

POLITICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES, No. 17, June 5, 1968

Present: Barnes, Dobbs, Halstead, Novack, Sheppard, Jones, DeBerry

Visitor: Ring

Chairman: Sheppard

AGENDA:

1. Membership
2. Propaganda Campaign around French Events
3. Antiwar

1. MEMBERSHIP

Barnes reported.

Motion: To approve the recommendation of the Detroit branch to readmit Peter S. to party membership. Carried.

2. MILITANT SALES CAMPAIGN AROUND FRENCH EVENTS

- a) Barnes reported. (Written report attached)
- b) Dobbs reported. (Written report attached)

3. ANTIWAR

- a) Jones reported on Student Mobilization Committee fight. (Written report attached.)
- b) Ring reported on the Parade Committee developments.

Norma Becker invited a select group of administrative committee members to a meeting prior to the full administrative committee meeting this week. She is calling for a program of "general activity" instead of just demonstrating. She suggested she wanted to get involved in electoral action and kept hinting about the Freedom and Peace Party. No one could agree except on dates for demonstrations. The other thing that Becker raised was that the Parade Committee had to do something about the "domestic crisis" since this is the "year of repression." Others at meeting agreed except Abner Gruneauer of SANE and us; despite our objections, it was decided to recommend a dual program of opposition to the war and to racism to the administrative committee of the Parade Committee which would work out what to do on the "domestic crisis."

Meeting adjourned.

Attachment to FC Minutes #17

Report by Barnes on Militant Sales Campaign
around French Events

Introduction

In response to the actions of the French workers and students, we have opened a propaganda campaign centered around a big increase in weekly sales of the Militant. The Militant campaign while concentrating on the French events is linked to the Student Mobilization fight we're now engaged in and to our election campaign. As Tom Kerry outlined in his report, we're actually carrying out three campaigns in one, concentrating on getting our ideas on each of them into the Militant and the Militant into the hands of over 20,000 people a week.

In addition to the Militant sales, we're holding public meetings, classes on the meaning of the French events, and in some areas branches have held solidarity actions. We propose several further steps at this time in the solidarity campaign: (1) the reprint of all the major articles from Intercontinental Press, the Militant and the YS on the French events in paperback book form, (2) a reprint of L'Enrage, the political cartoon booklet of the French students, (3) the sale of two buttons, one published in New York in solidarity with the JCR and the other published in Berkeley. —
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The Militant Campaign

The Militant press run has increased from 6,800 of the May 24 issue to 16,250 of the May 31 issue to 20,000 plus of the June 7 and June 14 issues. These runs are being sold out, not piling up in the branch. We have been taking up a page or two in each of these issues with a campaign around the issues of the Student Mobilization Committee fight in addition to the concentration on the French events.

We plan to maintain the current pace -- the massive sales effort in the 20,000 range -- through the issue of the Militant dated July 12. This would be the issue with the analysis of the results of the Student Mobilization's Continuations Committee meeting in New York and the French run-off elections on June 30. A change in the pace of the struggle in France would not necessitate basically altering the campaign. We will feature more analysis and interviews on the French events. We have been sending approximately 2,500 issues of each Militant to the entire national mailing list of the Student Mobilization Committee and plan to maintain this through the issue dated July 12.

The campaign is basically aimed at the radicalizing youth of this country. A campaign to recruit to the YSA is being carried out simultaneously with the campaign to sell the paper, through the actions of the youth comrades, supplemented each week by an ad carried in the Militant. A significant increase in recruitment to the YSA should result from the sales effort, the identification of ourselves with the French youth vanguard, and the fight we are leading inside the Student Mobilization Committee. It also lays the groundwork for an increase in the supporters of the Halstead-Boutelle campaign. L'Enrage and the buttons

both tie in to this campaign to recruit youth and to identify the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance as the section of the American left carrying on an active campaign of analysis and education in solidarity with the struggles of the French workers and students.

The sales reports that have come in show the overwhelming bulk of the sales have been to the campus milieu. At the same time, there has been the opportunity to reach out and probe a few other milieus -- sales to high schools, sales to ghetto shopping centers, and some sales at plant gates.

The entire campaign has been most successful in those places where an aspect of the work has been an attempt to involve youth in taking the truth about the French revolution to other milieus and testing the responses. It has been important for the image we present to the student radical and anti-war milieus as a whole -- that is, the image of the kind of action organization that is capable of turning outwards and responding to major events both in this country and abroad. It is one of the elements involved in winning recruits to the movement from this propaganda campaign. M

The young activists and the new young comrades need whenever feasible -- which has been seldom enough recently -- confirmation in concrete terms of our desire and perspective of winning workers to our ideas. The important thing is a clear sense of balance on the part of the branch leadership in the sales campaign. For instance, Berkeley who initiated the first plant sales had, as we can see from this report, the overwhelming bulk of their sales -- and correctly so -- on the campus. At the same time, the sales which they've held reaching out have been important in playing this role outlined above.

The Longer Run Increase in Militant Circulation

At the plenum we agreed to work to increase the circulation of the Militant as part of an intensive fall homestretch election campaign drive. An important bi-product of this current propaganda campaign will be a permanent increase in the circulation and weekly sales of the Militant. }

One, we will get an increase in subscriptions to the paper. By selling out, for several weeks in a row, 20,000 copies of a Militant with large sub blanks and an attractive format we will obtain a number of new subscriptions.

Two, more important even than these subscriptions, is the planned increase in the permanent bundle orders by the branches as a result of this experience. We've already received letters from branches saying that the comrades, especially the newer comrades that haven't sold the paper very much, discover that they can sell. That it is possible to seek out meetings, draw up sales charts, and then inspire and mobilize the comrades to sell the paper. While nothing like the current pace of 20,000 a week should be kept up for any significant length of time, a big jump in the bundle orders is possible and will place the circulation of the Militant much closer to what it should be relative to our }

other activities and the openings we see in the rest of the election campaign. But we'll only get this bi-product if our branch leadership is consciously working toward it.

This will have to be discussed as this campaign goes along so that when the current level intensive campaign of propaganda around the French events ends, an increase in the general sales of the paper will be maintained. For instance, the sales director in Los Angeles has already written and said he thinks that it is realistic to come out of this campaign with a tripling of their permanent bundle. Their normal bundle, for example, used to be 110. They sold 750 last week. The sales director thinks a normal weekly bundle of about 300-350 is feasible. If all the branches approximated tripling of the permanent bundle order, the Militant press run, assuming a little increase in the general subscription rate, would increase from the 6,800 that it was prior to this campaign to almost 10,000.)))

That is a realistic goal we propose shooting for. It will put us on a totally new footing for the campaign in the fall. This is the most important organizational gain to plan on and work for from this sales campaign around the French events. |||
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Public Solidarity Activities

Almost every local has had at least one forum, several are planning their second. New York's second forum featuring Fred Halstead, a National Guardian speaker and a Columbia Strike Committee speaker will be this week. At least four of the locals that we know of already are beginning classes around the French events and their lessons. And depending upon the time of return of our comrades from France we can plan several large public meetings for Joe and Mary-Alice at several of the branches. The only weakness along this side of the campaign has been the lack of ads in the Militant for the public meetings and forums. It's a bad oversight to forget to do this. Even assuming that few people come to the public meeting in response to the ad, they still play an important political role in showing our readers the scope of the activity of the party and its public campaign in support of the French events.

At least two branches that we know of -- New York and Berkeley -- have held solidarity picket lines and demonstrations that have attracted a number of youth outside our ranks. And in New York another larger united front meeting is planned. At this stage modest united actions at some of the most active campus centers is all that is feasible. But we should keep a close watch as a change in the pace of the events in France or their character may make possible larger broad demonstrations of solidarity. A major new large-scale repression by the cops against the students or young workers in some of the plants holding out, the direct use of troops, an initiative by the right wing, a new explosion by the workers and students after the elections, the direct or indirect use of American armed forces or military support -- any of these things would change this picture. We expect to receive this weekend a short tape recording from Alain Krivine, the central leader of the JCR, expressing gratitude for the American solidarity actions. We can use

(this at forums or solidarity demonstrations, and we can supply it to anyone who would like it.

The French events have had a large impact on the entire left in America. The CF has been forced to give, in the Worker, more prominent coverage of the French events centered around an open defense of the role of the PCF. This gives us a big opening for an extended educational and propaganda campaign through polemics in the Militant on the American CP, the meaning of their defense of the French CP and the connection this has to the issues before the mass movement in the American presidential election campaign in 1968. Farrell will report our thinking on this.

Other circles have been affected by the French events. For instance, the National Guardian has opened up what for them is a hot and heavy campaign against the policies of the PCF and the need for the revolutionary party. The impact of these events on the new radicals and the blow the French workers and students are dealing to the myths of the New Left theoreticians is important.

This sort of lessons open the way to an increase in our influence and prestige in the radical movement which we can take advantage of for many months. The open attack by the CF on Trotskyism and their admission of the leading role of the Trotskyists in the student movement was an unprecedented thing for them.

(Future Plans

We propose to develop the propaganda campaign around France in several ways.

1) The youth plan a special issue of the Young Socialist being put out around the French events. And the key articles describing the JCR, its development, its politics and their relation to its American sister organization will then be put out in a special Young Socialist pamphlet.

2) We plan to collect the major articles on France in the Inter-continental Press, the Militant and the Young Socialist, put them in chronological order with an introduction, notes and photos, and print them immediately as a large paperback book. It will be the entire records of the French revolution of May-June 1968 from the Trotskyist point of view. We'll plan to get this out right after the results of the elections.

3) As an act of solidarity with the French vanguard, we have reprinted L'Enrage. We'll be sending it to the branches to sell and to place in bookstores. There'll be no discount to branches, so that as much income as possible will accrue from it. We will be giving bookstores the normal discounts. The key thing will be to get L'Enrage into as many bookstores as possible as well as selling it over a period of time to the radical youth milieu.

4) The YSA NO has already produced a JCR button to be sold as a solidarity gesture and the Berkeley local is also producing a solidarity button which we will sell nationally.

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So far, the only thorough reports we have on the Militant sales campaign in the branches as a whole are from Berkeley and Seattle (see attached). We assume we will get reports from all the branches this coming week. We'll make excerpts from them and send them out. As in all successful campaigns, individual branches come up with good ideas to implement one or another aspect of the work, test it, send us the results. As fast as we get them, we pass them along for the use, given local conditions, of the other branches. This is much better than abstractly trying to think up the concrete ways of carrying out a campaign of this sort. We will excerpt and distribute to the organizers and NC members major portions of those reports if they come in this week.

Attachment to IC Minutes #17

Report by Dobbs on Propaganda Campaign around French Events

My remarks will be directed mainly to the question of what to do in this country in connection with the French events. First, I want to make some observations about basic aspects of the French situation that constitute the premise for the proposals I want to present.

There is sufficient evidence available to indicate clearly that a potentially revolutionary situation exists in France. Ten million workers on strike. Together with their families I believe they in themselves constitute a majority of the French population. The effect of the student radicalization upon the working class has been one of not only providing a very important body of allies for the revolutionary power that resides in the working class, but also of speeding the radicalization of the political outlook of the working class at this point of revolutionary crisis. And it shows not only a confirmation of the long-recognized role of the students and intellectuals in forecasting the coming trends of a worker radicalization by their vanguard action in the realm of thought, but as has been noted in several connections in the material we've been publishing on the question, there's a new affirmation in concrete terms at the present objective stage in history of the role of the students and intellectuals as a catalyst in the development of revolutionary struggle. Add the third wave, the peasants, coming into the struggle with considerable militancy and a general attitude of hostility against the regime, then consider the circumstances in which this general mood has tended to permeate throughout the middle class as a whole, and the evidence is profound that the revolutionary power is potentially at hand to carry through a fundamental social change in the country.

When you consider these factors in connection with the question of the potential for repression that resides in the hands of the capitalist class, one has to conclude that the DeGaulle regime is a long way from having guaranteed loyalty in the armed forces. As a matter of fact, in the earlier stages of the struggle there was already evidence that even some police, the gendarmerie at least, if not some of the more elite police forces, were themselves infected by the upsurge that started against the regime. Clearly, all the objective premises were at hand for a revolutionary socialist advance. That was one fact.

There's an equally compelling body of evidence accumulated to make clear that the traditional parties of the working class, the Stalinists and the Social Democrats, have played a traitor's role throughout the entire series of events, striving to abort the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, steer the conflict into popular front channels with a view toward constituting a bourgeois democratic regime in that form as against the Bonapartist-Gaullist type regime and, above all, to keep everything locked up within the framework of preservation of the capitalist system. That's factor number two in considering our approach to the question.

From this, it follows that you have again an affirmation in new and changed form of the opening postulates of the transition program of 1938: the accumulating objective potential for revolutionary overturn in the advanced capitalist countries growing out of the death agony of capitalism and a crisis of leadership that stands in the way. That, to my mind, becomes the third aspect to the premises for our approach in this country.

It is not yet clear that the Stalinists and the Social Democrats can succeed in definitely aborting the struggle for this period. We don't have enough evidence to judge that yet; our evidence is very limited. It is not yet clear what the potential may be for the relatively swift constitution of a more effective revolutionary leadership from the point of view of its weight and influence in the mass movement. We can take note with great satisfaction that our French co-thinkers leapt into this situation with a correct and, it appears to me, astute application of the basic Trotskyist line. We can take note of the fact that there is a correct gestation toward regroupment among divergent Trotskyist tendencies, apart from the Lambert group, concerning common action in the situation. We can take note of the fact that the vanguard of our co-thinkers in France seems already to have considerable and growing influence among the students. The big unknown is what headway are they making in the working class. We take it for granted that they're seizing every opening in that direction, but we don't know yet what has happened or what the prospects are. And I don't think the potential there in any case has yet run its course.

In general it is these basic factors in the French situation that constitute the motivation for proposals I will outline concerning what to do in this country regarding the French events. The indicated step right from the outset, of course, is to do what we realistically can to extend fraternal solidarity to our co-thinkers in France. Also, to proceed as we are already doing in all possible ways to communicate as widely as we can in this country a clear picture of what is happening in France, what it means and how it relates to future struggles in the United States. One of the things already discussed somewhat extensively in our press is the fact that this titanic explosion in France knocks into a cocked hat all the pseudo-theories about the alleged historic bankruptcy of the working class. Ten million French workers did more in a few days than we could have done with ten million polemics to refute the pessimistic nonsense from Marcuse, Sweezy and their kind that the workers were no longer capable of playing a revolutionary role and that some new vanguard formation had to be conjured up out of thin air. This will aid our recruitment among students, I think, in the sense that we will be better able to communicate more quickly to more students the essential meaning, the indispensable purpose and therefore the objective necessity of organizing a revolutionary political party in this country that bases itself on the concept of the working class spearheading the struggle for power. That's been one of our problems up to now, more of an obstacle than I think it will be in the aftermath of what is happening in France, in the recruitment of students to our revolutionary vanguard working class party, thereby identifying with the class through the vanguard party in advance of the general radicalization of the class itself. I think it will be in this connection somewhat easier to communicate to students the rela-

relationship between the role of students and the role of the working class.

Concerning the role of students as detonators of class struggle upsurges, we must show how this is conditioned by objective conditions, by the readiness of the workers for action. The students in and of themselves, short of a massive upsurge among the workers, have no possibilities of carrying through the aspiration of overturning the state as a whole and fundamentally reorganizing the system of the country. Now, we'll have some problems along this line. We have to anticipate that some of the galvanizers who imagine that actions by a limited vanguard will galvanize the masses, will tend toward adventuristic efforts artificially and mechanically to emulate the French students. This makes our educational efforts all the more imperative.

As against all of the negative aspects of our situation in the past, we're now strongly reinforced with the most compelling evidence of the validity of Marxism and that brings me right to the heart of the key question of what to do here. Assuming a reaffirmation of Marxism in the minds of thinking people in the light of the French events, then comes the question: what is Marxism? And here we come right head on against the problem with relation to our principal opponents in the contest for radical leadership in this country, that is, the Stalinists who masquerade as Marxists. Our job is to come to grips with the question of what is Marxism and what is not Marxism, who are Marxists and who are not Marxists. Polemics along this line can be raised to a qualitatively new and higher plane in the period ahead in this country.

It would be extremely effective for us if we approached the French question in this country around the general axis of a political offensive against the Stalinists. I think that with regard to explaining what's happening in France and the meaning of it to people in the various sectors of the mass movement in this country that can be advantageous. It would take the form of polemic, and in the last analysis polemic is far more effective than abstract analysis in getting across the essence of political concepts and the political meaning of events. With respect to the Stalinists themselves, we have some powerful ammunition against them and we should take after them with a vengeance and beat them over the head with the consequences of the treachery of their co-thinkers in France.

If you take the role of the French CP as the point of departure, it puts the Stalinists here right on the spot. They're trying to defend the line of the French CP and the evidence against them is so compelling that all they can do is expose their own political bankruptcy in the eyes of honest people trying to find the truth. Not only do they stand vulnerable because of their defense of the treachery of the French CP, but by their defense of their co-thinkers in France new light is thrown on the fundamental meaning of the CP political line in this country. We can strike hammer blows at them on the question of popular frontism, concerning the criminality of crossing class lines in politics. We can drive home some deep lessons to militants about the fallaciousness of the line that you have to make your vote count in elections, that the only way you can influence things on a day by day basis at the present juncture is find a way to press a reformist line through participation

(in the capitalist political mechanism. We can teach new, deep lessons to thinking militants about how this road leads to precisely the crisis of leadership that exists in France today. This policy, carried out by the CP right down to the moment of the mass upsurge in France, if reproduced in this country would create the same leadership crisis here that now plagues the French masses. I'm leaving aside here the question of the deliberate political intent of the Stalinists and talking about people who get sucked in by them. Militants who accept reformist strategy right down to the last moment before a mass radicalization will stand disarmed in program and leadership at the moment of revolutionary crisis as has been demonstrated in France.

From the point of view of Stalinist methods, we can also hit them hammer blows. Stalinist method in France has been, instead of presenting their line frankly as their line that they urge be supported by the masses, to represent their line as merely expressing the aspirations of the masses. Then they attack the revolutionary line of the Trotskyists, which actually expresses the aspirations of the masses, as an attempt to split the working class and its allies. By picturing their line as the will of the masses, they then twist reality into a crooked assertion that everyone who criticizes their line is trying to split the masses. That's the way they have functioned in France. And the CP here echoes that and reproduces it in the Worker and defends it.

(Now if you stop and think for a moment there's a very close parallel between this method followed by the French CP and the caper that the Stalinists in this country are trying right now in collaboration with the pacifists in the Student Mobilization Committee. The central accusation is that the YSA is trying to impose its line on the Student Mobilization Committee against the will of the rank and file. The connotation here is a direct parallel to that in France. They try to make it appear that their line, instead of being a line that they're urging the students to adopt, is an expression of the aspirations of the student militants who want to fight against the war. Our objections to their line, our capacity to make a class struggle line prevail to significant extent because it accords with the wishes and aspirations of the students, is pictured as an attempt on our part to derail the movement. We should draw these parallels as to method and show what it means. It will help us to deal not only with the concrete reality of the given stage of developing class struggle in the United States, but to show both how it is evolving towards the mirror image of its future that has today exploded on the French scene and what the fundamental role of the Stalinists is in the situation. In this way we can make clearer why it will be poison to the militants of this country if they let themselves fall under the control of the Stalinists and why Stalinism must be combatted. In that sense we should conduct a sustained political offensive against the Stalinists around the French question in relation to the American scene for the duration of the election campaign and beyond.

(How, then, to apply it. It would seem that a good way to begin would be with a general declaration directed fundamentally against the CP that would become the kick-off to such an offensive. I would think that at the given juncture, in view of the presidential campaign and

all the factors related thereto, that it would be best to have the declaration in the form of a statement by the presidential ticket, Halstead and Boutelle. That should merely be the kick-off, however, and should not be envisaged as a one-shot proposition. We should carry on a sustained literary polemic against the Stalinists in this regard and a combination of a kick-off declaration by the presidential ticket and the literary polemic in our press should serve as a basis to stimulate comrades in our movement as a whole to take after the Stalinists in every locality. For instance, the comrades in Oakland-Berkeley have already challenged the CP to a debate there.

As to the essence of the declaration by the presidential ticket, having in mind the political points that I've indicated in my remarks, there would be two essential components to the statement. One, what's happened in France and the treacherous role of the CP in France. And the second part, there happens to be a Communist Party in the United States which defends the CP line in France. We challenge it to defend its position in public debate.

One final thought. I said that the proposals are raised from the point of view of the fact that the Stalinists are our main opponents in the fight for radical leadership. Back in the thirties, in view of the historic circumstances of the time, the Stalinists were able to squeeze us into a corner and they were able to exert their dominance in a sweeping way in the radicalization of the thirties. In the aftermath of that phase, one of the things we have paid very close attention to as time and events have moved forward in history is the changing relationship of forces between the Stalinists and ourselves. As we entered the decade of the sixties, we were at a point where we felt confident to say that it was no longer a question of the Stalinists being assured in advance of a superiority over us in the relation of forces that would reproduce the circumstances of the thirties; that we had a better chance than we had in the thirties to compete successfully against the Stalinists in the fight for radical leadership. We're now in the eighth year of the decade of the sixties and between what has evolved in this country, particularly since the rise of the anti-war movement, and what has now exploded in France, it is my opinion that we have come objectively to the point where we've got the edge over the Stalinists in the fight for radical leadership. I don't mean to imply that it's become so certain that it's going to be automatic. I mean that we've got the edge insofar as we continue to prove capable of taking maximum advantage of every new phase of objective developments to build our forces, extend our influence in the mass movement and strike blows at the Stalinists. I think you can say definitely that if we take the maximum advantage of the French developments to launch a sustained political offensive against the Stalinists in this country that we've got a very good chance of improving what I believe is the beginning of a qualitative change in our favor as against the Stalinists in the fight for hegemony in the coming American radicalization.

Discussion

Fred Halstead: At the time of regroupment, we were also involved in an offensive against the Stalinists, but our tactics were different. We were trying to get close to their milieu and their members, get close to people suffering shocks from the Khrushchev revelations. We watched our language, and all that. We're in a different situation now, it seems to me. This is the time to take off the gloves and really whale 'em. The point here is not only to get the edge within the radical movement, but also to teach the lessons about Stalinism in general to the class as best as we can and we have another historic opportunity to do so now.

Harry Ring: Fred makes the point of the difference in language and tone needed here as against the regroupment period. I think the difference is not just that of language, but who we're trying to convince. I don't think we have a perspective in this situation of any orientation toward CP circles, that is of trying to break away any significant segment of the CP or its periphery.

I think that in the course of carrying out such a campaign we will break away some young people from their circles, perhaps even some older ones. But I don't see that as a significant aspect of the fight against the CP. I think that what we have here is an unusual opportunity to educate radicalizing young people in this country about the nature of Stalinism. This is, for me, the real opportunity, not that of driving any significant wedge into their ranks.

I think even the opportunity among their young people is very limited. We're not dealing, for the most part, with misguided young revolutionaries who are in the CP by mistake. They're there, from what I've seen, because they're reformists to the marrow of their bones.

I think we have to make very clear that while we don't turn our back on any possible opening in CP circles, the whole basic aim of this fight has to be to isolate the CP and educate radical-minded young people as to what they really are.

I think the French events also afford us the opportunity to discuss with the Cubans and other Latin American revolutionaries a key issue that continues to be an important point of difference among us, that is, the role of the working class in the advanced, imperialist countries. To one degree or another, almost all of the Latin American movements, outside our own, have subscribed to the theory that the workers of the imperialist countries can no longer be considered even a potentially revolutionary force. The French events obviously should go a long way in causing them to reconsider this question.

Lew Jones: On the question of the CP. The aim of this campaign is to expose the CP's line as a means of further isolating the CP. It is important as a secondary aspect to utilize the inroads into the CP youth milieu that we have gained in the course of the antiwar movement. We will want to an appropriate extent to take the lessons we are drawing to these youth. It is true that the CP youth leaders are hacks, but it is also true that a characteristic of some of the youth around the CP is

a sort of non-political allegiance to the Communist Party which they see as a party that led the Russian revolution. One aspect of this campaign would be to show that that is not true, by indicating the lessons of the French events and the Student Mobilization Committee fight. It is doubtful that much, if any, recruitment would come of this, but it can have a demoralizing effect on their cadres. We've been able to do a little bit of this in New York. We've been able to involve some of the CP milieu in building a solidarity demonstration for the French events, which will give us an opportunity to discuss the SMC fight with them before the rest of the movement.

George Novack: If we chart the relative strengths of the CP and ourselves over the past third of a century, the shifting weights went through the following stages: the unchallengeable predominance in the 1930's and in the 1940's which extended into the Cold War period. You'll recall that one of the major presumptions of the Cochranites was that in the next wave of radicalization the CP was most likely to have the predominance at the beginning and we had to shape our outlook and tactics accordingly.

I agree with Farrell that now we've come to a turning-point in which there is a slight margin in our favor. We ought to estimate just what that margin consists of. It doesn't consist of numbers, resources or international connections. It's primarily in the amount of activism that we can mobilize. The homogeneity and training of our cadres and our morale as well as our more correct line.

As I estimate the CP, it's an anomaly now. It's a formation that is Stalinist in background, policy, in methods of operation and organization which has become almost thoroughly social democratized. I think that the accumulated events, if not immediately, are going to produce differentiations and very likely divisions inside their movement. Because, although it has a facade of uniformity, it's a congeries of cliques today. I don't know whether we've analyzed the different layers and groupings inside the organization. It's very unfortunate that we don't have a better picture of the internal life of the CP. We might discover some unusual things that we don't know about.

Finally, the United States is the one country in the Western world apart from Canada where Trotskyism, because of the whole historical background and the present situation in particular, has a very realistic chance of acquiring supremacy among the radicals and the radicalizing masses before the Stalinists or even the Social Democrats do it. We've got to imbue our cadres with this outlook -- it will be an historical first if we actually achieve it. But that's within reach.

Barry Sheppard: One point on what Farrell said about the "galvanizers." I think it's true there's going to be among some of the healthy kids (leaving aside the hardened ultra-leftists), even people we're reaching, at least an initial mis-estimation of the French events. I'll give you an example. This person Jack quoted from the Columbia Strike Committee came to our forum Friday night and he got all the lessons of the French events that Les gave in the forum and he repeated them at the

demonstration Saturday. Then he added his own "lessons" and they included that you don't need organization, Columbia and France prove all you have to do is have the students go out and act now and that will set off everything. But we'll get an assist in talking about that from the French events themselves, and as we begin to lay out the role of the JCR -- what kind of an organization it is and the role it played. What's its program? How did the struggle actually occur? It didn't just happen without organization, and clearly the triumph of the struggle can't occur without an organized revolutionary party.

Jack Barnes: We can use the sustained propoganda and educational campaign we're going to be carrying out in the Militant during the coming period to shed some light on the political role of students and youth. The events in France make it possible to do this in a more concrete way than before. There are three aspects of this question that we should separate and use the French events to analyze.

One is the whole changed character of the student population in the advanced capitalist countries -- its size, its social composition, its political composition especially compared to the grip of the social democracy or Stalinism had on radicalized students in the thirties. All these mean that the student population -- I use it in the broadest sense to encompass high school youth -- are going to play a more significant role and a more progressive role than we have seen in previous periods. I'm not talking now about their role during a revolutionary upsurge of the working class, but their role within society in this entire period and their effect on social struggles. Their weight, their capacity to sustain struggles, the progressive character of the understanding of many that their struggles are not only against the educational system, and around the problems of their generation and of youth, but against capitalism in one form or another. It is important to analyze the key lessons of the French events on this level. That is, a large and radical student generation uncontrolled by the Stalinists or Social Democrats involved other elements of their generation including the high school students and young workers and helped spark the massive struggle of the French workers. One of the lessons to learn from the French events, which bring in focus much that has been developing in the last decade in the advanced capitalist countries, is the possibility of the student youth playing a role as a detonator, a catalyst of broader social struggles. But that's neither the only lesson nor the most important one for us.

The second aspect is the importance of the organization and the education of open revolutionary Marxist youth organizations in the advanced capitalist countries. The size, homogeneity, political consciousness and audacity of the Marxist vanguard of the youth is a decisive factor in determining the character of the general political activity of the student youth. Barry's remarks hit the nail on the head on this. The French events, prior to the sit-down at Sud-Aviation when the workers came in, would have been quite different if the JCR had not played the role it had played in the initiating stages of the student actions themselves. It imparted a certain character to the actions, raised the consciousness of the activists, struggled to draw sections of the high school students and young workers in as early as possible, etc. We

don't have all the details on this yet. This will be one of the very interesting things to find out.

From this point of view we look at the students not only as a social layer which is going to play a different role than we've seen them play before, but as a source of recruitment to a revolutionary socialist youth group. This is an organization which at this stage plays this conscious leadership role and which organizes the most advanced elements of the college youth, the high school youth and, to a certain degree, even young workers, varying in different countries, as the conscious organized revolutionary spokesmen of their generation. And their success makes a great deal of difference as to the effect and utilization of these large-scale student energies.

Then there's the third aspect. It is the politically advanced youth, primarily students, prior to the radicalization of the working class, that are the central source of recruits not only to the revolutionary youth organization but to the Bolshevik party. This is a decisive question at this juncture for the SWP and the Fourth International.

To a certain degree the relationship of forces between the Stalinists and social democracy and the Trotskyists during an upsurge will be determined by our size. One of the problems of intervening with our ideas is the number of our cadres. And the size of the apparatus, the size of the cadre of the revolutionary party, in this period is going to be to a large degree determined by the capacities of the Fourth International, and by the capacities of the SWP in the United States, to recruit to the party and train as Leninists a layer of these youth.

These are three different questions that are continually mixed up and we should separate them out and draw the lessons of the French events about them. This especially ties in with the propaganda campaign against the Stalinists because on each of these levels the Stalinists have attacked the student youth of France. They've attacked them for attempting "to split the workers organizations"; they've attacked them for "splitting the Communist student organization"; they've attacked them privately for trying to split the CP. But what the CP is really attacking the revolutionary socialist student youth for is their fight to recruit a new French generation to the Fourth International, not to the Communist Party. It's important to find out all about this because we're seeing a preview of social struggles which will open up in the advanced capitalist countries including the U.S.

One of the initial steps in the propaganda campaign against Stalinism should be this statement by Fred and Paul. I think it would be most valuable if their initial statement was not directed to the Stalinists directly, but directed to the movement, to the radicalized left.

There is a layer of people in this country, young people especially but also others, who to one degree or another are not about ready to go with the Stalinists. Our problem with them is not their pro-Stalinism, but their anti-Leninism. Our problem with them is not their pro-Stalinism, but their lack of any perspectives for the working class in this country and for the need for a vanguard party of the working class.

And it's to them that the key lessons of the French events should be directed in order to draw them toward us, to get them to support our campaign, to recruit them. Many of these people, some of the youth in and around SDS, some of the advanced Afro-American militants, probably some of the thinking young workers that we may not have that much contact with, for one reason or another because of their own experience, reject the CP and Stalinism. Our problem is not only to get them to reject the CP's perspective but to get them to accept ours.

The CP has done us a favor by deciding to put themselves into explicit opposition to Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle in the '68 presidential race. I think we should emphasize the word "sustained" in Farrell's remarks about a sustained propaganda campaign. This campaign beginning now goes clear through the entire presidential campaign. What the CP says by running a ticket is that Halstead and Boutelle is not the socialist alternative -- we must run our own ticket. We will kick off this fight by showing that France teaches us that we should support the SWP campaign, that we should prepare for the same thing in this country and we should build an organization of a certain kind.

Finally, on the question of the CP, I'm very glad that George made the remarks he made. I was struck on my tour and it was reconfirmed by some of the remarks at our plenum that we should be careful about jumping to any conclusions about the CP without getting the facts straight first. What Harry says is true about CP youth leaders and even some of the people who've been around them for a long time, but it's certainly not true of all the young people who are attracted to one degree or another toward the Communist Party and the CP circles. We've recruited many of these youth in the past several years. I can list name after name in various party branches of young people whose parents were in the CP, who were attracted by the CP's ideas, who were even briefly members of the DuBois Club, who were looking for a road to socialism. They're not hacks. We don't know how many of them there are and, while they're not our main target in this kind of propaganda offensive, we will reach some we don't know about.

It's important that we accurately view the relationship of forces between us and the CP. I think it is possible that the American CP is going to do some recruiting out of the French events. They may lose some people, too. There will be a process of differentiation, and we'll do a job on them, but I also think they're going to pick up some people. They attempt to convince the young people around them this is the French workers, this is the CGT, this is the French Communist Party, we've fought here, we've fought there, now we're fighting against de Gaulle. They will have to attempt to utilize the French events, not only to lie and cover up their real role, but to try to get some feeling of spirit and elan imparted to their young people about the role of the CP. They tried to do that in this week's Worker. They now have two correspondents in Paris, and compared to other weeks when they actually down-played the French events, the whole top half of the Worker this week featured two stories from Paris, one of which was about the "leading role" of the Communist Party in the struggles of the French workers. And so it's important to note the sustained character of our propaganda offensive and the fact that people around CP circles are going to be confused for a period of time. It's part of

our recruitment drive as we go into the homestretch of the election campaign. And we can count on unexpected and explosive events -- including more in France -- to help us out on this.

Farrell Dobbs: On the question of the youth that Jack has just discussed. Without having any comparative statistics, I get the general impression that student youth in the United States stand quantitatively, and you might say to a limited degree qualitatively, in a different status than student youth in France. Quantitatively, the student population in this country, with the extensive educational system and larger student body, seems to be somewhat greater in proportion to the population as a whole than is the case in France. In the qualitative direction, it is my impression that there is a pronouncedly more significant proportion of sons and daughters of the working class in the student body in this country than is the case in France. Even on that basis, however, student youth as such, acting on their own, cannot carry through the struggle to the point of effecting basic social change. That is why we use the term "detonator" or "catalyst" with respect to students' relations to the development of action by what George called the heavy battalions of the class struggle, the working class. Another aspect that Jack elaborated further which I had touched on -- students identifying with the working class through the medium of the conscious vanguard party of the class -- requires some extensive thought. Let's go back for a moment to some aspects of the situation in the thirties in this country. The students had tended to radicalize ahead of the workers in the thirties, as is generally the case. The Communist Party was able to make considerable headway in recruiting students and intellectuals in advance of the labor radicalization, in advance of the main explosion which took the form of the rise of the CIO in the mid-thirties. Now, two things coalesced in that experience which add concreteness to the question we're discussing here about the role of the student youth in combining with the working class in struggle, as well as standing as a formation on their own.

The young workers who spearheaded the labor radicalization in the thirties welcomed the direct support and assistance of students. All a student had to do was indicate that he was on the workers' side and he was welcomed with open arms. As a matter of fact, workers, you know, have tremendous respect for intellectuals. On occasion, John L. Lewis used to make derogatory remarks about intellectuals but that didn't symbolize the attitude of the working class. It reflected Lewis' reaction to the way some intellectuals who identified with the labor movement were critical of Lewis' desire to run everything with an iron hand. The attitude of the class itself, and particularly the young workers, was one of welcoming the students with open arms.

It was in this setting that the Communist Party, by virtue of the recruitment it had already accomplished among students and intellectuals, was able to send detachments of these young people into the exploding labor radicalization to play a direct role and win significant leadership. The particular form that development took in the thirties would not necessarily be repeated now. In the thirties, outside of the relative handful organized around the AFL, the working class was atomized; it wasn't even organized at the trade union level. In that circumstance

in the thirties, students and intellectuals sent into the labor movement by the CP were able to become an integral part of the leadership at one or another level in unions that were just coming into being. Today, while the trade union movement is not all that it should be in proportion to the labor force as a whole, you still have a very substantial organized trade union movement and one that is highly bureaucratized. This creates a different set of circumstances concerning the forms of identification of students and intellectuals with radicalizing workers, but the essence will still be the same.

In this regard, we should get all possible information from our co-thinkers in France about the experiences they're having, because here again you're experiencing largely the counterpart in France, in living terms today, of what are going to be the implied lines of development in future radicalization of the American working class. It will be very important for us to find out everything we can about the kind of liasons that develop between the students and the young rebel workers in the given French situation, where there is a strongly organized, highly bureaucratized union setup. Particularly, we need information about the role of our co-thinkers in this respect. We should study all such information very, very closely.

Now the other point I wanted to comment on is the very pertinent factor that Harry raised about the differences in our approach to the Stalinist ranks at this juncture as against the situation at the time of regroupment. A key thing to keep in mind here is that our regroupment campaign was aimed primarily at the Stalinist ranks, due to a given set of circumstances in which the revelations at the Twentieth Congress by Krushchev in 1956 had proven to have a shattering effect on the Stalinist ranks everywhere. It became clear to one-time revolutionary militants, who had been spoon-fed the Stalinist line to the point where it had become a way of life with them, that they had been taken for a bunch of suckers and it was a shattering experience for them. The question was -- how many of these militants, now that it became clear that they had identified themselves with a fundamentally false line, would be able to turn around and resume a revolutionary course. That was an unknown quantity. The indicated thing for us was to reach them and try to help salvage whoever we could that was capable of turning around. Experience showed that there weren't many that could do it. Some clung to the outlook and old setup and today constitute the basic core of the present CP. Others wandered off into limbo, out of radical politics, made their peace with the capitalist system, without any pretext of further identification with the cause of socialism. A bare handful were salvaged.

Unless it's crystal-clear that there are different circumstances today than was the case then, comrades will get some mistaken notions about how to think out tactics toward the CP. I think it's worth your while to review the political resolution adopted at the 1959 party convention in which we drew a balance sheet on the regroupment experience. (Militant, July 27, 1959) The thing I want to take note of at the moment is the essence of the conclusions reached in that balance sheet -- that the forces for a revolutionary vanguard party in the United States must come from radicalizing young workers, black militants and student youth. Everything that has happened since 1959 has verified that conclusion. It follows that in a propaganda offensive against the Stalinists, we are

aiming not primarily at the Stalinist ranks, but primarily at newly-radicalizing young militants from the various sectors of the mass movement. There is greater promise in some mass sectors at the moment, less in others, but in general we are aiming in that direction. That means that our primary objective is to prevent the Stalinists from influencing young militants who become radicalized and win them to our own ranks; that's our primary objective and we have to keep that very carefully in mind. Of course, we pay attention to what the situation is in the CP, we pay attention to the question of who the Stalinists may be winning and if they get somebody they're not entitled to, we're still concerned with the question of how to win such militants away from them. But the important thing is to keep carefully in mind which is the primary and which is the secondary tactic.

The primary tactic now is to reach into the various sectors of the mass movement and win young militants to our movement and prevent the Stalinists from winning them. The secondary tactic is to do what we can to win over anybody the Stalinists get that they're not entitled to and further weaken them in that regard. Our primary task, in a word, is to do everything we can to dry up as much as possible recruitment potentialities for the Stalinists and recruit the radicalizing militants to our movement. Since some militants are going to slip through our net, we pay attention in a secondary sense to trying to correct that situation.