

For the past two years the main organizational unit of the movement has been the non-exclusive, single issue committees to end the war in Vietnam. We have been the main political force involved in these committees and consequently are a part of the leadership in many of them. Although these formations have been organized both on campuses and in neighborhoods, the campus committees, despite their ups and downs, have been the most viable. As long as the antiwar movement continues to grow, we can expect fresh new layers of students to periodically flow into the independent committees.

The continued existence of the committees, with their single-issue basis reflects the objective need for the kind of organization that brings together people who want to work actively against the war but do not yet want to commit themselves to one or another radical organization. As a result of their activity in these committees many young people radicalize further and do decide to join a political organization. It is from this layer that the YSA has received the overwhelming majority of its new members in the past year.

In addition, there is no contradiction whatsoever between the independent committees and united fronts. On the contrary the participation of independent committees in united fronts enhances both formations. The independent committees add militancy and dynamism to and provide forces for the united front formations while united fronts broaden the possibilities of action for the independent committees and gives a meaningful arena of antiwar activity to every YSAer.

The other major organizational form is the more complex and unstable city-wide united front committees such as the New York Parade Committee, which includes such diverse forces as SANE, pacifists, Communists, socialists, etc. In some cities these united fronts come together only to organize the major national mobilizations whereas in others they are also on-going centers for city antiwar work.

One of the major political problems of the antiwar movement has been the vacuum created by the absence of a national organization or center with authority. The N.C.C. which emerged in the summer and fall of 1965 might have become such a center. However, this was prevented by its negotiations position and its failure to become a genuine united front. At the November, 1965 N.C.C. convention we politically opposed the ineffective and unprincipled line of the N.C.C. and supported the formation of the Bring the Troops Home Now Newsletter which counterposed the line of immediate withdrawal. By the time of the November 8th mobilization most of the movement accepted the line of immediate withdrawal, the November 8th Mobilization Committee was established, and the Newsletter had gained wide circulation and was drawing militant activists closer to its outlook.

The formation of the November 8th Mobilization Committee and later the Spring Mobilization Committee are hopeful signs pointing toward the establishment of a national center. The Spring Mobilization Committee is a very broad united front which is attempting to broaden out even further. It does not, however, solve the problem of creating national coordination for the militant, campus-based wing of the movement.

The biggest step along this line was made at the Chicago Student Conference in December where united front coordination of youth organizations operating out of the Spring Mobilization Committee office was agreed upon for the April 15 mobilization. What exactly will come of this remains to be seen, but it is a promising step. It provides an opportunity for taking the united front approach directly onto the campus for the Spring mobilization, where we can have discussions with members of the DuBois Club and S.D.S.

With the formation of the Student Mobilization Committee, the opportunity projected by the Newsletter for so long of building a broad, militant campus-based national formation is much closer to reality. The N.C.C. did not play any role in the formation of the Student Mobilization Committee and even the future existence of the N.C.C. is in question.

United Front

The united front has been one of the most important forms of struggle for the antiwar movement. It has involved the CP in formations and actions with other currents with which it would previously have nothing to do. This has been a very

fruitful and educational experience for all concerned. Besides strengthening the antiwar movement, it has made it much easier to spread and popularize the program of revolutionary socialism.

YSA

The YSA participates in the antiwar movement on three levels--the first two levels are in the independent committees and the broad united front formations. The third level is our role as socialists.

As a result of our active participation as builders and militants in the antiwar movement since its beginning we are more and more identified as the socialist wing of the antiwar movement. We have never made any attempt to have "secret" members and our members who are antiwar leaders are also known as YSAers. Our press has played an effective role in bringing socialist views into the antiwar movement and in the last two years we printed and sold about 24,000 pamphlets on the Vietnam war. This should be viewed as an integral part of our antiwar work.

The united fronts where the YSA participates as an organization in its own name has made every YSAer, including those who are not in antiwar committees, members of the antiwar movement. As avowed socialists and members of the YSA we can speak and write for the antiwar movement in our own name.

Not only are we the socialist wing of the antiwar movement in this country but we are part of the international socialist wing of the opposition against the war. In this role we have worked shoulder to shoulder with antiwar fighters from Canada and Western Europe and have been in the vanguard of trying to internationalize the American movement.

As a result of our participation in the antiwar movement our program of revolutionary socialism has become one of the major currents within the radical movement as a whole. This is reflected in the continuous growth of the YSA.

Tasks

This general political evaluation dictates the tasks the YSA will be carrying out in the next period. It is in no way a list of detailed activities that locals should undertake. Whether locals organize teach-ins, campus war crimes tribunals, student strikes, campaigns against CIA recruiters, etc. are decisions that are up to local evaluation based on an assessment of the needs and possibilities on the specific campuses and in the area. What may be perfect for one area to implement our general tasks may be out of the question in another area.

The general tasks are:

- 1) Campaign to build the April 15th Spring Mobilization;
- 2) Continue to propagandize for and educate the antiwar movement to the program of immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam;
- 3) Continue to fight for non-exclusion in the antiwar movement;
- 4) Become involved in the struggle against campus complicity with the war;
- 5) Continue to fight to keep the antiwar movement out of capitalist electoral politics and to prevent it from being converted into a multi-issue reformist movement while encouraging all connections between genuine class and minority struggles and the antiwar movement;
- 6) Continue to work in and build the independent antiwar committees and the united fronts and encourage these formations to reach out to new segments of the population;
- 7) Continue to take advantage of openings in the labor movement and the Negro struggle;
- 8) Take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities for socialist propaganda work and increase the activities that we carry out in our own name in order to more clearly establish ourselves as the socialist wing of the antiwar movement.

January 1967

MINORITY ANTIWAR RESOLUTION

Submitted by: Eloise Meseke, John Barzman, Linda Sherrill,
and Stephan Chase.

I. THE NATURE OF THE NEC DRAFT OF THE ANTIWAR RESOLUTION

The NEC draft of the antiwar resolution is both superficial and inadequate and lacks any serious analysis of the events and turns in the past year, or of the role played by our opponents. The resolution does not define any of the problems which will be confronting our movement in our work with the pacifists, liberals, Stalinists, and the radicalizing youth.

It also fails to define our attitude towards various parties and formations in the antiwar movement or to provide us with a direction in which to proceed. It is marked by a lack of clarity, especially in sections dealing with the organizational aspects of the movement and the United Front in particular. It stresses the importance of building the movement by operating within United Fronts, but sets down no guidelines for our functioning in such formations.

We must have a resolution which sets down a clear line of demarcation between the programs of the reformists and that of the revolutionaries for the antiwar movement, and their respective approaches to a United Front. Both these formations and the role of our opponents in them must be subjected to a critical analysis to guide our national antiwar fraction and to prevent the accomodation and tailending which has marked our past intervention.

II. THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

It is necessary here to review the course of events since our intervention in the Thanksgiving Convention in Washington, D.C. The 1966 convention resolution analysed this period and stressed the crucial role that the YSA played both organizationally and politically in raising the consciousness of the antiwar movement. Our task was set forth: "The primitive political level of the majority of the antiwar activists means that the political basis of most disputes is often muddled and unclear. This means that we must be diligent in fereting out the political foundations of every debate and explaining it as precisely as possible."

This was the role which we played in the Thanksgiving Convention. We explained that the dispute taking place was based on the key question of withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam, and we exposed the unprincipled position which our opponents took for negotiations. A clear perspective was laid out for the formation of a left wing around the BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW NEWSLETTER to build a militant, independent antiwar movement around the slogan of withdrawal. The Newsletter was launched at a time when every major opponent

attacked us on this question and the question of the role of the independent committees to end the war.

In a YSA report on the Thanksgiving Conference, written by Kipp Dawson, the role of the political tendencies was clearly analyzed. To paraphrase and quote:

The attitudes of the Communist Party and the DuBois Clubs" . . . on the antiwar movement stem from their general line of coalition politics. They want to see the movement remain 'broad,' that is, within liberal politics and under their domination . . . where the more advanced sectors keep quiet and completely subordinate their politics to the liberal program dictated by the right wing of the movement. They abandon the historical task of politicizing the movement for the sake of unity . . ." They fear the growth of a large independent wing which they cannot channel into support of the Democratic Party in order to carry out their line of peaceful co-existence with American Imperialism.

Further:

We saw the development of the independent committees" . . . not as a threat to the unity of the peace movement, but as a developing vanguard of the movement against the US imperialist war on the Vietnamese. We worked against attempts to channel the militants into the stagnant peace and liberal groups We supported the idea of coordinated activity among all the elements of the movement, but not at the expense of the political development of the antiwar movement and of its most advanced sectors."

All debates and events, whether at the conference or since then, are based on the opposing views of negotiations vs. immediate withdrawal.

The "radical" pacifists who are sympathetic to the liberation struggles play the role of fence sitters and mediators, but at every critical turn line up with their fellow reformists on the crucial dispute over withdrawal as a central demand, as Muste has done time after time.

Correctly analyzing SDS, Kipp reported:

The role that SDS played at that conference ". . . brought into question the weight of the New Left as a major political force. What actually happened was that they, together with the rest of the New Left, got caught in the middle of the fight over crucial issues which the antiwar movement faces and found that they had nothing to contribute and sat back confused."

It is important to realize that since the time of the Washington Conference, these other tendencies have continued to

play the same roles and have grouped and regrouped themselves against us along the same two major political disputes -- i.e., WITHDRAWAL vs. NEGOTIATIONS, and REFORMISM vs. INDEPENDENT ANTI-IMPERIALIST STAND.

III. MARCH DAYS OF PROTEST

The Washington convention authorized the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam to act as a national coordinating center and to call the March International Days of Protest. While the NCC held national authority at this time, our comrades were in a key position because of the strategic role we held in the independent sector of the movement gained by our correct analysis and intervention in the CEWV's. We played a major role in setting up the city-wide coordinating committees formed to organize the Days of Protest.

In the period following the Washington convention we had educated and strengthened the independent committees which were the base of support for the March Days. Even though withdrawal was still not acceptable to all the forces involved, the slogan dominated the signs on the marches. The March Days of Protest marked the high point of the independent thrust of the antiwar movement, the weight of the CEWV's, and our influence through them.

IV. SPRING, 1966

After March, the Buddhist demonstrations strengthened our position for withdrawal and exposed the position for negotiations and many more forces were won over. The Newsletter had helped prepare for this development but failed to become the official organ speaking for the whole withdrawal section, as we had hoped it would. Due to the influence of the Stalinists, the NCC became more and more a section of the antiwar movement politically supporting peace candidates and community organizing. With such an orientation, it proved unable to coordinate antiwar opposition and declined organizationally.

V. SUMMER, 1966

The antiwar movement then entered the crucial period of the summer months. The NCC had not become a national coordinating committee and the YSA was forced to realize that our perspective of building the Newsletter caucus into a national organization of the CEWV's had not materialized. In fact the base of support for such a development had begun to dwindle due to a sense of frustration and demoralization among the independents who felt that the demonstrations had failed.

This was shown most clearly by the dispute within the Vietnam Day Committee over the Scheer campaign, which split the most dynamic independent committee on the issue of peace

politics. The split over peace politics and community organizing vs. demonstrations occurred on a national scale and represented a continuation of the original conflict over orientation at the Washington convention. By calling the August 6-8 demonstration we hoped to find some activity to occupy the activists, to divert attention from the peace campaigns. But this demonstration became our sole answer as a radical alternative.

As revolutionary socialists the last thing we want to do is to divert attention from the key questions confronting the antiwar movement. The Newsletter contained an article in May raising the question of peace candidates, but since then contained not a word publicizing or exposing peace candidates-- not even on the minimal basis of their antiwar platforms being for or against immediate withdrawal. Why not? Because now we were to use the Newsletter to form an alliance with A.J. Muste, who ran the New York Peace Parade Committee. And A.J. Muste supported peace candidates. We chose an alliance with Muste over and above our political task of educating the movement and winning over the followers of the reformists to our program of immediate withdrawal. The Newsletter, the "voice of the CEWV's," should have taken up the question of peace candidates and related it to the question of withdrawal.

The inevitable disagreements around reformist politics and the political direction for the antiwar movement were carried into the Peace Parade Committee when our opponents called a conference in June to reverse the decision, which we had fought for and won, to call the August Days of Protest under the slogan "Bring the Troops Home Now." A few days prior to the June conference, the case of the Fort Hood Three had broken and the three servicemen came to the parade committee for help. They were invited to the conference and spoke there.

VI. THE FORT HOOD THREE -- "AN EXCELLENT TRADE"

If the Fort Hood Three case was to be a major turn in our antiwar work (as we were told it was to be), there should have been a change in the objective situation to warrant such a turn. If there was not such a change, there must have been another reason for the turn -- and a careful study of the case reveals that there was. The only written report sent out by the leadership on the nature of the Fort Hood Three case and our orientation to it was a "confidential memorandum" sent to organizers and NC'ers only. It should be read to fully appreciate how and why we should have made the major turn to the troops on June 30.

As already stated, there was a threatened split within the Peace Parade Committee and it is apparent that our fraction would have been in a minority if the disagreements had come to a head. The Fort Hood Three case, however, saved the day.

Throughout the development of the "major turn," our leader-

ship showed themselves to either be so apolitical as to base our antiwar work on illusions, or else they consciously miseducated the membership.

The first illusion created and doled out to both the antiwar movement and our comrades is that the Fort Hood Three are typical G.I.'s, three young conscripts who don't want to go to Vietnam. The fact is, however, that the Fort Hood Three are completely atypical. Among them is Dennis Mora, a member of the DuBois Club, whose father fought in Spain. This is unusual, not typical. Their chief attorney is Stanley Faulkner, the Stalinist, and long before June 30th they had approached the Stalinist NCC and the DuBois Club (Stalinist) Convention to solicit support. This also must be considered atypical. Our last clue came when they supported Herbert Aptheker and only Herbert Aptheker in the November elections. Already the glitter of this case, as a vehicle for reaching the troops, shows itself to be other than gold.

It is one thing to omit certain details from our public press, but quite another to delude ourselves. This was billed as a major turn of the antiwar movement -- a method of reaching the troops -- of establishing "a dialogue" with the soldiers, "an answer to all the frustrations." Previously there had been no discussion in our movement of a turn to the G.I.'s, but suddenly this case became the basis for a major political turn "within our movement and the antiwar movement." There had been no corresponding change in the political consciousness of the troops. We had always maintained that turning petty-bourgeois elements to the working class before a real radicalization had occurred would not tend to alleviate their frustrations but only increase them. There is nothing wrong with leafletting G.I.'s or any other section of the population if we do it on a correct basis, but there was no justification for a major turn in our orientation at this time.

Due to our efforts, a defense committee was set up led by A.J. Muste and Staughton Lynd. And the slogans "Defend the G.I.'s right not to go to Vietnam" and "Free Speech for G.I.'s" were popularized. Logically, the dominant slogan of the case became "Defend the G.I.'s Right Not to Go to Vietnam." This was a civil liberties case to begin with, one that we should obviously support within the organized antiwar movement. But because a "we won't go" position is inherent in the slogan "Defend the G.I.'s right not to go to Vietnam", we should not have pushed this case as a major turn to the troops.

Because we seized on this case as it was, and pushed it, we did not go to the troops as a Bring the Troops Home Now movement, or even the Bring the Troops Home Now section of the movement. We went with all our opponents organized in the catch-all Parade Committee on a case with a "we won't go" position. The reason that we could not approach the troops with our slogan was that we had traded it in a maneuver in the Parade Committee for unity around the Fort Hood Three.

As the confidential memo states:

"The unity appears not only around supporting the three G.I.'s, but around all the other activities in connection with August 6. We had previously anticipated -- and there could have been -- serious arguments at various points over many questions. These arguments have not occurred on some questions because we specifically chose not to fight on them. Precisely because we considered the case of the G.I.'s and the turn it made possible for the movement to be of such transcendent character that our tactics required a little adjustment."

"For example, the slogan 'Bring the Troops Home Now' was supposed to be the major theme of August 6. We have ended up with that slogan as one of nine. However, on the call leaflet it says in the most prominent place: 'In solidarity with American youth, G.I.'s and those facing the draft, who do not want to be involved in this immoral war.' We consider that an excellent trade. An excellent trade."

An excellent trade. Political clarity, then was subordinated to "unity." That is the meaning of the Fort Hood Three case -- a maneuver, "an excellent trade."

Our leadership was influenced by the frustrations of the petty-bourgeois movement and saw in the case a gimmick which could overcome the frustrations and the differences. They were so carried away by their impressions and wishful thinking that they began to believe their own illusions. They misdirected our cadre from our central task of building a Bring the Troops Home Now movement as the only way to reach the troops, and instead proclaimed that "we raised the level of the antiwar movement" to the point where it was ready to accept this great case.

The events in the Defense Committee followed a logical development given the nature of the Fort Hood Three case. The Stalinists had wanted nothing to do with the case until we seized upon it and made it a big issue. When they saw that they could get something out of it, they moved to take over the committee and Muste quite naturally complied, appointing Carl Griffler -- the Stalinist -- as its chief administrator. As both Muste and the Stalinists agreed on their approach to the draft question, they proceeded to turn the defense committee into a means to promote antidraft activities following the logic of the "Defend the G.I.'s Right Not to Go to Vietnam" slogan. The "G.I.'s," of course, being pro-Stalinist, did not object.

This case -- our major turn in the antiwar movement -- was then dropped like a hot potato, by our press and by our antiwar fraction. Our leadership had been out-maneuvered by the master maneuverers.

VII. THE NEWSLETTER

The evolution of the Newsletter offers more evidence of adaptation to the petty-bourgeois antiwar movement. From an organ of a caucus within the NCC with the anti-imperialist line for the antiwar movement, the Newsletter evolved into an organ of the Peace Parade Committee, showing Muste just how "cooperative" we could be, so cooperative, as stated before, that we did not write in the Newsletter any programmatic disagreements with him.

The Newsletter was supposed to be our major propaganda organ in the antiwar movement, clarifying issues and educating activists. While it is true that a national organization based on withdrawal had not materialized, the Newsletter should have carried an independent line against imperialism, stressing the need for a movement based on immediate withdrawal -- the perspective set down at our last convention.

If this perspective was no longer correct, the leadership should have reported why not, and what a new perspective should be. However, there have been no reports and the Newsletter subsequently evolved into an organ for the Fort Hood Three, at which time it subordinated propaganda for withdrawal to carry the line of our new "major turn." The line soon became, as stated above, "Defend the G.I.'s Right Not to Go to Vietnam."

Finally, still with no official reports, the Newsletter was suddenly dropped, after an acceleration of its apolitical course during the fall.

VIII. CLEVELAND CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER, 1966

During the summer a group of professors who had been involved in teach-ins held a conference on their own initiative in Cleveland. They decided that a large action was needed in the fall, that it should be organized on the basis of non-exclusion, and that they should call for withdrawal and self-determination.

A joint conference was called by this group and the New York Parade Committee for the fall. Using Muste's authority a number of peace groups were invited. The attendance was overwhelmingly comprised of the more liberal and conservative adult groups. The student wing was noticeably absent with our comrades comprising the bulk of the youth who attended.

By this time almost every major opponent had given lip service to the slogan of withdrawal. This position had been clearly adopted by the previous Cleveland conference on its own initiative. Yet our fraction did not even attempt to have this statement re-affirmed officially by this conference. The reason given was that the raising of the slogan question would be "divisive." This is the position that the Stalinists had used to attack our comrades for the fight we waged the previous fall. Not raising questions of political program always

strengthens the reformists. It is to their advantage alone and to our disadvantage to submerge political issues with the cry for "unity" -- in this case around a vague, muddle-headed, catch-all slogan or program such as "Sick of the War," which came out of the September Cleveland Conference.

The NEC saw the November Mobilization as a means ". . . for sustaining the movement by getting it through rough periods like the November elections." However, the November Mobilization was seen by the liberals as a vehicle through which to support peace candidates! Muste stated that one of the purposes of the Mobilizations was to support peace candidates or conduct write-in campaigns.

At the September Cleveland conference there were no large numbers of youth or independents to win away from the influence of our opponents. The relationship of forces was overwhelmingly against us; therefore, our tactics were quite correctly different from those in Washington, 1965, because there was nothing to be gained by pushing our differences to a fight. Nevertheless, we should have simply made the record clear on what our differences were on the question of community organizing, peace candidates, and the draft; and should have stated that since there could be no agreement on these issues that the only thing we could unite on is a call for a national demonstration. It is not important that we win the vote for our entire line at a conference of this nature, but that we set forward our program so that we can attack our opponents on political issues in our press. By merely raising a motion that the central slogan be "Bring the Troops Home Now" we would have exposed all those who would vote against it.

And this is the key to our opponents position on the question of withdrawal. They cannot argue with us on this position so they have to give verbal support to it. However, they have never agreed that Bring the Troops Home Now should be the central demand of any demonstration. They cannot agree to this because its adoption as the central demand will bring the antiwar movement to irreconcilable opposition to American imperialism and the bourgeois liberals who speak for it. This is the reason that the slogan "Sick of the War" was adopted by the steering committee. In the previous convention document it was clearly stated as one of our major tasks, "to articulate and explain why the antiwar movement should base itself on Vietnam's right to self-determination and immediate withdrawal of US troops; and to expose and fight all formulations and approaches that settle for less than this." However, this slogan "Sick of the War" was uncritically accepted by our movement and left us with no basis to clarify the role of our opponents or to differentiate ourselves from our opponents in the eyes of the more advanced sectors of the movement.

The Newsletter should have stepped up propaganda for immediate withdrawal. But it was used as a means of gaining "respectability" in the eyes of our "allies." We gained no

political advantage from the tours that our comrades went on in support of the Mobilization Committee. We were put in the position of doing the legwork for the Mobilization but gained nothing from the tours and our intervention but positions on the November 5-8 Mobilization staff.

Our opponents, however, were not so foolish. When Emspak toured for the November Mobilization Committee he used it as an opportunity to push the NCC line for the antiwar movement. We were the only ones who gave up anything, because we adapted ourselves to their slogans, and failed to differentiate ourselves for fear of losing our maneuverability within the upper circles of the "peace" movement.

IX. THANKSGIVING CLEVELAND CONFERENCE

At the Thanksgiving Cleveland Conference the composition was narrower than the first. The only ones present were the "politicals" and no attempt was made to draw in the youth or new layers. We wanted to get the conference to come out with a call for a spring action in April and since this orientation was not in conflict with the traditional idea of a spring peace march and peace campaigns, we had little trouble. Each group saw it to their own advantage. The conservatives wanted to bring in broader layers and turn it into a March-on-Washington type affair. According to the NEC document we had no differences on this question.

It was obvious that the CP decided to intervene in this formation to gain influence in the organized antiwar movement before that fall and the 1968 elections. Their hopes in the NCC had been smashed so they decided to try to get a stronger footing with the pacifists. The Fort Hood Three case had already facilitated their doing so. We again turned the choice of slogans over to the steering committee and the result was "End Mass Murder," a pacifist slogan. This is a far cry from Bring the Troops Home Now. Again, we uncritically accepted this slogan.

The CP really did not represent a change from their basic policy of channeling the movement into a "large, liberal peace movement which unites everyone opposed to the war around a minimal liberal program (in this case, pacifist)." Withdrawal is incorporated in the call but again is not the central demand. As the movement broadens to the right we can expect attempts to drop this demand. This direction has already appeared in Muste's backsliding into the negotiations position in the initial call he sent out.

X. STUDENT MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE

Before the November Conference in Cleveland the CP had decided that it could not circumvent the Mobilization Committee as it had hoped. It had initiated the call for the Student

Strike Conference in order to do this, but when it decided to intervene in the Mobilization Committee it changed its tactics for the Student Conference and went along with our proposals to tie it to the Spring Mobilization.

However, their reasons for entering the Student Mobilization Committee, which came out of the Chicago conference, are diametrically opposed to ours. The NEC draft states, "With the formation of the Student Mobilization Committee the opportunity projected by the Newsletter for so long of building a broad militant campus-based formation is close to reality." The draft then states, "They (CP) are becoming involved in the movement now in the hopes that they can help channel it into liberal capitalist politics as the 1968 elections draw near."

We want the Student Mobilization Committee to become a left wing based on withdrawal, yet the major "ally" in this coalition is using it as a vehicle to turn the movement over to the Democratic Party. This basic conflict makes the future development of this formation highly questionable. We should not develop any illusions about this temporary alliance with the Stalinists. If the Fort Hood Three is not enough, there are many other experiences to warn us to be on guard when the CP "cooperates" in an organization.

The only hope we have for the success of the Student Mobilization Committee is to try to strengthen the links which it provides with SDS so that it will include allies other than the CP. The only basis on which the Student Mobilization Committee can differentiate itself to attract left wing independents and SDSers is for it to represent the left wing of the youth fighting for withdrawal.

In reality this formation is not based on the demand for withdrawal. Again, as in the Spring Mobilization Committee, withdrawal is just one of the three demands which are subordinated to the central task of building the mobilization. There is no clear differentiation between it and the Spring Mobilization Committee except that it is younger. If it becomes a left-wing of the campus-based youth the CP will drop it when it comes time to prove their devotion to the bourgeois liberals in the elections.

XI. WHERE WE STAND

Our past intervention has been to uncritically support this alliance with the pacifists and the liberals. We have subordinated our long range goals for temporary positions and respectability. We have not made clear the differences between the reformists and ourselves. The differences must be made clear in order to build an anti-imperialist base free from control by the reformists, a base around which we can rally militant youth and any newly radicalizing layers. We should have recognized the change in the relationship of forces

which began to show itself toward the end of the summer. The emergence of the liberals and pacifists in the leadership at this point required that we differentiate ourselves on certain issues to build a left wing around us. Now that the more conservative forces have consolidated their position and have re-introduced the questions of exclusion and negotiations, we are at a definite disadvantage. More important, the best elements of the antiwar movement are those who have been educated by our press and our comrades. If we fail to influence and educate the most advanced sectors outside (as well as) ourselves, and unless we make a break from the tail-ending of the past year, our entire intervention will accomplish nothing but legwork for the reformists, and miseducation.

We must foster no illusions which miseducate and subsequently demoralize the petty-bourgeois elements of the antiwar movement. Furthermore, to confine ourselves to finding activities which divert their attention away from political conflicts, conflicts which would threaten the alliances between us and petty-bourgeois organizations, is to throw away the lessons of the revolutionary working class tendency in the united front.

XII. THE UNITED FRONT

It is correct and our responsibility to unite for action with anyone, no matter what his political position, against the policies of the government in Vietnam, as long as the joint action does not stifle our attacks against imperialism.

It is incorrect to not fight for our program on the grounds of maintaining organizational unity with petty-bourgeois tendencies. We must fight even if it means merely "making the record" or isolating ourselves from the petty-bourgeois organizations we oppose. Given different compositions of the organized sector of the antiwar movement, we will, from time to time, win more, or less, of our demands for united actions. There is nothing unprincipled in compromising when we are forced to, as long as the compromise for unity does not hamper our functioning in opposition to those with whom we compromise.

As new forces such as Bevel and trade-union bureaucrats enter the movement, pressures will increase to drop withdrawal and non-exclusion. The NEC draft states the opportunities to be gained from this development, but fails to look into the dangers from it. If a substantial section of the right wing leadership of the labor movement comes into a united front, such as the Spring Mobilization Committee, we must gird ourselves for even more setbacks for our programmatic influence on broad united action.

XIII. TRADE UNIONS

In recent months there has been some movement within the trade union leadership towards a stand against the war. However, the NEC does not approach this subject correctly. First

of all, it is incorrect to claim that SANE created a trade union division in an attempt to broaden the movement. What actually occurred was that the Social Democrats and ex-Stalinists in the trade union bureaucracy chose SANE as the vehicle for the expression of their antiwar sentiment. It is true that the antiwar movement had facilitated the expression of these views, but more important influence on them is the rift in the capitalist class over the war, and the pressure of antiwar sentiment among the petty-bourgeois strata in which these officials move. They are looking to a realignment within the Democratic Party and hope to channel the antiwar movement into a block with the liberal politicians of the Kennedy variety.

The real importance of the expression of antiwar sentiment by the trade union officials is that it will facilitate the expression of antiwar sentiment among the rank and file. However, we still have no indication that large numbers of rank and file trade unionists will be entering the movement in the coming period.

The NEC draft fails to mention the most important economic by-product of the war is not inflation and wage freezes, but the unparalleled prosperity that American capitalism is experiencing. There is full employment, overtime, and a shortage of skilled labor. Every worker recognizes that it is the war which is under-pinning this prosperity. There has been no real attempt to freeze wages because of super profits and because labor has learned the lessons of WWII and Korea. Most strikes have been offensive rather than defensive as the draft implies.

Still, while the war has not yet decreased the living standards of the majority of American workers, the issue of the war and the antiwar movement has affected their consciousness. There is definitely no enthusiasm for the war, a general uneasiness about it, and an awareness of the opposition to it among the middle class. They are also aware that since the advent of the Cold War, the US has become more and more isolated from its allies and world opinion is generally against US policy in Vietnam.

These factors point to possibilities that exist of workers opposing the war in the future and joining the antiwar movement. When this occurs our tactics for intervention will necessarily differ from our present intervention in a highly politicized antiwar movement.

XIV. FUTURE OF THE MOVEMENT

It does not necessarily follow that because the working class is not involved that the movement is on a low political level. While the organizational form and methods of struggle of the antiwar movement are still on a primitive level because of its petty-bourgeois composition, the political level of many activists is actually quite high. There is a widespread

feeling of solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution. Therefore it is inexcusable that we have not been playing more of a left wing role in our past intervention.

It appears that the pacifist leadership in the Spring Mobilization Committee are sympathetic to the Vietnamese revolution and agree with us on this level. But it must be remembered that they continually waver on the key questions of withdrawal and self-determination, and generally will fail to side with us at any critical conjuncture.

Because the pacifists agree with the more conservative peace groups on the question of coalition politics, their bond with them on this question will dominate their sympathy for the struggle of the Vietnamese. If the conservative elements such as SANE and the trade union bureaucrats continue to become more active, the leadership of the Spring Mobilization Committee will seek to make more concessions to these anti-communist, pro-capitalist elements. In order to do so they will have to water down their already shaking militancy, drop their present non-exclusion policy, and orient more towards coalition politics. The pressures from this orientation will necessitate an attack on withdrawal and its inherent anti-imperialism.

We will have to look to new layers of radicalizing youth to offset this development.

XV. CONCLUSION

During the epoch of imperialism the most crucial political struggle is around the question of war. "A correct policy is composed of two elements: an uncompromising attitude on imperialism and its wars, and the ability to base one's program on the experience of the masses themselves." (Transitional Program)

The two elements are incorporated in the tactically correct slogan for this period, Bring the Troops Home Now. (1) It is the only principled basis for opposition to US imperialist war. (2) It brings the thrust of the movement into uncompromising conflict with American imperialism. (3) All other slogans leave the door open for the government to absorb the movement by appearing to fulfill its demand without recognizing the right of Vietnam to self-determination.

Therefore it is our main task to build an organizational form in the antiwar movement which can adopt this slogan as its central demand. If the Student Mobilization Committee cannot fulfill this task then we are forced to group a left wing around ourselves and the independent committees. We must put more stress on the educational role of the YS to facilitate us in this work.

Such a conscious anti-imperialist wing around the slogan Bring the Troops Home Now could be an area for education and

recruitment and such a base would give us real leverage in the united front formations.

We support coordinated activity with any elements opposed to the war in Vietnam in order to build opposition to the war. However, we view these alliances as temporary agreements which we are ready to break the moment they begin to impede the political development of the struggle against the war, and our own independence in the struggle.

We can ally with other elements but not rely on them. We can only rely on our program to build the movement and we must maintain our organizational independence and freedom to criticize in order to advance our program.

If we fail to maintain our freedom to criticize we maintain the united front at the expense of subordinating our slogans and program, which are the only means by which we elevate the political consciousness of the movement.

We realize that betrayal of the struggle is inherent in the reformist policies of our "allies." But if we conduct our intervention properly their betrayal will weaken them and strengthen us. The united front is not a partnership with the reformists but a form of struggle against them. We must not rely on them but mistrust them.

Our task is to win over the antiwar militants from the influence of the pacifists and reformists to conscious anti-imperialism.

The YSA must make a clean break from the policies of the leadership in the past year -- the policies of maneuvering, tail-ending, and subordinating our program for the antiwar movement to that of the reformists. The opposition to the war offers a situation in which the YSA can educate itself politically and organizationally in principled politics.

To offset the poor organizational functioning within our own fraction this past year, we must have adequate reports, especially where major turns may be envisaged. The NEC document is typical of the reports received from the leadership in the past year; our tactics and the objective situation have been prettied up so as to condone the policies of the leadership.

We should adopt this resolution as the general line on which to carry out antiwar work in the coming year.

The Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill Resolution

By Lew Jones

The Vietnam war's central importance to world and national politics and our leading role in the antiwar movement make the antiwar discussion and decisions at the coming convention crucial for our work in the next period.

The submission of the Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill resolution underscores the importance of the discussion. The YSA is now presented with what the authors contend is an opposing general line for our central arena of activity.

We will first reiterate briefly the general line which has guided our activity in the antiwar movement since its inception and which is embodied in the NEC draft resolution. Second, we will deal with the CMBS version of the history of the antiwar movement. Third, we will examine the alternative course for our antiwar work implied by the CMBS resolution.

I. Our Line

From the beginning our attitude toward the antiwar movement has been based on the characteristic which makes it unique compared to past pacifist movements. Classical pacifism opposed war in time of peace, but when war broke out, used its authority to mobilize patriotic support for "this particular war." That is, classical pacifism always voiced its opposition to war in general but always found an "exceptional reason" for supporting its "own" government after the outbreak of armed conflict. The crime of the pacifist leaders was that they used their authority as advocates of peace, to turn the wholly progressive pacifism of the masses, who are opposed to war, into its chauvinist opposite when war broke out.

The present antiwar movement is distinguished from classical pacifism above all by the fact that it has developed and grown in explicit opposition to the shooting war being waged now against the Vietnamese. This is the first time in American history that such a movement has developed during a war. This fact dictated from the beginning the necessity not only of our participation but a willingness to shoulder leadership responsibility in this movement. It precluded intervening by simply condemning the movement as pacifist and "making the record" as to where we stand.

Proceeding from this premise, and from the knowledge that the movement was made up of conflicting tendencies, we have from the beginning fought for a policy of non-exclusion. Non-exclusion is the basis of our participation in the broad united front type coalition that makes up the antiwar movement.

As we interpret the concept of non-exclusion it embodies, not only the principle that no tendency shall be excluded because of non-conformist ideas, views and opinions, but that we reserve

the right, for ourselves--and others--to advance such slogans and demands within the movement that we feel can best advance the struggle in opposition to the war. We do not issue ultimatums to others to accept our views as a condition for joint action in the struggle against the war. Nor do we tolerate such ultimatums from others. We are confident that given a democratic milieu our views will prevail among substantial numbers of young militants and antiwar activists. This basic framework of non-exclusion and a serious attitude toward working out specific agreement for joint action dictates the necessity of arriving, within strictly defined limits, and wherever possible at decision by consensus. United action would otherwise become impossible. It is within this general concept that we have, from the beginning, advanced and vigorously promoted our central slogan, Bring the Troops Home, Now!

Our insistence on a "single issue" antiwar movement has been grossly misunderstood in some quarters. The "single issue" around which the coalition has been built was never intended to be the single slogan of withdrawal of U.S. troops but joint struggle in action to end the war. It is around this issue that the widest possible unity in action has been mobilized against the imperialist war in Vietnam and against the capitalist class that is waging that war.

We never considered, and we do not now view the antiwar movement as a united front of propaganda with a general program. It is a united front of action. Opposition to imperialist war is tested not in words, which come easy, but in deeds, in marches, and in periodic mass demonstrations. It was around this axis that we concentrated our efforts to keep the movement from being channeled into class collaborationist politics, community organizing projects, individual anti-draft gimmicks, research projects, etc.

It is this that has characterized our "single issue" approach to the antiwar movement.

Within the broad united front type coalition organized around struggle against the war, we have been able to build and maintain to this point a working bloc with the radical pacifists. The bloc has rested upon agreement on the following points: 1) The most important question of the day is opposition to the war, and it is around this issue that the broadest coalition of diverse tendencies can be formed. The movement must be non-exclusive. 2) The movement should engage in mass actions, and not subordinate such actions to the so-called "multi-issue" projects of particular tendencies. 3) The movement's propaganda should reach out to the labor movement, the civil rights movement, and the G.I.'s. 4) Within the broader coalition, we seek to convince as many as possible to demand immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. This demand is a concretization of the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination and links up the immediate interests of the G.I.'s in Vietnam with the antiwar sentiment at home.

This is our political line, embodied in resolutions of past conventions and national committee plenums, conferences, articles, and editorials in our press, in pamphlets, brochures, speaking tours, etc. From this general line flows our tasks, as outlined on Page 16 of the NEC draft resolution.

Chase, Meseke, Barzman and Sherrill contend that they represent a tendency with a contrary line which they present in the form of a minority resolution for convention decision as a substitute for the line of the majority. Unfortunately, nowhere in their document is their alleged "line" clearly set forth.

Except for some casual, unsubstantiated "criticisms" in their first few paragraphs, they do not critically examine the line of the NEC draft resolution. Instead, we are presented with an "indictment" of the leadership for being derelict in carrying out the line adopted by previous YSA conventions. Yet, although not explicitly stated, the logic of the views expressed does lead to a contrary political conclusion from which flows their charge of tactical "adaptation," unwarranted concessions, deviations, etc., etc. Let us examine these views.

II. A Review of the Last Year

The analysis of the antiwar movement which tortuously emerges from the Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill resolution runs along the following lines: There was a "...change in the relationship of forces which began to show itself toward the end of the summer. The emergence of the liberals and pacifists in the leadership at this point..." (Page 10-11). "The March Days of Protest marked the high point of the independent thrust of the antiwar movement, the weight of the CEWV's, and our influence through them." (Page 3). The authors have found each succeeding demonstration since the March 25-26 protest inadequate, at best. The liberals and pacifists have taken over the movement and it has lost its "independent thrust."

Our analysis of the antiwar movement over the past year is quite different. We have not seen a downturn of the movement or takeover by reformist forces. On the contrary, the antiwar movement has reflected the general deepening of antiwar sentiment in the United States by growing in numbers and broadening in forces on a united front type basis. Moreover, this growth over the last year has occurred as other major peace and political groups have been forced to pay lip service to the concept of self-determination.

The growth of the movement on a militant basis has occurred with YSAers playing leading roles, both on a national and local level. Far from just "occupying positions," our members have utilized their well-earned positions to play vanguard roles in educating and leading the movement.

Our estimate of the situation is underlined by the fact that some leaders of the labor movement and the civil rights movement have made and continue to make steps toward the organized antiwar movement.

The Past Year

The summer period was chiefly characterized on the one hand by a deepening of popular sentiment against the war and on the other by a division in the organized movement over reformist community organizing versus mass demonstrations which reflected the more general debate over the November 1966 elections.

In this period the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam (NCC) launched its summer project which was to be a base for supporting "peace" candidates in the autumn. At the same time the New York Parade Committee had become the de facto leadership of the antiwar movement, representing on a local New York basis a broad united front grouping.

In the eyes of antiwar activists these two groupings represented in organized form the division in the movement. The NCC, dominated by one tendency, stood for a "multi-issue" approach oriented toward community organizing and "peace" candidates.

The Parade Committee represented a broad, united front type grouping (over 60 groups at this time) that strongly reflected the militant and student section of the movement and whose officers, Dellinger and Muste, were supporters of self-determination. The committee was established solely on two simple points--non-exclusion and periodic mass demonstrations against the Vietnam war.

The August 6-9 national protest was initiated by the Parade Committee. This call for action came out of the continuing debate over perspective, and was made in spite of the NCC's opposition. The call not only represented a victory for those opposed to class-collaborationist politics but also a change in the relationship of forces in the militant wing's favor. This fact was outlined in a June 4, 1966 NEC report; "In this work we have the definite advantage. In an important sense the situation we faced last fall ('65) has now been reversed. (Emphasis added). In many areas our initiative is not challenged and it is the coalitionists (those supporting class collaborationist politics primarily with the Democratic Party) who bear the responsibility for attempting to slow down or split the IDP (International Days of Protest) and reverse the relationship of forces, so they can introduce a peace candidate perspective." This situation was also described in a June 17, 1966 report by the SWP-YSA joint antiwar fraction: "To a large degree the position in which the militant wing of the antiwar movement finds itself is the reverse of that at the Washington Convention. It is the coalitionists (class-collaborationists) who are opposed to the action and direction and themes that have been decided by the majority of the activists and committees around

the country. The militants are trying to maintain a united front and build actions while the coalitionists forced into verbal support are dragging their feet. Under these circumstances the fight of the left is for unity and to build the International Days of Protest." (Emphasis in original).

Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill say on Page 4, "By calling the August 6-8 demonstration we hoped to find some activity to occupy the activists, to divert attention from the peace campaigns." (Emphasis in original). Apparently, Chase et al do not understand that action in the streets against the war is not a mere diversion from class collaborationist politics--it is its opposite. The August days of protest kept the movement in the streets in action against the war, and was a strong blow against the "peace" candidates perspective for this reason.

A concrete example was the situation of the Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee (VDC). There the committee was split by the forces behind "peace" candidate Robert Sheer who sought to turn the VDC into a multi-issue grouping and one of his campaign committees. We had predicted that his actions would divide the movement. And indeed they did when the Sheer supporters left the VDC and publicly attacked it.

We were active in bringing what there was of the VDC back together on the basis of opposition in street actions to the imperialist war. For example, we were instrumental in organizing a street demonstration of 4,000 on April 13, which helped expose Sheer who attacked the demonstration. Later on August 6, 10,000 people demonstrated in San Francisco, an action we actively helped to organize. Through these activities we were able to reactivate the VDC and lay the basis for winning activists away from the Sheer grouping back to the VDC.

Do the authors think these actions were wrong? Only a "gimmick" to occupy the attention of activists? Was this "tail-ending?" Or were they used to effectively combat the "peace" candidate approach? The test of the line is in deeds. And in this case, particularly, our line was proved correct.

The Newsletter and its supporters played an influential role in this new situation and before. The Newsletter representatives attended the numerous regional NCC gatherings and put forward their position against "peace" candidates and for mass action. The Newsletter had also launched several campaigns and actions to educate the movement and to project the Newsletter as the leadership of the militant wing of the movement. These included the New York Women's March, the Lt. Howe case, the Withdrawal vs. Negotiations pamphlet, publicity for such things as the Afro-American CEWV's, and the Fort Hood Three case.

During this period, however, it was clear that the Newsletter did not have the authority or forces to launch a national organization. Such an organization could not be created artificially. We began viewing the Newsletter supporters as one of the components

that would eventually form such an organization.

A change in relationship of forces occurred in favor of the militant wing. It is important, however, to realize that even though a victory was achieved by calling the demonstration, a section of the movement remained unconvinced and only gave verbal support to August 6-9. In fact, a split in the movement was a very real possibility.

The Fort Hood Three Case

The case of the Fort Hood Three further aided the militants' position. At its inception and through most of its development, the case tended to sharpen the opposition of antiwar activists to the government and "peace" candidates.

This was outlined in a NEC report by Doug on July 2 (the "confidential memo" was not the only report, but one of several). Three reasons were given for the political importance of the case. "1. A well publicized and active defense of these three G.I.'s--none of whom are "pacifists" and all of whom are presently in the army--is a link between the antiwar movement and the G.I.'s... 2. The case sharply confronts the Johnson administration at one of its most sensitive points--the draftee army. A reliable, unquestioning army is of the utmost importance to Johnson and his war aims, and if soldiers and groups of soldiers begin challenging the war and their participation in it, it is a direct challenge to the government. (Emphasis in original)...3. ...There is a need for the freshness and inspiration of new and daring focal points. This case can become one of those points."

This was not a turn away from building the civilian antiwar movement, nor a "major turn" toward the troops. It represented a broadening of the scope and consciousness of the movement.

The popularity of the case and the inspiration it gave the movement helped to provide a basis for consolidating the coalition in the Parade Committee.

More important, however, was the education of the movement itself. There had previously been difficulty convincing others in the movement that troops were potential allies of the antiwar movement, and that the movement's strategy should be gauged to show that the antiwar movement was on the side of the troops. Through the Fort Hood Three case we were able to convince major sections of the antiwar movement of our argument.

The campaign around the Fort Hood Three strengthened our arguments for the Bring the Troops Home Now slogan. Prior to the case when the consideration was raised that it was wrong for slogans to alienate the troops, we would be laughed down. But the Fort Hood Three case became an argument to point out the importance of 'Bring the Troops Home Now' as a slogan which

could reach the troops. In fact, the Fort Hood Three case did more to convince the antiwar movement that withdrawal was a correct slogan than any other single factor aside from the Spring 1966 demonstrations in Vietnam.

Our emphasis on the case was not agitational, but educational. No demands were made of the troops. We had basically four simple aims: 1) Educate the antiwar movement to the fact that troops were potential allies and one force that could help end the war. 2) Make it clear to troops that the antiwar movement was fighting for their interests. It was simple. The movement wanted them to come home, not die for Ky. 3) Set the precedent, through action, that the troops have a constitutional right to read literature on the facts of the war.

This case enabled us to fight for both withdrawal and a broadening of the movement at the same time. The so-called "trade" the minority is so upset about was simply a matter of supporting the Fort Hood Three as one way of furthering our aims, rather than presenting an ultimatum of withdrawal as the only slogan of the August 6-9 protest in New York which could have led to an uncalled for, unnecessary, and irresponsible split, and would have severely limited the opportunities open to us and the movement.

(Incidentally, the minority excerpts quotes "selectively" from the "confidential memo." The very next two paragraphs after the "excellent trade" paragraph describe the total situation:

"We haven't given up the withdrawal position. None of the nine slogans contradicts that position...What we did was decide not to irritate the more conservative groups over where 'Bring the Troops Home Now' would be in the leaflet, so that we could emphasize the complete unity around the proposition of going to the G.I.'s with the message this case carried..."

"This unity now exists. But it is important to remember that the old dichotomy exists beneath the surface. And it is important to understand the implications of the turn that has been made in order to take full advantage of the united support before a cleavage between right and left again appears.")

The Struggle Over The Fort Hood Three Perspective

Let's trace the development of the Fort Hood Three case. It began as a radical case based on the slogan "Support the G.I.'s Right Not To Be In Vietnam"--a withdrawal slogan--and on the proposition of distributing the facts of the case and the war to G.I.'s. As an opening to a working class force we seized upon this opportunity to probe deeper, just like we would with an opening in the labor movement. On this radical basis the defense committee grew and became widely known.

As the case had widespread support and entailed a sharp confrontation with the government, the class collaborationists attempted to blunt its implications. With the aim in mind of transforming the case into a draft case, supporters of the CP became more active and a protracted struggle over perspective ensued in the defense committee.

Our perspective lost in this struggle, despite our strong opposition, and the defense committee is now oriented more toward antidraft activity. It is of utmost importance, however, to note that 1) the nature of the committee was changed in the course of a struggle, 2) the perspectives for the committee were changed only after the full impact of the case had begun to ebb.

Our Preparations for the Case

Was the YSA unprepared for this development as the authors of the minority document charge? "Previously, there had been no discussion in our movement of a turn toward the G.I.'s..." (Page 5). No, their charge is false. When the YS ran its first 32 page issue featuring an article on the "Bring the Troops Home Now Movement" (the longest article ever published in the YS) it was not due to some subjective interest by the editor. This article and the political importance of it had been discussed at length at the 1965 plenum. Moreover, the YSA sent several speakers on tours speaking on the importance of the antiwar movement projecting an image that would have the sympathy of the G.I.'s.

The August 6-9 demonstrations and the Fort Hood Three case, of course, did not settle the conjunctural debates or the underlying questions for the antiwar movement, even though the relationship of forces had changed. August to November saw the development of capitalist "peace" candidates which if supported by the movement would have derailed it into the capitalist camp; a development we fought against and educated the movement about for over a year.

Our aim was to maintain the movement on its broad and militant basis of a united front of action and to emphatically oppose any support to the "peace" candidates. A contradiction between the deepening popular sentiment and the reluctance by the class-collaborationists to support antiwar action existed.

The September Cleveland Conference

Within this context the September Cleveland Conference occurred. Called by the Inter-University Committee for Debate on Foreign Policy (IUC) the conference laid the basis for taking the broad united front approach of the Parade Committee onto a national scale. The conference itself had many new forces in attendance, which later became the basis for a sponsorship that ranged from the Women Strike for Peace, the Friends, and SANE, to the YSA and the SWP.

We projected a perspective opposed to that of the class-collaborationists. Our perspective was to build mass demonstrations and rallies on November 5-8. Our proposition--which was carried--demanded that the peace candidates support the demonstrations and not vice versa.

The slogans adopted at the conference--Against the War in Vietnam, For Economic Justice, For Human Rights--were acceptable to us and represented a realistic basis for united action. The "Sick of the War" idea was simply the title of the call (not the one we would have chosen if we had complete control) and a tactical adjustment to more conservative elements.

Chase, Meske, Barzman, and Sherrill are chiefly concerned that we should have 'made the record' more at this conference. They miss the entire point. This conference organized a national united front mass action against the war.

The perspective decided upon was a realistic one. Mass demonstrations, although smaller than previous actions in some areas, occurred in every major city. The "peace" candidates fizzled with no major figure or number of candidates appearing. The question had splitting effects in two places during that period--the Queens CEWVN (NY) and Boston. The threat of a diversion of the movement into capitalist politics was surmounted.

During the growth of this national formation we began to notice significant changes in the objective situation in the United States. Civil Rights groups, especially the black power wing, began to become more outspoken against the war, and to take steps toward the organized antiwar movement.

The earlier airline mechanics strike and other developments revealed how the war was beginning to affect labor. Johnson's wage guidelines, threatened anti-labor legislation, and increased taxes have all affected the ranks of labor, making it necessary for some bureaucrats to show more militancy and for a small number of them to oppose the war.

In contradiction to this deepening antiwar sentiment stood the pessimism of many of the student activists, who had become discouraged by the continuing escalation of the war. The conscious reformists tried to take advantage of this pessimism to promote their orientation for the movement.

Our job in this situation was, first, to maintain the national grouping and relationship of forces that had developed. Second, to set a perspective, by discussing out and convincing the activists, that would enable this national formation to reach out to the deepening and broadening antiwar sentiment.

The Thanksgiving Cleveland Conference

Within this context the Thanksgiving Cleveland conference took place. The conference itself was poorly organized and did not have representation from the whole movement. The student wing particularly was not well-represented. At the conference we took on the job of convincing those that were there, as a first step, of the necessity of the movement reaching out through organized activity to broader forces, including the labor and Negro movements. Taking the form of a debate over community organizing versus mass demonstrations, an extended discussion of what perspective the antiwar movement should have taken place. YSAers took the floor several times to spell out what was occurring in the United States and the need for an ambitious program of action.

A report from the YSA-SWP joint fraction on January 16 described this educational process we initiated:

"Our main job was to educate those who had been involved in the November 5 Mobilization to the possibility of projecting a new kind of mobilization for the spring and to cut across the pessimism that the professors and activists, especially some of the non-YSA student youth, felt. Our arguments revolved around several themes: that the reason for the sense of demoralization and lack of appreciation for the accomplishments of the antiwar movement was the movement's isolation from the labor and Negro movement; that the protests could not expect to rapidly end the war under these conditions; that nevertheless the economic and social pressures generated by the war, and the anti-Negro, anti-labor moves by the Johnson administration emboldened by the war, would increase as spring approached and we could expect resistance to them.

"Further, we said that the core of the antiwar movement represented at the Cleveland conference had a responsibility to try to reach out and attempt to involve these other layers, as well as remobilize the middle class activists that have made it up to now. We said that we should think in terms of not just another day of protest but of organizing a qualitatively larger demonstration that would represent a new political step for the antiwar movement, taking advantage of the developments in the labor and Negro movements that we knew would occur in the next few months."

Our perspective carried the conference, even though, once again, a large number remained unconvinced. The most important thing was that a date for action against the imperialist war was set, a perspective of mobilizing massive numbers and of reaching out to labor and Negro forces was set, and a structure with A.J. Muste as chairman was established to carry out this perspective. A set of slogans, which included withdrawal and none of which contradicted withdrawal, was referred to the steering committee.

The conference itself was small and unrepresentative of the movement, yet it came at a time when new opportunities were presenting themselves. The YSA-SWP fraction thus faced a problem. We saw the need for the conference to set an ambitious course and yet we had no desire to simply win a verbal victory on the withdrawal slogan because of our voting strength. The most important thing for the conference to decide on was the setting of a date for a future action that would lay the groundwork to attempt to involve forces from the trade union and civil rights movements, and the establishment of a structure to make sure this perspective was carried out. These proposals reached significant agreement and have been implemented.

The Communist Party supported the April 15 action, trying to recoup many of the losses they had suffered by only being minimally involved in the antiwar movement. This shift in line necessitated an attempt to work with, not over or around, the YSA, which in practice has led to the opening of new milieus to our ideas. They also hope to convince a section of the movement to support their brand of "peace" candidates in 1968, which we, of course, will oppose. But we can only welcome and encourage the participation of the CP in all the united front type formations.

The Chicago Student Conference

The Student Strike Conference in Chicago in December, 1966, organized primarily by the CP youth, represented an attempt by the CP to set up a front group to fill the vacuum created by the lack of a national student formation to end the war. Their aims changed slightly with their turn toward support of the April 15 action, and with our active participation in the conference.

We participated in the conference as leaders of the antiwar movement with several aims: 1) to educate activists on the potential of the movement; 2) to tie the spring student action concretely into April 15; 3) to try to involve SDSers and independents; 4) to lay the basis at the Chicago conference for setting up a student united front, nationally and on each campus.

On every count we were able to convince the conference of our view. SDS opposed April 15 and remains on a national scale outside the Student Mobilization Committee but this was not our intention nor a result of our policies. In local united fronts, SDS chapters have become involved in many areas.

An important achievement at the conference was the Student Mobilization Committee's (SMC) foundation based on self-determination for the Vietnamese. Organizing the student wing on the basis of the demand for withdrawal, the development of the Student Mobilization Committee represents significant motion toward the perspective the Newsletter projected. On that basis the Newsletter has thrown itself into building and

developing the committee. The Newsletter's contacts, staff, resources, and prior experience have played a major role in building the SMC into what can become a viable organization.

The Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill resolution is confused on the development of this committee. They down-play the importance of the SMC giving as a major reason "...their (CP's) reasons for entering the Student Mobilization Committee...are diametrically opposed to ours." (Page 10). That's of course true, but who expected anything different? If no one disagreed with us, the word opponent--nor united front--would not be in our vocabulary. But, what do they make of this? "This basic conflict makes the future development of this formation highly questionable." (Page 10). Maybe yes, maybe no. But, in any case, by building it energetically now on its present militant basis we maximize the possibilities of a successful development and minimize the possibility of the CP imposing its popular front-peace candidate aims.

The Current Conjuncture

Where does the antiwar movement stand today? Our perspective for it has in good measure been proved correct. The process of reaching out to other sections of society has moved forward, drawing in representatives of both wings of the civil rights movement, a few unions, and the conservative peace groups. The addition of James Bevel as executive director symbolizes and further aids the process of organizing antiwar sentiment in the ghetto. The addition of Cleveland Robinson, secretary-treasurer of District 65 of RDSWU, as a vice-chairman and the formation of labor subcommittees within the Spring Mobilization Committee, and local union support on the West Coast indicates the growing labor support and the expanding opportunities in this area.

It took time and constant campaigning by our forces to set the Spring Mobilization in motion. The call, delayed by long political debates, has finally been released containing the demand for withdrawal of U.S. troops and no demand suggesting that the U.S. has the right to negotiate the future of Vietnam. This call is the most militant of any of the previous days of protest.

Around the Mobilization a campaign spirit is developing, promising to make April 15 the largest demonstration in the antiwar movement's history.

The Effects of New Forces

There is a contradiction involved in the entry of labor and civil rights groups into the movement, of course. As organizations from the labor movement and the Negro struggle begin to become involved in the protest movement, they move through their own organizations and leaderships, and at their present level of political consciousness. These leaders are

for the most part class collaborationists.

The leaders move toward the movement because 1) they feel antiwar pressure from their own ranks and 2) they see a growing radical movement that threatens to go over their heads.

Their entry is welcomed by us, because it signals the beginning of antiwar activity by working class forces. Of course the entry of bureaucrats adds to the specific weight of reformism in the movement and will lead to increased attacks on withdrawal, non-exclusion, and radical influence generally. If such forces do come into the movement in sufficient numbers, it is likely we will have to re-fight some of the prior battles of the antiwar movement.

In such circumstances our conjunctural role will begin to change. It will tend to shift from one of direct leadership in a relatively small mass movement to one of fighting to build a class struggle left wing among larger organized masses.

But we do not approach this conjuncture nervously and fearful that we will lose our integrity, talking about "girding" ourselves and "we must fight even if it means merely 'making the record'" as Chase et al do on page 11. No, we welcome, urge, and actively solicit the entrance of new forces into the antiwar movement, confident that we will not merely "make the record" but will reach out to even more people with our ideas and build a class struggle left wing.

There is no contradiction between the leading role we are now playing and what may be our role 3-6 months from now. On the contrary, by building the Spring Mobilization we maximize the possibilities and opportunities for our ideas and influence in the future.

There are other factors which will or could influence the development of this contradiction: the 1968 elections, the possibility of negotiations, the escalation of the war, a new revolutionary upsurge in the world, etc. Our job will be to watch the objective developments closely and gauge our tactics realistically to the movement as it develops in order to reach our strategic aims.

The central tenets of the analysis of the antiwar movement in the Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill resolution are completely wrong. The movement has not declined. It has continued to grow, reflecting the deepening sentiment against the war in the population, particularly in the labor and civil rights movements. The last year has seen the growth of united fronts of action based on non-exclusion on national, local and even campus levels. The liberals and pacifists have not taken over, and the movement has not lost its "independent thrust" since March 25-26. Just the opposite is the case. The independence and anti-imperialism of the movement has deepened and will reach its highest point so far on April 15. At this time

against the war has been the basis of our whole approach since the 1965 SDS March on Washington. This is why we are for the broadest possible coalition around action against the war, and why we do not make acceptance of the withdrawal slogan a condition for our participation in and leadership of united actions. From this view of the antiwar movement's deeply anti-imperialist character, our primary task is not now to "build an organizational form in the antiwar movement which can adopt" the withdrawal slogan. Our primary task is to continue to build mass actions against the war to achieve the greatest unity in action of a continually expanding antiwar movement. Yes--the "central task" of the Student Mobilization Committee is to build the April 15 Mobilization!

On page 7, they say, "By this time (the November Cleveland conference) almost every major opponent had given lip service to the slogan of withdrawal. This position had been clearly adopted by the previous Cleveland conference on its own initiative. Yet our fraction did not even attempt to have this statement re-affirmed officially (emphasis added) by this conference." That's right--we decided that rather than register a purely formal victory for verbal radicalism at Cleveland, it was more important to get agreement to launch the next antiwar action and to lay the groundwork to bring the largest possible numbers of people out into the streets against the war.

We had enough support to carry the vote at the conference, but did not have that majority among the antiwar forces we wanted to bring into the April 15 action. We should also note that far from contradicting our line of Bring the Troops Home Now, our tactics beginning in Cleveland have not only helped consolidate the largest action against the imperialist war in Vietnam to date, within which we have complete freedom of action, but for the first time in any national day of protest, the formal call "makes the record," if you please, for withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam.

Throughout their document, they denigrate the concept of the antiwar coalition, belittling our efforts to build the widest possible unity against the war. The Parade Committee is referred to derogatorily as the "catch-all Parade Committee." (Page 1). We are for "catch-all" committees like the Parade Committee, to organize the widest possible unity in action against the war. We want to build the "catch-all" antiwar movement. We hope it eventually "catches all" of the labor movement and Negro movement.

Following through on their belittling of the united actions against the war, they say on page 11: "Furthermore, to confine ourselves to finding activities which divert their attention away from political conflicts, conflicts which would threaten the alliances between us and petty bourgeois organizations, is to throw away the lessons of the revolutionary working class tendency in the united front." And, "we must fight even if it

means merely 'making the record' or isolating ourselves from the petty bourgeois organizations we oppose."

Implicit in this approach and behind this advocacy of verbal radicalism and 'making the record' (what record?) lies the concept of reversing the priorities in our antiwar work.

Instead of the primary task being to build the widest possible unity in action against this imperialist war, and fighting for our slogans, demands, ideas, etc. within this framework, they would have us open a fight to make withdrawal the central demand and not "subordinate it to" building mass actions!

This approach could have only one result and effect, whatever the authors subjectively intend. That effect would be to split the movement against the imperialist war in Vietnam.

Implicit in their position is that we begin laying down conditions, making ultimatums--fighting "even if it means merely 'making the record' or isolating ourselves." From this we can only conclude that they want us to demand that the antiwar movement adopt our line and to thereby exclude those who refuse to go along. But this would be the wrong turn at the wrong time. The next "moderate forces" who will come into the antiwar movement are sections of the labor movement and Negro movement! This is just what we want. What we want then is only the right to express our views as a minority within a mass movement, not be standing on the sidelines, safely wrapped up in our purity, smugly content for having 'made the record.'

The whole thrust of their line, intended or not, is to jettison a basic plank in our approach--non-exclusion. A fundamental tenet of non-exclusion is that we do not force others to accept withdrawal as a condition of joining the movement, just as we demand to be included in the broader movement against the imperialist war with the right to educate about and advocate the slogan for withdrawal of U.S. troops.

On Page 14, the counter-resolution lists a series of truisms everyone agrees with on the united front. "The united front," they say, "is not a partnership with the reformists but a form of struggle against them. We must not rely on them but mistrust them." That is true--but the logic of their position leads in the direction of abandoning the point of departure for the application of Leninist concepts within the united front; that point of departure is the united front itself.

Our Bloc with Muste and the Radical Pacifists

On the question of the militant pacifists, they say on page 2: "The 'radical' pacifists who are sympathetic to the liberation struggles play the role of fence sitters and mediators,

but at every critical turn line up with their fellow reformists on the crucial dispute over withdrawal as a central demand, as Muste has done time after time." (Emphasis added). Again, they see the question of whether the withdrawal slogan is the central demand as the crucial issue. Not only Muste, but we, the YSA, have not forced the withdrawal slogan to be the central demand of the massive national actions against the imperialist war in Vietnam because we understood that not everyone agreed with it who could be mobilized in action against the imperialist war, and it is this action against the war which is our central objective. This is the correct, anti-imperialist approach.

They repeat their criticism of the radical pacifists on Page 13: "It appears that the pacifist leadership in the Spring Mobilization Committee are sympathetic to the Vietnamese revolution and they agree with us on this level. But it must be remembered that they continually waver on the key questions of withdrawal and self-determination, and generally fail to aid us at any critical conjuncture." (Emphasis in original).

In the first place, this is factually incorrect. If it were true that Muste and Dellinger and the other left wing pacifists fail to side with us on any critical juncture, the movement would not have been able to establish unity on the militant basis that it has. The radical pacifists support the withdrawal demand. Time after time they have sided with us on non-exclusion, withdrawal, broadening the coalition, and the single issue basis of periodic actions against the war.

The latest time was in the Spring Mobilization Committee, when the CP and other class collaborationist forces on the West Coast succeeded in passing a resolution recommending that the Spring Mobilization drop its withdrawal position in favor of advocacy of U.S. negotiations to end the war. The radical pacifists among others blocked with us to kill this move.

Muste and the SWP 'Peace Candidate'

Another factual error: they state on page 4: "The Newsletter contained an article in May raising the question of peace candidates, but since then contained not a word publicizing or exposing peace candidates--not even on the minimal basis of their antiwar platforms being for or against immediate withdrawal. Why Not? Because now we were to use the Newsletter to form an alliance with Muste who supported peace candidates."

Muste supported no capitalist party peace candidates. He did support Judy White and Herbert Aptheker--two working class candidates--or do Chase et al consider White and Aptheker in the same category as capitalist peace candidates? Within the antiwar movement, Muste was the main single force outside of ourselves fighting to prevent the movement from being diverted into support to capitalist peace candidates instead of building mass actions.

The whole question of peace candidates was handled by the Newsletter through its fighting for the alternative policy of actions against imperialist war. The Newsletter, as an organ of the antiwar movement, could not present the full Trotskyist analysis of the question. This was done in the Young Socialist and the Militant in articles directly on the question, articles explaining the Judy White campaign, articles explaining our critical support of Aptheker, and articles on our opposition to the petty bourgeois "peace" candidates. The SWP election campaigns, which we supported, provided us with an important avenue to fight on this question. It was by bringing these campaigns to our co-workers in the antiwar movement that we made some of our biggest gains.

Again, what is the implicit line contained in this position on the radical pacifists? Although they don't come out and say so, the logic of the Chase et al position is that we should not be in a bloc with the radical pacifists, and we should now break that bloc. This, too, just like their implicit position that we give up non-exclusion is another piece of sectarianism bordering on abstentionism. Without our bloc with the radical pacifists neither the antiwar movement nor our movement would be where it is today. Of course this bloc has its frictions. Of course new events may upset it and maybe sooner than we would prefer. But we are going to hold onto it as long as we can, and won't lightly break it up in order to "make the record."

"Making the record" appears to be the essence of revolutionary politics to Chase et al. What we fear is hidden behind this verbal radicalism is a position that objectively approaches that of PL, Wohlforth, Spartacist, and the other ultra-lefts. They "make the record"--from A to Z--and have used that as a springboard to launch themselves completely out of the movement. That is the logical extension of the implied "line" in the Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill resolution, and the road which we unqualifiedly reject.

The antiwar movement has been the first large movement the YSA has had an opportunity to work deeply in as builders and leaders for a sustained period of time. It is important we approach this movement correctly, by understanding its inherent anti-imperialist character, by understanding and applying the concept of non-exclusion to build the broadest unity in action against the imperialist war, by learning how to present our ideas and build the YSA without losing sight of the tasks of building the antiwar movement itself in struggle against the class enemy. In this movement we are learning valuable, if incomplete, lessons on how to intervene in the working class movements and great class battles to come.

No, our task is not to "make a clean break from the policies of the leadership in the past year" as Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill say. Rather it is to re-affirm the general line we have carried out in the past, affirm our tasks for the future, and deepen our understanding of the class-struggle approach of this line.

We must reject the line implicit in the Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill resolution--the line of isolating and splitting ourselves off from this movement.

One final point. The general line of the counter-resolution is unclear, and is not spelled out. Chase-Meseke-Barzman-Sherrill insist that they have a counter political line to that of the NEC draft resolution, however, since they place their resolution in opposition to that of the NEC. We have discussed the logic of their position, and have demonstrated where it is leading them. Supporters of the counter-resolution should seriously consider whether they actually agree with the political implications of their resolution or whether they are in actual agreement with the political line and tasks of the NEC resolution, with perhaps reservations and criticisms on how that line was carried out. If that is the case, the principled course for such comrades should be to vote for the line of the NEC resolution, making their criticisms and suggestions concerning implementation.

March 12, 1967