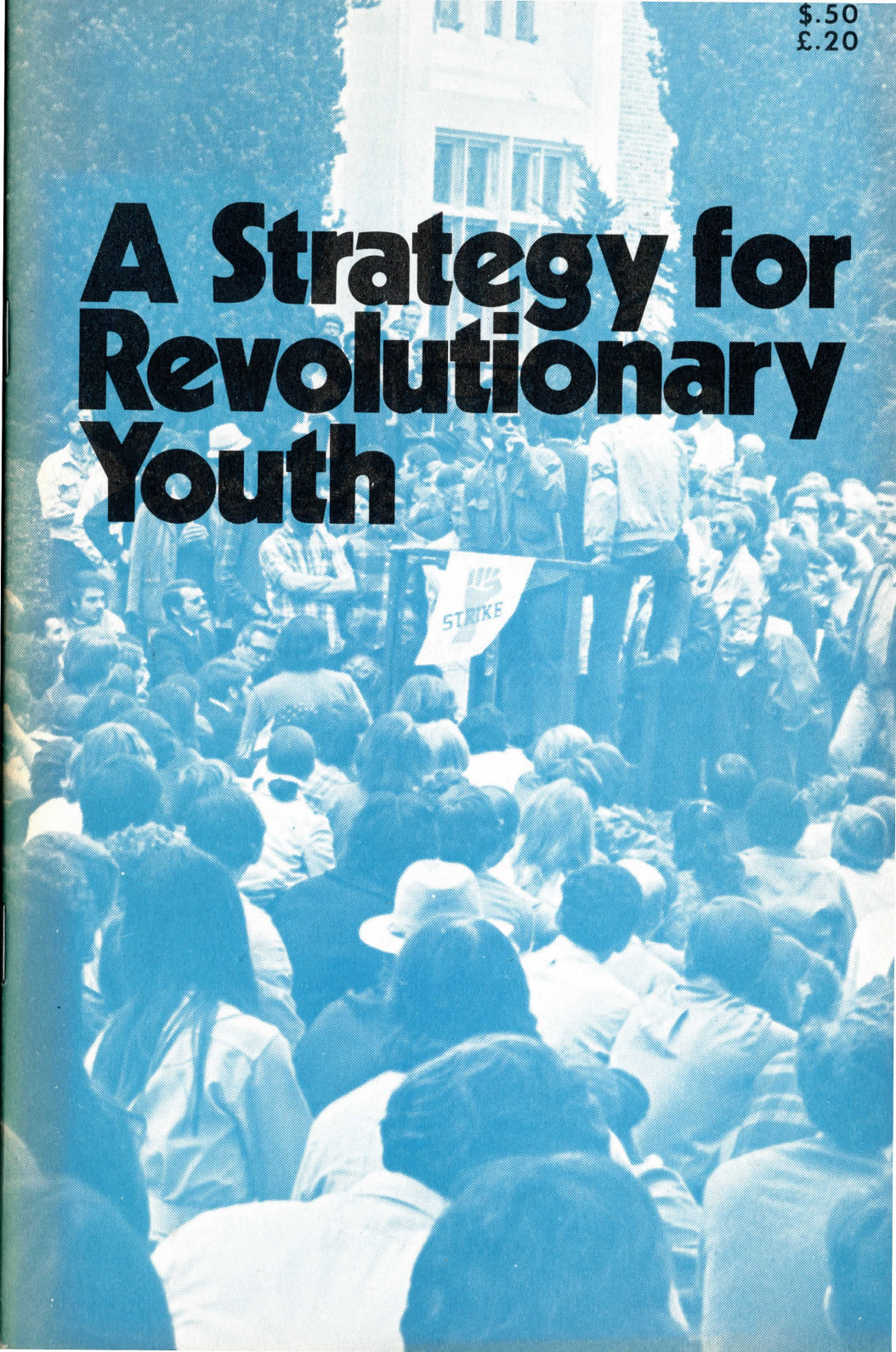


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£.20

A Strategy for Revolutionary Youth



This pamphlet was first published by the Young Socialist Alliance in August 1969, under the title *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, and is reprinted by permission.

Manufactured in the United States of America
Second Edition, April 1972

Pathfinder Press, Inc.
410 West Street
New York, N. Y. 10014

A Strategy For Revolutionary Youth

INTRODUCTION

The 1960s and '70s have seen an explosive new factor burst onto the political scene the world over: the student revolt, and a broad radicalization of the young generation.

If one simply recalls some of the highlights of the series of international student and youth struggles, the impact of this radicalization and its importance in world politics become abundantly clear. There were the Japanese student struggles against the Japan-U. S. Security Treaty, the Mexican student mobilization culminating in the Tlatelolco massacre of 1968, the struggles of the Czech and Yugoslav students for socialist democracy, the French student movement of May 1968, the May 1970 student protest in the U. S. against the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State and Jackson State killings, and the central role of students in the struggle for self-determination in Bangladesh. One could extend this list on and on.

In several of these instances, student revolts have served as a "detonator" of struggles by the masses of workers which have led to the brink of social revolution.

For revolutionary socialists, it is of the utmost importance to correctly analyze this phenomenon of masses of youth coming to political consciousness. We must understand its roots, the social and ideological characteristics of the rebel youth, and their place and weight in society as a whole, in order to be able to win these students and youth to a revolutionary perspective.

The document that follows is an attempt to analyze the international student revolt and its meaning for the socialist revolution. It is intended to be a tool, or guide, for revolutionary Marxists to use in their participation in the student struggles, to lead these struggles in the direction of socialism.

This document was written in 1969, drawing on the experiences of the student struggles of the late 1960s. Only one year later it was strikingly confirmed in the upsurge that shook the American university system in May of 1970. During the May strike, students carried out an aspect of the red university strategy by taking over their schools, transforming them into antiwar universities, and using them as a base to reach out and mobilize nonstudents as well as students against the war.

This document was presented by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International to a world congress of that organization held in April 1969 to begin a discussion within the Fourth International on the new youth radicalization.

The Fourth International was founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, when it had become clear that the Third International had completely degenerated under the leadership of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR. The goal of the Fourth International is to build a world party of socialist revolution consisting of mass revolutionary socialist parties in all countries.

In its discussion of the youth radicalization, the Fourth International has had much experience to draw upon: for example, the role of the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (JCR) and the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (the French organizations which merged to form the Ligue Communiste, the French section of the Fourth International) in the May-June 1968 revolt in France; the experiences of Mexican revolutionary socialists in the student struggles of 1968; the experiences of the Japanese section of the Fourth International in struggles of students and young workers in Japan; and the lessons learned in the course of the student struggles of the past few years by the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes in Canada and the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party in the United States.

The Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party are prevented from belonging to the Fourth International by reactionary legislation in the U. S., but the YSA and SWP are in political solidarity with the Fourth International and lend it fraternal support.

Caroline Lund
March 1972

A Strategy For Revolutionary Youth

A fresh generation of revolutionary youth has come upon the world scene and is playing an ever more important part in its politics. Over the past decade, a movement has grown from symptomatic indications of a mood of rebellion against a number of rotted institutions into a powerful revolt of youth on a global scale.

The social group most affected by this process of radicalization up to now has been the student population, which, owing to its increasing social weight and its sensitivity to world politics, has taken on greater and greater importance. The student youth do not reflect in a direct way the interests of the class to which they belong, or to which they will belong, but reflect primarily the contradictions and class struggles of society as a whole. The student radicalization mirrors and announces the current crises of the world capitalist system—hence its characteristic strengths and weaknesses.

The powerful student radicalization has shown its capacity to serve as a transmission belt speeding the development of a radical political consciousness among other social layers of the same generation. In several countries it has triggered mass action by the working class as a whole.

The growing combativity and revolutionary elan of this new generation have been proved many times over, in all three sectors of the world revolution. In Czechoslovakia the student movement played a central role in initiating the struggle for socialist democracy during the spring and summer of 1968.

In Pakistan the students touched off a social crisis of revolutionary proportions which brought down the regime of Ayub Khan. In Mex-

ico in the summer and fall of 1968 mass student demonstrations around basic democratic demands led to a sympathetic response from the masses of Mexico City and precipitated a political crisis for the Diaz Ordaz regime.

In France in May 1968 the student revolt catalyzed the biggest general strike in history and precipitated a revolutionary situation. The May-June events in France provided a graphic demonstration of the fact that not even the main centers of capitalism can avoid the dynamic effects of the student radicalization. These lessons have not been lost on the capitalist ruling class internationally.

While the bourgeoisie and their echoers in working-class circles decry the "conflict of generations," the "generational gap," and even "symbolic parricide," the issues posed by the youth in revolt are not primarily generational ones. They clearly reflect the major class conflicts of our time. The fundamental significance of this unprecedented radicalization of the youth is the emergence of new forces, ready, willing and able to enter the arena of class struggle on the side of the colonial peoples and the working class and to give battle to world imperialism and its accomplices, who falsely claim to speak in the name of the working class and its allies.

The new wave of radicalization began during the late fifties in response to the upsurge of the colonial revolution, the new rise in the Afro-American struggle in the U. S., and in reaction to the Khrushchev revelations of Stalin's crimes and Moscow's suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956. It was furthered by the Algerian revolution and given added impetus by the revolutionary victory in Cuba. It reached a qualitatively higher stage when U. S. imperialism escalated the Vietnam war, making Vietnam the focal point of the international class struggle. Millions of young people around the world rallied to the defense of the Vietnamese people.

The radicalization of the youth is of crucial importance to the Fourth International and its sympathizing organizations. It poses a major challenge to the entire world Trotskyist movement—how to provide leadership for it and win the best of the new generation to the banner of the Fourth International. Whether the Trotskyist current in a country is a small nucleus or an established tendency of some strength, this central task remains unchanged. *To recognize and carry out this task is central to the work and orientation of the International in the next period.*

I. Root causes and common features of the worldwide youth radicalization.

The political character of the radicalization of the new generation is rooted on the one hand in the crisis of imperialism and on the other in the correlative crises of Stalinism and the Social Democracy—

the historically bankrupt major tendencies in the workers' movement. The new generation is achieving political understanding during the most intense period of social convulsion in this century. In Vietnam it has seen modern imperialist war in all its brutality. In a few brief years it has witnessed big revolutionary upheavals and counterrevolutionary bloodbaths. Current history consists of a succession of upheavals and not even the United States is immune, as the ghetto uprisings and campus revolts bear witness.

The economic contradictions of imperialism are the underlying source of the social explosiveness of our era. Even while there has been a prodigious expansion of the productive capacities of the advanced capitalist countries in the past two decades, the gap between the rich and the poor nations has steadily widened. Successful revolutions in China, Cuba, and North Vietnam, along with the destruction of capitalist relations in Eastern Europe and North Korea, have removed vast areas from the sphere of direct imperialist exploitation. Political instability and the threat of revolution in one colonial country after another have inhibited capitalist investment in these sectors. At the same time competition between the major industrial powers for a larger share of the world market steadily intensifies.

These economic contradictions are intertwined with the necessity felt by imperialism to halt any further advances of the world revolution. *The efforts of the imperialists to maintain their exploitation and oppression and crush revolutionary movements have been the prime factor in radicalizing the youth in both the advanced capitalist countries and the colonial countries.*

While the example set by the insurgent youth in their challenge to capitalism has affected the youth in the workers states, the dissidence in these areas has been engendered primarily by the efforts of the bureaucratic caste to maintain their privileged positions and totalitarian rule.

The continuing crisis of world Stalinism has been a powerful factor in radicalizing the youth in both the Soviet bloc and the capitalist countries. The prestige and authority of the Kremlin have considerably diminished since 1956. The Sino-Soviet conflict, the Cuban revolution, the Vietnam war, and finally the invasion of Czechoslovakia have all contributed to the disintegration of Stalinist monolithism. The counterrevolutionary implications of the doctrine of "peaceful coexistence" and the "parliamentary road" to socialism, and the grotesque distortions created by the absence of workers' democracy and the abuses committed by a privileged bureaucratic caste, have become increasingly obvious to growing numbers of radical youth.

The Social Democracy is equally disqualified in the eyes of the new radical generation. The Social Democrats have become so thoroughly identified as guardians of capitalist rule that they have no attraction for the youth. Their youth organizations, with rare exceptions, are, like the Communist party youth organizations, empty shells with few active members or followers.

The new generation has come into politics under the impetus of a succession of victories. The Chinese, Algerian, Cuban, and Vietnamese revolutions and the advancing Afro-American liberation movement, have been key rallying points and sources of inspiration and emulation. The new generation has seen defeats, some of them bitter and tragic as in the case of Indonesia. But it has not undergone the numbing experience of such terrible and enduring catastrophes as the rise of Stalinism and fascism before the second world war and the betrayals by the Communist leaderships in Western Europe following that war. Most of them were too young to have had direct experience with the early years of the cold war. Many recall the victory of the Cuban revolution as their initiation into political life.

The dissident youth in the workers states have grown up during the erosion of the power and influence of Stalinism and are obliged to come to grips with all the problems involved in the antibureaucratic struggle.

While the interlocked crises of imperialism and of the historically superseded leaderships of the working class have shaped the basic political development of the student radicalization, they do not suffice to explain the social weight of the current student movements. Students have often engaged in forays in the past without causing much concern to the capitalist rulers or the bureaucratic regimes of the Soviet bloc.

The enhanced social weight and political impact of the student movement derive from the fundamental changes that have taken place in the sphere of education under pressure from the scientific, technological and industrial advances involved in the "third industrial revolution." These developments call for a more highly educated and technically qualified type of personnel which is capable of innovating, developing, and operating the most complex, up-to-date means of production and destruction.

These economic conditions require larger numbers of better educated people not only among the administrators and superintendents of the productive processes but also in the work force at all levels of industry and trade. Higher educational and cultural standards flow from higher levels of productivity and greater "capital intensity." The steady rise in the norms of qualification all along the line has greatly altered the character and structure of higher education, particularly in the more advanced countries over the past twenty years.

It has also resulted in the increasing proletarianization of white-collar workers as intellectual labor is introduced into the productive process on a larger and larger scale and the relative weight of unskilled manual labor is reduced in the productive process.

On a world scale, and in most individual countries, the facilities for higher education and the size of the student body are undergoing explosive expansion. According to the latest UNESCO figures, between 1950 and 1963-64 the student population in the world's colleges and universities more than doubled. In France it multiplied by 3.3;

in West Germany, by 2.8; the U. S., 2.2; Italy, 1.3; China, 6; Czechoslovakia, 3.2; the USSR, 3; East Germany, 2.8; Turkey, 3.7; Colombia, 3.5; India, 2.2. The high-school population has increased even more during the past fifteen years.

This turbulent growth has created more problems than it has solved. On the one hand, the educational setup has not been reshaped quickly enough or thoroughly enough to suit the requirements of the ruling class in the capitalist countries and the experts entrusted with looking after its interests. On the other hand, the demands imposed upon the university in transition from the old ways to the new have generated great dissatisfaction among the student body and sections of the faculty. The students' feeling of alienation resulting from the capitalist form of the university, from the bourgeois structure and function of higher education and the authoritarian administration of it, has become more and more widespread. This dissatisfaction has led to confrontations and sharp collisions with both the academic administrators and the authorities over them. The university has consequently been plunged into a severe and permanent state of crisis which cannot be overcome short of a revolutionary transformation of the social order.

In view of the rapid turnover of college "generations," these clashes touch layer upon layer of students in a relatively short period of time. They find that the university is often not equipped to train them in the skills they need to find employment or that it insists upon molding them according to the crassest needs of big business or the bureaucratic regime. In any case, the university is not designed to impart the most elementary truths about living society. In complicity with the established authorities, it tries to hide or to distort these truths and even to insist on falsifications. The insistent demands of the students for freedom of political inquiry and activity and control over the universities they attend bring on the now familiar head-on confrontations with the academic officials and the ruling class or bureaucratic caste which stands behind them.

While the specific issues, whether on or off the campus, which incite or rally the students to action vary considerably from one country to another, and even from one university to another, their movements are strikingly similar in pattern. The rebellious students find themselves arrayed against the powers that be and confronted with a showdown struggle.

Thus the sitdown occupation of the Belgrade university in June 1968 precipitated a national political crisis in Yugoslavia, as did the demonstrations of the French students a month earlier. The student demonstrations in West Germany, Japan, Pakistan, Egypt, and California have had powerful political repercussions.

In the last two decades, as it has grown in size, the student population has strikingly altered in complexion in several important ways.

1) The time spent as a student has appreciably lengthened. Millions

of young adults now spend their most productive and energetic years in the university environment. Many family restraints have been left behind, and they are not yet restricted to holding down a job to earn their livelihood. They have access to more information than the ordinary citizen and time to absorb and discuss its implications.

2) They are concentrated in educational institutions or areas to a degree exceeding the work force in all but the most giant factory complexes. The overwhelming majority of these educational institutions throughout the world are located in the major urban industrial centers where the working class is also concentrated and where the decisive battles for power will take place.

3) While the composition of the student body in the capitalist lands is still preponderantly middle-class in origin, there has been some influx (a significant one in the United States) from working-class backgrounds.

4) Social distinctions and stratifications within the student body are not so sharply defined as they were twenty or thirty years ago. A college degree no longer means that the holder automatically becomes a government functionary, a small businessman, or a member of the professions. Under today's advanced technology, a college graduate will more likely become a highly-paid technician or a skilled worker in the productive apparatus. He has nothing to sell but his more qualified labor-power and no perspective of escaping the essential condition of a wage worker. These circumstances tend to link him more closely to the industrial working class. The attitudes of university students are more and more influenced by this situation so that growing numbers tend to identify with the status awaiting them after graduation rather than with their family origin.

5) The owners and organizers of the economy are far more dependent for the operation of their enterprises upon the qualified personnel coming from the higher educational institutions and are therefore far more concerned about their moods, attitudes, and political orientations.

6) Students have stronger ties than previously with the rest of their generation in the high schools, factories and draftee armies, making their radicalization a more serious matter for the rulers. Regardless of class, youth are subject to more or less the same restrictions imposed by the norms of patriarchal bourgeois society, norms which usually prevail even in the countries that have abolished capitalist property relations. They are subject to the same discriminatory laws such as those dealing with political rights, military conscription, and social restrictions. These factors help to cement the ties between various social strata of the generation.

All these conditions taken together give the student population impressive social and political significance. The opinions and actions of this social layer have great impact on national life.

The new features of academic life are most evident in such highly

industrialized powers as the United States, Japan, Germany, and the Soviet Union. But all countries which compete in the world market or the military arena are subjected to their presence and pressures to one degree or another.

The pace of the global radicalization of the students, the ways in which it is refracted through diverse issues, and the depth of its impact vary considerably in the developed capitalist countries, the workers states, and the colonial lands. Nonetheless, the intensity and impact of the student demonstrations in Paris and Tokyo, Mexico and Brazil, Egypt and Pakistan, Poland and Czechoslovakia, testify to the universality of the phenomenon. The almost instantaneous world-communications network and the degree of international travel play a large role in this continuing universalization. The rebellious youth in one area rapidly copy the methods, take up the slogans and study the political lessons of struggles in other areas. The general admiration for heroes such as Che and the common inspiration drawn from the Vietnamese revolution are indices of a surprising degree of homogeneity in the youth vanguard the world over. They speak a common language.

The international interdependence of political ideas and experiences is key to understanding the current student radicalization as a world phenomenon, despite the variations determined by national particularities. Given the various social and political factors outlined above and the explosive character of our epoch, the current student radicalization is not just a conjunctural phenomenon, but a permanent one that will be of continual concern to the revolutionary movement from now on.

II. Ideology and politics of the student radicals

The student radicals exhibit a broad spectrum of ideological tendencies and political positions. For the most part, they disdain the Stalinism of the Moscow school and the reformism of the Social Democracy.

The treacherous, class-collaborationist role of Stalinism and Social Democracy is responsible for the fact that the student radicals as they gain political understanding have no mass workers' parties to turn to to learn the traditions and organizational and political norms of revolutionary politics. The new generation of radicals begins by rejecting Stalinism and Social Democracy, and bypassing them in action. In doing so they usually come to see themselves initially not so much as a clearly-defined alternative ideological current but as an alternative political vanguard, united in action around particular issues.

In their quest for a new ideological basis, the student rebels originally resurrected some of the primitive notions which had been tested and found wanting in earlier periods of socialist and labor history. The emphasis placed by the Cuban leaders on practice and their dis-

counting of theory helped to foster this trend. The new radicals initially neglected scientific theory and a carefully-worked-out political program of struggle in favor of pragmatic expedients. These served as a charter for impressionism and opportunism and later as an excuse for adventurism. In place of democratic centralism, "participatory democracy" and decentralization were advanced as nostrums. Under these banners, however, small uncontrolled cliques often manipulated movements in an undemocratic way. They substituted spasmodic actions, "propaganda of the deed," or "revolutionary style," for patient and persistent organization of the revolutionary forces.

The radical student movement goes through different organizational stages and forms, but these are not necessarily consecutive. Thus while in one country the student movement may evolve from a "student unionism" phase, through an anarchistic "participatory democracy" stage, to a stage where it sees itself as made up of various ideological tendencies, in another country all these various forms and stages may well overlap to a greater degree, or exist simultaneously.

Many of the radical student currents failed to recognize, or denied, the decisive historic role of the working class and its revolutionary vanguard party. The essence of their position was repudiation of Marxism in the field of ideology and Leninism in the sphere of organization. On the key question of Stalinism, over which many had begun their course to the left, they were unable to explain its nature as the historical antithesis of Leninism.

The basic weaknesses of many of the student radicals—instability, ultraleftism and inability to solve the organizational question—are rooted in the social nature of these currents. The same conditions which enable them to quickly reach a high level of political sensitivity—more leisure, less job discipline—make it more difficult for them to understand the need for a permanent organization, long-term strategy and patient and persevering political action.

The result was the paradoxical phenomenon of large numbers of young people moving to the left of the Communist and Social Democratic parties in their temper and activities but remaining deficient in their theoretical equipment and organizational concepts.

For example a layer of the new radicals in the West drew inspiration from the views of C. Wright Mills, Herbert Marcuse and others, who doubted the capacity of the working class to serve as the prime historical agency for social change, denying that it possessed the revolutionary potential ascribed to it by Marxist theory.

They disqualified the industrial workers. In the advanced capitalist countries they interpreted the twenty years of relative quiescence as evidence of a permanent structural characteristic of the working class. In the workers states, they held the workers to be incapable of breaking the rigid bureaucratization. In the colonial world, they noted that workers were often a relatively privileged layer compared

to the poor peasantry, and drew the conclusion they were thus incapable of leading revolutionary struggles.

They identified the working-class movement with the Stalinist and Social Democratic organizations and union officialdoms. They initially saw the possibility of victorious revolution in the postwar period only in the colonial world where the peasantry remains preponderant.

The general crisis of bourgeois ideology and the repulsive aspects of bourgeois society that have started many radical youths in search of collective political solutions induced others, often known as "hippies" or "beatniks," to seek an individual means of maintaining personal freedom without overturning capitalism. Some have reached utopian positions, believing that bourgeois society can be transformed through love and unselfishness. This tendency toward petty-bourgeois escapism and self-indulgence, the search for a new "life style" has its political reflection in the various anarchistic tendencies that exist in every country.

However, the political outlook of the radical students has not remained static. It has begun to evolve quite rapidly in the past two years. The various currents have been exposed to all contending schools of thought in the radical milieu, have gone through intense internal disputes and sometimes bitter factional alignments, and started to regroup. Maoism, spontaneism, neo-anarchism, state capitalism, Castroism, and Trotskyism have all won adherents and left their marks on the activists and their organizations.

The new radicals often attempt to combine theoretical and ideological elements from all the various political currents in the working class. But after a time, the march of events and experience in struggle compel many of them to define and further clarify their positions. Political tendencies emerge which basically reflect the different currents in the world labor movement. The thrust of the youth radicalization has been away from the opportunism of the Moscow wing of Stalinism and the Social Democracy. But lacking mass organizations with principled class struggle traditions from which they can learn, and frustrated by the limitations placed on the role a student vanguard can play, the biggest danger in the student movement becomes one of ultraleftism. Competing with, and systematic polemicizing against these various opponent currents is an essential part of winning the best elements to the banner of revolutionary Marxism.

The various weaknesses which are often seen among the new radicals and their organizations, however, come nowhere near outweighing their strengths:

1) By and large, national and international politics absorb the new generation of radicals. Often unacquainted with extensive mass mobilizations in their own living experience, many have had to arrive at revolutionary conclusions through independent critical thought, and have had to work out solutions on their own to important and complex problems.

2) The days of Communist and Socialist youth organizations, primarily concerned with social activities, sports contests, ye-ye, etc. are gone. The best of today's radical youth are attracted to the revolutionary youth groups and join them because of the militant actions they initiate or take part in, around the most burning political issues of the day, because of their political programs, their international perspectives, their seriousness toward theory.

3) Above all, the current radicalism of the youth is characterized by the rebirth of an authentic internationalism, the kind of solidarity that is the complete opposite of the narrow bureaucratic nationalism of the Stalinist movement. The greatest impetus to this development has been given by the Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions. The courage of the Vietnamese in resisting the aggression of American imperialism helped bring into being a worldwide effort on their behalf. The Cubans contributed to this revival by setting an example in their own appeals, by Che's call for "two, three, many Vietnams," and by their insistence that the best way to defend a revolution under attack from imperialism is to spread it to other countries.

The new radical generation is aware that it confronts a common enemy in imperialism, the capitalist ruling class of the United States in the first place. It has already shared a series of common political experiences in the struggle against imperialism (Cuba, Vietnam). International campaigns are readily geared together and joint actions rendered more effective by the ease of communication and travel in the world today.

4) One of the most promising characteristics of the student radicalism is its anti-authoritarian bent, its lack of respect for tradition and its readiness to challenge and question most of the hallowed norms, rules, and regulations of the past. In its search for answers to problems which it did not create, the new generation is willing to consider with an open mind precisely those solutions which have been regarded as heretical and taboo. In fact, whatever is opposed by the state, school, parents, church, employer, or bureaucracy is thereby recommended to the rebels.

5) Many young radicals are groping toward a revolutionary Marxist understanding of national and world politics. Leaving aside those who reject Marxism and Leninism out of prejudice, without seriously studying and testing them, most of them are earnestly striving to make their way in a confused, experimental way through the fog of lies and distortions spread by the capitalist agencies as well as the falsifiers of Marxism.

They may be temporarily diverted in the blind alleys of Maoism, neo-anarchism, or ultraleftism, but bit by bit they are rediscovering the truths of Marxism and learning how they apply to contemporary reality.

It is these qualities of the new radicalization, and its development outside of, and as an alternative to, the organizational forms of

Stalinism and Social Democracy, which give it key importance for the world Trotskyist movement. It is the existence of broad currents with these political strengths that makes it possible and crucially important to build broad united-front organizations for struggle around specific issues. It is also these political strengths that open unparalleled opportunities to win large numbers of this new generation to revolutionary Marxist youth organizations, and the very best of them to the revolutionary party.

III. Strategy of the "Red University"

Radical student circles are hotly debating the central question of orientation. What should be the direction and objectives of the student struggle? What kind of relationship should the student movement seek with the broader struggle of the working masses and oppressed nationalities? What sort of program should the revolutionary vanguard put forward for the student movement?

The reformist tendency maintains that students should concern themselves primarily with narrowly defined university issues—grades, courses, the quality of education, living conditions, narrow campus politics. They see struggles around such issues in isolation from the crisis of capitalist society as a whole. They counterpose such limited struggles to the inclinations of the politicalized students themselves to take up issues of key concern to the world, such as the war in Vietnam.

At the opposite end of the spectrum stand the ultralefts. Most of their strategies come down to turning the energies of the student body away from the academic milieu altogether, to leaving the campus and taking the student activists to the factory gates or into the "community," to distribute leaflets proclaiming the need for revolution. The Maoists epitomize this in the slogan "Serve the People."

Both of these orientations should be rejected as one-sided and sterile. The revolutionary youth vanguard, to be effective, must put forward a program that transcends the campus in its goal, but at the same time includes it; that connects student demands with the broader demands of the class struggle on a national and international scale, that shows students how their own demands relate to these bigger struggles, are an integral part of them, and can help to advance them. The program put forward by the revolutionary youth must tie together the long-range perspectives and daily work of a revolutionist in the school arena. The program put forward by the revolutionary youth is one that mobilizes for struggle around the basic issues of the world class struggle *and* the needs of the student population itself.

The student population is not homogeneous. Students come from varying class backgrounds with widely differing interests and they are on many different levels politically. Their only homogeneity

consists of their common position as students in a capitalist society and university—or a bureaucratically deformed workers state.

Many politically advanced students in the course of struggles around diverse issues, come to comprehend the need to gain control over their education and educational institutions and to recognize that this goal can be fully satisfied only with the revolutionary transformation of society. But they puzzle over a way of formulating the objective so as to tie it in with the current struggles in society as a whole. How can the battles over prevailing educational conditions be linked with the desired goal of completely transforming society? It is difficult for them to see how their fight as students fits into the general fight against capitalism. This is a source of frustration and of searches for shortcuts to the revolution, which, in turn, breed opportunism and ultraleftism.

During the massive student protests in Yugoslavia in June 1968, the Belgrade students summarized their demands with the call "For a Red University!" This formulation was very apt in their situation. They meant that Yugoslavia is supposed to have a socialist educational system but that actually it has been shaped to fit the interests of the ruling bureaucracy. Consequently the Yugoslav students face problems that are quite comparable to those faced by students in the capitalist countries. To solve these problems, they demanded that the Yugoslav educational system be transformed to what it ought to be—let the bureaucratic university give way to a "Red" university.

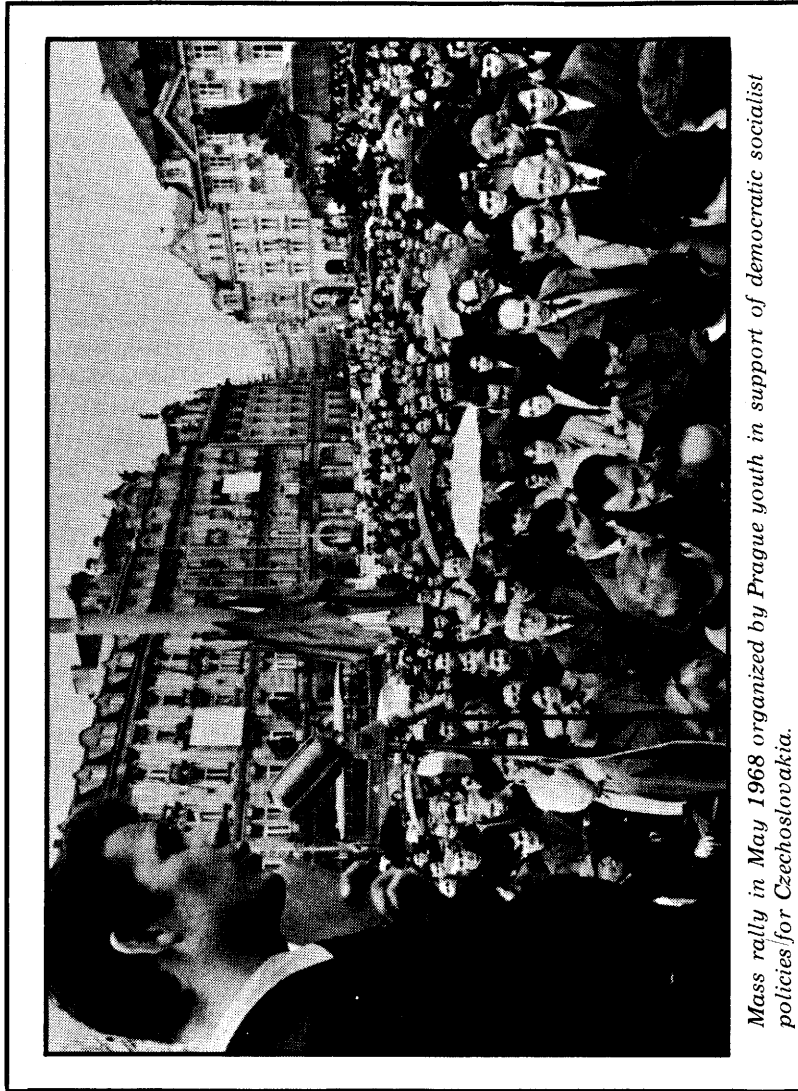
This idea was also advanced by radical students in some of the capitalist countries and adapted to their situations.

"For a University that Serves the Working People—for a Red University!" With this basic orientation radical students seek to answer the questions: "What kind of education shall students get? Toward what ends should this education be directed? Who shall control the educational facilities? What layers in society should the educational institutions serve?"

The concept of the Red University means that the university ought to be transformed from a factory producing robots into an organizing center for anticapitalist activities, a powerhouse for revolutionary education, an arena for mobilizing youth in a struggle for the complete transformation of society.

The Red University concept as it has appeared on the campus up to this point, is a big advance over slogans which refer to the narrower goal of student-faculty control over the university. The struggle for autonomy and self-administration is only one aspect of a rounded program aimed at helping students to understand the role of the university under capitalist domination, to educate them to the need for a socialist revolution and to enlist them in the movement to bring the broadest layers of this generation into the struggle for that revolution.

Included in the concept of the Red University is the need to counter the teaching of bourgeois ideology, which goes under the name of



Mass rally in May 1968 organized by Prague youth in support of democratic socialist policies for Czechoslovakia.

"education," whether in the field of sociology, philosophy, economics, psychology, or whatever. Revolutionary students must understand the need to confront the prestige and authority of the capitalist university and its normally pro-capitalist faculty on its own level of theory and ideology. They must fight against converting knowledge and its acquisition into a mystique, the concept that higher education is something reserved for a select and highly intelligent few and not accessible or comprehensible to the working masses.

The university as an instrument in the class struggle—a Red University—is opposed to the liberal view of the university as a sanctuary of a privileged minority, remaining aloof from the social and political controversies in the rest of society. The resources of the university should be made available to the exploited, the poor and the oppressed. Students and faculty should have an absolute right to invite anyone they please to address them on any subjects they wish. They should be free to establish close ties with working-class organizations and parties, the minorities, and the popular masses, becoming a source of information and enlightenment for them.

The strategy of seeking to convert the capitalist university into a Red University has special application in reference to oppressed national minorities. The need for one or more leading centers of higher education has been felt at some stage by every powerful movement of an oppressed people for self-determination. In the struggle for national freedom in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism, a university shaped for the special needs of an oppressed nation serves as a symbol and an agency for developing national consciousness and national culture in a way most conducive to overcoming narrow nationalist limitations and giving the struggle an international perspective. For both democratic and socialist reasons, the demand for the establishment, extension and improvement of such facilities under nationalist control must be fought for by the revolutionary vanguard.

In Belgium the demand for Flemish universities in Flanders, notably at Louvain, won broad support among the Flemish-speaking population and a struggle over this issue even brought down a government cabinet in Belgium.

In the United States, owing to the rise of black nationalism as an increasingly strong force among the Afro-Americans, the Red University concept has appeared in the variation, "For a Black University!"

The insistence of black students upon greater access to higher education, upon control over the curricula, finances and professors in independent facilities where they can study their own culture and history, upon the inclusion of courses of particular interest to Afro-Americans and upon opening the doors to "Third World" students has led to university and high-school battles from one end of the country to the other. Backed up by direct actions involving both black and white students and faculty members, the actions aimed at forcing the school authorities to concede on these issues have exposed the determination

of the white supremacist rulers to maintain control over their educational factories. These efforts have also awakened many students to the revolutionary implications of black nationalism and the lengths to which the capitalist class will go to oppose the Afro-American struggle for liberation.

As is shown by its origin, the call for a "Red University" is similarly applicable to student struggles in the Soviet bloc. The universities in the workers states have acted as prime centers for expressing grievances of the populace against the bureaucratic regimes. In their recent struggles, the Polish, Yugoslav, and Czechoslovak students have advanced concrete demands stemming not only from their own particular problems but also from those facing the entire working class and its allies. Prominent among these have been the call for political freedom, workers' control of production and an end to social inequalities.

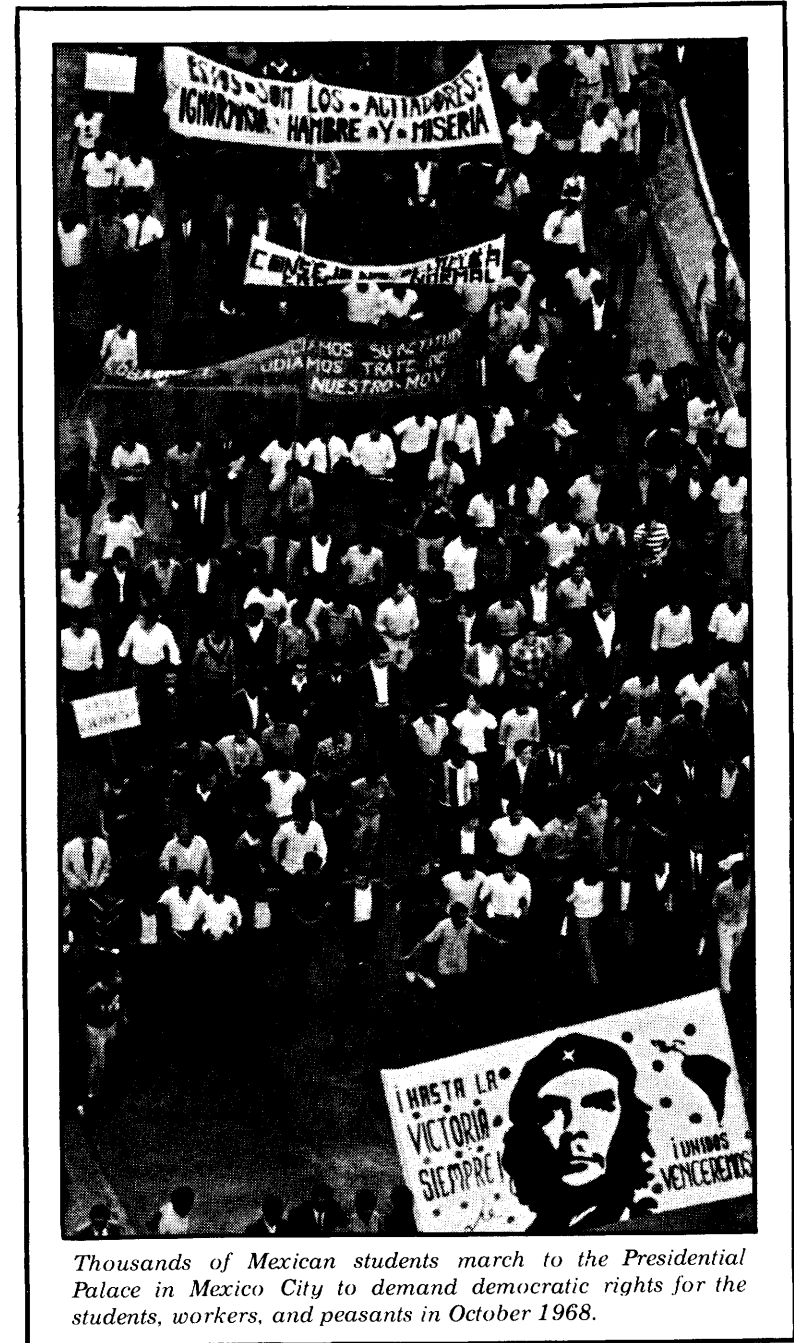
In the colonial and semicolonial countries the concept of the Red University can readily be linked with the traditions of radicalism and the struggle to establish or to preserve university autonomy. There the students are now playing, as they have often done in the past, a role of first-rate importance in the struggle for revolutionary goals. They have undertaken actions that rapidly bring them into conflict with antidemocratic regimes, that soon involve issues going beyond the universities and lead to the mobilization of popular support among the workers, peasants and other oppressed sectors of the people.

The battles engaged in by the radical students of Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, Pakistan, India, Egypt, Mali, Turkey and a number of comparable countries show how universal this pattern is.

IV. A program of democratic and transitional demands

The universities and high schools are all the more important because of the size of the forces involved, their mood of combativity, the actual struggles they themselves initiate, their location in the big cities where the greatest potential forces for revolution are assembled, their ties to the workers, peasants and plebian sectors and their readiness to include issues going far beyond immediate campus problems. In addition to all this, experience has repeatedly shown how valuable the universities and high schools are, both as testing grounds for the education and development of young radicals and as sources of recruitment to the revolutionary party.

An impressive example of the possibilities opened up by a correct policy is provided by the international campaign which was organized by student militants in a number of key countries in support of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front and its struggle against American imperialism. To launch the solidarity campaign, international connections in university circles were utilized. Through agitation and



Thousands of Mexican students march to the Presidential Palace in Mexico City to demand democratic rights for the students, workers, and peasants in October 1968.

actions around this key issue, hundreds of thousands of students became politicalized and radicalized. The attempts to organize large numbers of students in demonstrations on behalf of the Vietnamese revolution frequently posed the right of the students to use university facilities for ends that outraged the authorities, bringing the students into collision with them. Political issues were thus brought to the fore in sharp form. These confrontations in turn mobilized more students in the defense of their democratic rights and further intensified the struggle.

The validity of the political approach outlined in the founding document of the world Trotskyist movement, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, has received striking confirmation in the struggles involving the students. What is now required is to apply this approach in a better planned and more thorough way, working out a set of democratic and transitional demands for application in this field as it stands today.

The student struggles cannot be isolated from, or counterposed to, the political issues arising out of the world class struggle as a whole. Neither can the struggle for the Red University be isolated from the task of building a "Red" youth organization with links to a "Red" Leninist party. Similarly, the program of democratic and transitional demands arising from the student struggles is organically linked to the rest of the transitional program as outlined in the founding document and developed since then. The program of demands for the student movement represents a concrete application of the general approach outlined in *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.

The ultimate objective of the Fourth International is to link the student struggles with the struggles of the workers and national minorities at their present levels of development and to orient them toward a combined drive for state power, bringing into the struggle all the forces opposed to the capitalist or bureaucratic regimes.

Proceeding from the existing state of development and level of consciousness of the students, these demands express their most urgent needs and grievances, directing them in the most effective way against the institutions and authorities that have come under fire from the students themselves. In mobilizing around such slogans, young militants can come to understand the validity of the transitional program as a whole and become educated to the necessity of a fundamental change in the entire capitalist system.

Because of the decay of the capitalist system and the erosion of democratic conquests, made in some instances almost two centuries ago, many of today's student struggles begin over the most elementary issues such as the right of free speech. However, they tend to develop beyond this level quite rapidly, going beyond the campus, beyond the framework of democratic freedoms as conceived in the most revolutionary phases of capitalism in its rise, reaching into the economic

area and bringing up problems that can actually be solved only under a socialist system. A clear understanding of this logical progression makes it possible to advance a consistent series of interlocking slogans that can readily be adjusted for particular situations. Above all, it facilitates the recognition of suitable slogans of this type originating from the ranks in combat.

A combined demand for free education and for a decent standard of living—to which everyone has a democratic right but which can be provided only in a socialist society that has overcome the limitations of the capitalist system—is offered in the following series of suggestions for students in orienting their actions:

- 1) A university education for everyone who wants one, the full expense to be underwritten by the government.
- 2) No maximum age limit on free education; no limitation on the number of years a person may continue in school, or resume school after dropping out, post-graduate studies included.
- 3) Decent housing for students.
- 4) An annual salary for all students adequate to their needs and safeguarded against inflation by automatic compensating increases.
- 5) Guaranteed jobs for students upon graduation.

In the struggle by students for control over their own education the following list of "student power" demands have been advanced to one degree or another in various universities internationally:

- 1) Abolish government-controlled student organizations. Recognize the right of students to organize and govern themselves according to their own free choice.
 - 2) Joint control by students and faculty over the hiring and firing of faculty members and administrative officials.
 - 3) Let the students themselves democratically decide what subjects should be taught.
 - 4) Abolish the powers of professors and administrators to arbitrarily penalize students.
 - 5) Freedom of political association for students and professors.
 - 6) The right to utilize university facilities to promote educational and cultural activities of direct interest to organizations of the working class, peasants, oppressed nationalities and plebian masses.
- In the struggle for political freedom on the campus, some of the following slogans have become central issues in major confrontations:
- 1) University autonomy, to be won or to be kept inviolate.
 - 2) Repeal of all laws infringing civil liberties. End the witch-hunt.
 - 3) The police and all other repressive forces to be strictly banned from entering university grounds and buildings.
 - 4) Dismiss all government officials responsible for victimizing students, workers, national minorities, political dissidents.
 - 5) Dissolve the special police forces and secret political police.
 - 6) Release all the political prisoners.

7) Abolish the censorship, whether official or "voluntary," of the press, radio, television, and the arts and sciences.

8) For freedom of the press, freedom of association and organization, freedom of speech, assembly, petition, and travel and the right to engage in demonstrations.

In student struggles directly involving national minorities, the fight for their rights comes sharply and specifically to the fore, as has been dramatically shown in the United States in relation to the struggle for black liberation. The issues arise most often around violations of democratic rights, or battles to establish them. They are not confined to the university level but extend throughout the educational system to the primary grades. Consequently struggles in this field immediately affect the oppressed communities as a whole to a much greater degree than is the case with majority groups, and the issues are more easily seen as involving much broader questions concerning the perspectives of a national minority in a decaying capitalist society. Because of this, the possibility of student struggles having catalytic effects in the minority communities deserves special attention.

The slogans in this field can be summarized in the following categories:

1) Recognition of the right of the oppressed national minority communities to control their own public affairs, including education from kindergarten up.

2) Representation of national minorities on all policy-making or policy-implementing bodies of the schools.

3) Against racism and great-power chauvinism. For truthful teaching of the history and culture of oppressed national minorities in all schools, with periodic reviews by educational committees elected by the oppressed national minorities.

4) Recognition of the unconditional right of a national minority to use its own language in the educational system.

5) Unlimited government-financed educational training through post-graduate study for oppressed national minorities.

6) Establishment of adequately financed, independent, university-level educational facilities under control of national minorities.

A special area of concern to students is the relationship between the school administration and the giant corporations and their government. For big business and the military, the university constitutes an indispensable recruiting ground. Linked with this is the role of the universities in highly questionable research projects undertaken in the "public interest." In connection with antiwar campaigns, where a natural connection is easily seen, important struggles have been initiated in this area. Typical slogans fall into the following sequence:

- 1) End the ties between the university and the military.
- 2) Abolish secret research by the university for the government.
- 3) Abolish secret subversion by government agencies of student organizations.

4) Expose the ties between university officials and big business by making public *all* investments, holdings, and contracted projects of the university and of all directors, trustees and administrators.

5) Abolish research of special interest to big business.

6) No recruiting of personnel on the campus by the big corporations.

7) Lower the voting age and the age limit on holding public office. Old enough to fight, old enough to vote and to have a voice in deciding public affairs.

The permanent perspective of large armed forces in the capitalist countries, aimed against the colonial revolution and the workers states and available for domestic repression, makes the following central demands important to student youth as well as working-class youth and youth of national minorities.

1) Defend the democratic rights of all youth conscripted in the army. No restrictions on soldiers exercising their full citizenship rights.

2) Abolish capitalist conscription.

In countries suffering totalitarian regimes as in Spain, South Africa and elsewhere, the universities have repeatedly demonstrated their importance as incubating centers of organized revolt. The experience in Spain is now particularly rich in showing how the efforts of students to break the grip of government-sponsored student organizations and to organize along independent lines parallels similar efforts by the working class and interlocks with them.

Here the campus struggle centers around a single broad demand: "For university autonomy!"

As already indicated, this can readily be formulated in particular slogans that grade into slogans transcending the struggle on the campus and connecting up with broader issues involving the workers, peasants, and plebian masses in the cities.

The situation is symmetrical to this in most of the workers states. Here the student struggle naturally follows the orientation of pointing up the contrast between the official socialist ideology and propaganda and the lack of anything resembling the socialist democracy which Lenin stood for and explained in *State and Revolution*. As shown in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union itself, the sequence of demands tends to go as follows:

1) Freedom of discussion on philosophical, cultural and scientific questions. The right to express a critical viewpoint.

2) Freedom to discuss historical questions. Let the truth come out!

3) Freedom to discuss current political issues.

4) Abolish the censorship.

5) For the right to organize and demonstrate.

6) No political persecution. Let the public, including foreign observers, be admitted to all trials.

7) Freedom of travel. No restrictions on sending representatives to visit youth organizations in other countries or in receiving their representatives on visits.

8) Eliminate self-perpetuating social inequalities and the special privileges of the bureaucracy.

9) Return to revolutionary internationalism.

10) Solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed in other lands.

Youth radicalism is not restricted to college and university levels. It has widely permeated the high schools and in some places even the upper primary grades. High-school students in numerous countries have turned out by the thousands in the mobilizations against the Vietnam war and have been among their most enthusiastic and energetic supporters. The high-school students organized in CAL (Comites d'Action Lyceen) played a major role in the actions before, during and following the May-June 1968 events in France.

At a certain point in the development of every revolutionary youth organization, its ability to organize, lead and win over decisive layers of high-school youth becomes a key test. Revolutionary-socialist youth organizations must take the lead in organizing the secondary-school youth, fighting with them for their rights and seeking to coordinate their activities with other sections of the anticapitalist struggle. Scheduled to enter the higher institutions of learning or go in large numbers into the factories, these young activists will provide an invaluable ferment of militancy and socialist consciousness in both arenas.

To put forward and fight for such slogans and goals, to advance them in a way to take full advantage of openings and opportunities, requires a Marxist leadership that is politically alert, tactically flexible and able to avoid falling into either opportunistic adaptation to the student environment or into ultraleft sectarianism.

V. The revolutionary youth organization and the party

The scope of the current student radicalization presents an unprecedented opening for expanding the influence and cadres of the parties of the Fourth International. Hundreds of thousands of young radicals no longer intimidated by the poisonous propaganda of Stalinism are ready to listen with open minds to the views of Trotskyism. Tens of thousands have already accepted large parts of the Trotskyist program. Their aversion to Stalinism and the Social Democracy makes it possible for an honest revolutionary alternative to gain ascendancy among decisive sections of the new radicals. Substantial numbers of them can be recruited fairly rapidly into the ranks of the Fourth International.

The experience of the world Trotskyist movement during the past few years has shown that its work among the youth can most effectively be carried forward through revolutionary-socialist youth organizations fraternally associated with the sections of the Fourth International but organizationally independent of them.

The Trotskyist forces in various countries vary greatly in size,

and they are in different stages of growth and development. Different tactics will have to be used to reach the goal of constructing a revolutionary-socialist youth organization—including participation in other youth formations. But all such activity should be seen as a tactical step toward the construction of such an organization.

It is important to note that the social and political analysis of the student movement today and the world situation in which it is developing shows the *objective* basis for such independent revolutionary socialist youth organization.

The independent youth organization can attract radicalizing young people who have not yet made up their minds about joining any political party of the left and who are not yet committed to the Bolshevik perspective of becoming lifetime revolutionists, but who are willing and ready to participate in a broad range of political actions together with the revolutionary party and its members. It can lead actions and take initiatives in the student movement in its own name. It can serve as a valuable training and testing ground for candidates for party cadre status, and make it easier for them to acquire the political and organizational experience and education required for serious revolutionary activity. Membership in the revolutionary-socialist youth organization enables young radicals to decide their own policies, organize their own actions, make their own mistakes and learn their own lessons.

Their form of organization also has many advantages for the revolutionary party itself. It provides a reservoir for recruitment to the

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party. It helps prevent the party from acting as a youth organization and from lowering the norms of a Bolshevik organization on discipline, political maturity and level of theoretical understanding to the less demanding levels of an organization agreeable to the youth.

VI. The tasks of the Fourth International among the youth

Three interrelated tasks are indicated by this analysis of the sweep of the radicalization of the youth. These are:

1) To win the leadership of the radical youth in the spheres of both ideology and action.

2) To build strong Marxist youth organizations.

3) To draw new cadres from the youth to replenish the ranks and supply fresh energy to the leadership of the sections of the Fourth International.

The Trotskyist youth have greater possibilities of leading substantial forces in action than any other tendency in the radical movement. In several countries they have already proved capable of initiating and directing movements of considerable proportions and significance. One example is the worldwide campaign undertaken in defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Another is the role played by the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire in the historic May-June 1968 days in France. A third is the ideological influence of the Fourth Internationalists in the movement led by the National Strike Council of the Mexican students.

No tendency can hope to root itself in and gain political leadership of the radical youth that does not fully and audaciously participate in the front ranks of its ongoing struggles, whatever shortcomings they may have. At certain points the youth movement can only progress through action and the absence of action can condemn it to prolonged division and sterility. The Trotskyist youth must set the example in practice, as well as in theoretical concepts and political pronouncements.

However, there is an abundance of activism, of readiness to struggle and sacrifice among the ranks of youth. What is most lacking in the new generation is theoretical training, political clarity and a correct line of struggle. This side of the revolutionary-socialist youth movement is of decisive importance for its further development. Growing recognition of this will become registered in the widening influence of Trotskyism. The superiority of the Trotskyist movement over its opponents and rival comes from its sound Marxist foundations, its Bolshevik traditions, its programmatic comprehensiveness and correctness, its adherence to socialist internationalism. These features likewise constitute its chief attraction to radicalizing youth.

While spreading the ideas of Trotskyism among the youth with whom they participate in united combat, the Fourth Internationalists

must seek to construct a revolutionary-Marxist youth organization that will systematically educate its members and followers in the methods, doctrines and positions of the Trotskyist movement from its origins. All the results of activity among the youth can be jeopardized if the organizational requisite for this educational work is neglected.

Work among the youth is not an end in itself. It reaches fruition in the impetus given to the construction or reinforcement of the revolutionary parties that will be capable of leading the working class to victory. The sections of the Fourth International are as yet too small to lead the masses in their own name and under their own banner in a decisive struggle for power. Their work has a preparatory and predominantly propagandistic character involving limited actions.

Their task now is to win and educate decisive numbers of the radical youth in order to equip them for the greater task of winning leadership of the revolutionary elements among the working masses. To fulfill that function adequately, the youth recruits must thoroughly assimilate the organizational concepts of Bolshevism and its methods of constructing politically homogeneous and democratically centralized parties. The construction of such parties in the struggles that are erupting is the only means of overcoming the crisis of leadership which is the central contradiction of our epoch.

Government authorities the world over, whether in the advanced capitalist powers, the workers states or the colonial world, are becoming increasingly concerned over the unrest among their youth, which is becoming more and more unmanageable. Their worries are justified. This rising generation has already manifested a tremendous potential for radical activity and a powerful will to change the status quo.

Whoever succeeds in winning the allegiance of the most intelligent and devoted activists among the rebel youth holds the key to the future. For they will play a major role in making history and deciding the destiny of mankind for the rest of the twentieth century.

Insurgent students in a number of countries have already shown how their initiative in confronting the established powers can serve to stimulate struggle in other sectors of society. The young workers will be in the forefront of the movements to break the grip of the bureaucratic machines in the unions and will set an example for the older generation in their militancy and interest in revolutionary politics.

The Fourth International cannot afford to default in what is its central task today—winning and assimilating the best of the rebel youth. A good start has already been made in a number of countries. It is now imperative to build on these achievements. This requires better coordination of the activities of the youth groups of the different sections and closer collaboration on such projects as antiwar and defense campaigns and the development of new openings for the movement internationally.

The aim is to enable the Fourth International to become the recognized voice, organizer and leader of the youth, who are called upon to advance the world revolution.

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Cover design by Ellen Lemisch

DB3WP-6