



Black Youth and the Struggle for Self- Determination

Young Socialist Alliance
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This draft resolution on the Black liberation struggle was written for the Young Socialist National Convention to be held at the Manhattan Center in New York City, December 27-31, 1970. It was drafted by the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance.

Similar resolutions and discussion articles will deal with other activities in which young socialists are involved. These initial draft resolutions, along with any others submitted to the convention, will be discussed and the general political perspectives outlined in them will be voted on.

The resolutions are being circulated prior to the convention to assure the fullest possible discussion on political perspectives and activities before the convention meets.

Young socialists from around the country are invited to participate in the written discussion and urged to attend the convention. Contributions to the discussion and inquiries can be sent to the Young Socialist Alliance, P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003.

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BLACK YOUTH AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

Present Stage of the Black Liberation Struggle

In the past year, nationalist consciousness has continued to deepen in the Black community. Two conferences held earlier this fall illustrate this point. On the same weekend, Sept. 5-7, the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention-Plenary Session and the Congress of African People met with a total attendance of about 14,000. The fact that 10,000 people attended the plenary session of the RPCC in Philadelphia indicates that the Panthers, despite the government campaign to liquidate them, are still a force among advanced layers in the Black community and on the campus. The weak point of the conference was the lack of any strategy of how to defend the Panthers from the government's attack, and how to further the struggle for liberation.

At the Congress of African People, the perspective of an independent Black political party and the need for united front actions were laid out. However, it remains to be seen whether the programs outlined at the conference will be put into practice.

Nationalist consciousness is spreading and taking hold in every sector of the Black population; it is surfacing in many different forms. The strike of the postal workers, the majority of whom are Black, is a clear example of the combativity and militancy of Black people in this country.

The deepening revolt of Afro-Americans in the armed forces of the U.S. is testimony to the depth of nationalist sentiment. The racist oppression meted out to Black soldiers is a reflection of the racist conditions that exist in society as a whole. This fact is becoming more and more apparent to Black GIs, and in response they are fighting these racist conditions within the armed forces just as they fought them at home.

Perhaps the best examples of this are the organizations that have arisen in Germany, including the Black Action Group in Stuttgart, the Black United Soldier in Karlsruhe, and the Black Defense Group in Karlsruhe. These Black GIs are not only involved in activities centered on their national oppression, but are also organizing other Black GIs on a wide scale against the war. On July 4 of this year, a coalition of these groups held a mass meeting of a thousand Black GIs at the Heidelberg University campus to protest and to plan further protests against racist oppression at home and in the army. This is quite significant considering that the number of Black GIs in Germany is only about 28,000.

Another sector of the Afro-American population that is beginning to surface and vent its anger against the government are the Black prisoners, who, along with Puerto Rican prisoners, have revolted all over the country. Recently in New York City prisoners took control of five jails for a brief period. Rebellions in the prisons of this country have happened before, but what is especially significant about the recent revolts in New York is the increased political character of the uprisings. In the Queens Branch House of Detention in Long Island City the prisoners formed the Inmates Liberation Front and banners were flown from windows with slogans such as "All Power to the People!" and "Free All Oppressed People!" As David Rothenberg, director of the Fortune Society, a group of former convicts fighting for prison reforms, expressed it, "Prisons are a microcosm of society." These prison revolts are part of and illustrate the depth of the present radicalization.

The rise of Black feminist organizations and the increased participation of Black women in the actions of the women's liberation movement illustrate the depth to which not only the feminist sentiment, but also the nationalist sentiment, has taken hold of the Black community.

One of the most important developments in the last year has been in Cairo, Illinois. The Black community has over the last two years suffered systematic attacks from white vigilante groups and the city and state police. These attacks were aimed at destroying the mass movement of the Black community in Cairo to boycott the white-owned stores and corporations. The leadership of the Cairo struggle, having been through the "Panther Experience," and, learning from that experience, was able to project a strategy that dealt with these attacks.

Unlike the ultraleftist fixation on "picking up the gun," the Cairo United Front for Survival understands to a certain extent the importance of mass actions and the need for self-defense in conjunction with mass action. That is, they did not counterpose the question of self-defense to the need to mobilize the masses of Blacks in Cairo around the boycott. Nor did they project self-defense in isolation from the masses of the Black community. Rallies were held every week to inform people of the situation, and a newspaper was published to aid this process. However, when physical attacks were launched on the Black community in an attempt to smash the boycott, the Cairo United Front understood the necessity to defend it - self and did not hesitate to do so.

Throughout the national conference called by the Cairo United Front, held in Carbondale, Illinois, October 24-25, the leadership of the United Front constantly expressed the need to dispense with what they called the three Rs--Rapology, Romanticism, and Rhetoric. They understand the need to build a nationwide defense of their movement, and see this as part of developing a nationwide movement. Rev. Charles Koen, chairman of the Cairo United Front, said, "When Jackson State went down, no stand was made. When Kent State went down, a stand was made. Black people have to make a stand around Cairo."

Strategy for Black Liberation

Many ideas have been raised as strategies for Black liberation. Although there are many concepts put forward, they fall basically into three categories, the first of which is reformism. The basic strategy reformists project is the gaining of reforms, not through struggle, but through reliance on Democratic and Republican party politics. That is, reliance on the political instruments of the capitalist class in this country, the capitalist class that has thrived on the oppression of Afro-Americans and has no interest in the liberation of Black people. In fact,

the capitalist class, aware of what a shake-up of the two-party system would mean, has more and more backed "Black" Democrats like Stokes, Hatcher, Andrew Young, Dellums, etc. By relying on these capitalist politicians the reformist wing of the Black struggle does not in any way serve the general welfare of the Black community, but rather aids the white supremacists by co-opting and corrupting the Black nationalist sentiment and channeling it back into the Democratic and Republican parties.

One of the contradictions of reformist organizations like SCLC is that they have at times organized mass actions while being deeply immersed in the Democratic party. This reliance on the Democratic party has had detrimental consequences for the struggle.

In the fall of 1969, SCLC in Chicago led mass demonstrations demanding jobs on construction sites and community control over job training. These Black actions shutdown many sites, gathering more momentum with each passing day. But as soon as Mayor Daley feigned sympathy for the demands, SCLC called a halt to the demonstrations. It was at this point that the momentum of the mass actions was lost and dissipated through reliance on the good will of the Democratic party politicians; the struggle ended in defeat.

The second category of ideas are those put forward by the ultralefts--such as the Panthers, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and the All-African People's Union. Ultraleftism is a real problem in the Black struggle, and, along with reformism, it has served to mis-direct the movement. Ultraleftism is not a question of "ultranationalism," but is again a question of moving away from nationalism. What ultraleftism essentially amounts to is attempting to find short-cuts to bridging the gap between the present state of consciousness in the Black community and revolutionary consciousness. The ultralefts see no way of linking the struggles for the immediate needs of the Black community with the revolutionary goal of fundamentally changing the whole capitalist system. Because of this they swing from one extreme to the other without finding a connection between the two ends. Lacking a nationalist strategy, the Panthers fall into reformist positions such as their back-handed support to Black Democrat A. A. "Sammy" Rayner, who ran for Congressman in Chicago. Rather than projecting a strategy for action against national oppression, the ultraleft wing of the Black liberation movement projects, at its best, non-struggle, and, at its worst, "revolutionary suicide."

The final strategy is one that is

projected by ourselves and a small section of the Black liberation movement. The revolutionary nationalist strategy is a strategy of consistent nationalism, a strategy that recognizes the need to organize Afro-Americans as Afro-Americans around the issues that affect them as Afro-Americans. That is, to organize them around the kind of demands codified in the document A Transitional Program for Black Liberation--the kind of demands that will draw the masses of the Black community into independent political action. Rejecting both reformism and ultraleftism, the YSA's strategy projects struggles for demands that center around the broader demand of Black control of the Black community, which is the only nationalist and the only revolutionary solution to the oppression of Black people. As Malcolm X put it in an interview given to A. B. Spellman, which was published in the May, 1964, issue of Monthly Review, "We must be in complete control of the politics of the so-called Negro community; we must gain complete control over the politicians in the so-called Negro community, so that no outsider will have any voice in the so-called Negro community. We'll do it ourselves." Clearly expressed here is the revolutionary dynamic of the demand for Black control, for it poses the question of who will rule over the Black community--Black people or the white capitalist class.

Part of this strategy is the building of a mass independent Black political party as an indispensable tool for organizing and carrying out effective struggles for these demands. This party would be able to expose and challenge the two capitalist parties and play a central role in bringing the revolutionary ideas of Black nationalism to every sector of this society.

We have the perspective of building a left wing of the Black nationalist movement around a strategy of mass independent political action focused on democratic and transitional demands. A key aspect of determining the success of any united front formation is the strength and influence of the left wing of that movement. The YSA perspective for a left wing is based on our realization that there are thousands of people who will join us in building a movement for concrete demands, without necessarily agreeing with the YSA's full program. This left wing formation would seek out and try to involve other sectors of the Black community in the struggle and would play a key role in mobilizing the Black community around concrete issues, like the war, laying the base for the construction of a mass Black party. As in the antiwar movement, where the SMC is the most militant and consistent wing, in a similar fashion this organization would be the most militant and consistent wing

of the Black liberation struggle.

The reformist strategy for Black liberation has brought nothing except Uncle Toms like Stokes and Hatcher to the fore to administrate the oppression of Afro-Americans under the guise of having significantly changed the conditions of the Black community. Therefore it is nothing more than a dead end for the fight for Black self-determination.

Ultraleftism also represents a dead end for the Black struggle and its inadequacies are perhaps best illustrated by the degeneration of the Panthers. By criticizing and analyzing the Panthers, we can assess the tasks of the Black liberation struggle and develop a strategy for our own participation in the movement, avoiding the traps the Panthers fell into. As always, one of the primary tasks of the YSA is the defense of victims of capitalist oppression, especially the kind of oppression that the Panthers now face. However, political support of the defense of the Panthers must not be confused with political support of the Panther's political program and approach.

The popularization of the concept of a Black political party, the providing of an example of the kind of transitional program which would be the basis of such a party, raising the idea of self-defense, and showing the link between capitalism and racism are all important contributions made by the Panthers. However, it is precisely on these points that the Panthers are unable to realize in a programmatic and organizational sense the potential that they had.

This is basically due to their incorrect analysis of the present situation and the tasks of the revolutionary vanguard. The Panthers rejected the strategy of building a mass Black political party around a transitional program and projected instead the construction of a para-military organization based on a semi-Maoist program. Their concept was not that of a mass Black political party based on the current level of consciousness and struggle in the Black community, i.e., nationalism, a party that would engage in all of the slow, hard work which is part and parcel of party-building. They instead attempted to substitute themselves, the "revolutionary vanguard party," for the masses of Black people, rejecting the necessity of putting forward and fighting for a program that could transform the general militancy of the Black community into an organized, cohesive and consciously revolutionary force.

Ultraleftism and reformism both flow from a lack of understanding of the potential for and the necessity of organizing the masses in a revolutionary

fashion. The reformism of going to Philadelphia to write a new "constitution" for the U.S. combined with the ultra-leftism of "revolutionary suicide" is a good example of how ultraleftism and reformism can be combined due to this common lack of confidence in the power of the masses.

Black Students

The lessons of the last big upsurge in the Black student movement have to be drawn by the present Black student movement if the next upsurge is to go further than the last. Some sections of the movement are beginning to understand this. The importance of projecting a strategy and program that can involve broader sections of the population in the struggle is a key lesson to be learned from the 1968-69 San Francisco State College and University of California at Berkeley strikes. It was by raising the demand for open admissions that the Third World Liberation Front was able to involve the Black, Chicano, Asian-American, and Native American communities in action. Also the TWLF was able to provide a conscious direction and leadership for white students, pointing out the role that Black student organizations can play in the struggle for social change on campuses.

The struggle of Black students is an important component of the fight for Black liberation. The struggles on the campuses and in the high schools for open admissions and Black studies have led to a degree of organization and political development in advance of any other sector of the Black community.

Coupled with this has been the vanguard role that Black youth in general and Black students in particular have played in the fight for national liberation. It was Black students that provided the leadership and the driving force in the civil rights movement. And it is they who will provide important cadres of the broader struggles that will take place later in the Black community as a whole.

Black students, more so than students in general, have strong ties with the rest of their generation in the high schools, factories, and in the armed forces. This makes the radicalization of Black students a serious matter of concern for the capitalist rulers. Regardless of class, Afro-Americans are subject to more or less the same oppression inflicted by racist bourgeois society. They are subjugated by the same discriminatory laws such as those that deal with political rights, military conscription,

social and cultural restrictions. This common national oppression is the basis for the greater ties between Black students and the other strata of their generation.

The Black student struggles have also provided both positive and negative examples for the Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian-American and Native American liberation movements. The best illustration of this is the Chicano struggle, where a section of that movement was able to pick up on the positive lessons of the Black struggle and the antiwar movement and move forward.

The campuses and the high schools are the training grounds for the cadre of the Black struggle and for the Black cadre of the revolutionary socialist youth organization, the YSA. In places like Detroit, Chicago, and Riverside, California, the bulk of the YSA's Black membership has been recruited from our participation in the Black student movement.

Added to this is the factor that it is on the campuses that the Black cadre of the YSA and the YSA as a whole have their base. In all the mass movements, in which students especially play a significant role, our contact and influence is greatest on the campus and in the high schools. It is among students that our propaganda is most widely circulated, and it is on the campuses that the YSA will find those people most responsive to our revolutionary ideas.

Integral to the building of the YSA as part of the day-to-day life of the campuses will be deepening our roots and integrating the YSA into the Black student movement. It is in this way that we will best be able to relate to the community and workers' struggles.

Although a number of general statements can be made that apply to both the campuses and the high schools, there are some important differences that have to be taken into account in developing a strategy for Black students in the fight for national liberation. The more repressive atmosphere in the high schools makes it somewhat more difficult to participate in political activity. This means that a very important aspect of the YSA's work among Black high school students will be the fight for high school student rights. The experience of the struggle in New York City last spring has brought into sharp relief the fact that Black high school students will be an active component of the fight for the democratic rights of high school students. In New York, the coalition which was formed to wage the campaign for high school student rights had the active participation of

Black and Puerto Rican student organizations as well as individual Black and Puerto Rican students. This coalition was able to mobilize thousands of high school students in New York, many of whom were Black. Because these students were mobilized in their mass, some gains were made in winning some of the demands of the high school rights coalition. The experiences of Black high school students, upon their graduation, will spread into the army, onto the campuses, and into the factories.

Another difference between the high schools and campuses is that the ties between the Black student population and the rest of the Black community are greater in the high schools than on the campuses. Struggles in the high schools have a greater potential for growing over into struggles of the entire Black community. The necessity of having the control of the educational institutions of the Black community in the hands of the Black community can be much more clearly seen in the case of the high schools.

Overall, the opportunities and potential for the involvement of the YSA in the future struggles of Black high school students are just as great as on the campuses and will be a key area of our participation in the Black liberation movement.

A Black University

The Black community should have universities which are related to the desires and needs of Afro-Americans, to their struggle against oppression, and to their development as a nationality. The Black community must also control its entire educational system in order to end the teaching of racist myths and begin the development of an educational system and curricula that meet the needs of Black students, give them a knowledge of themselves and an understanding of the true history and culture of Black people.

The task of turning the high schools and universities into instruments of the Black liberation struggle is the strategy of the "Black University." During the May upsurge, this concept of turning the schools into organizing centers of the various movements was applied in the concrete at a number of campuses around the country in terms of the "Antiwar University." In some cases, such as Seattle, San Jose, and Stanford, the Black student unions were very much involved in the building of strike activities like the demonstrations that took place May 9. This was especially true after the murder of Blacks in Jackson and Augusta.

Some sections of the Black liberation movement have grasped the lessons of May and the YSA has the task of broadening this understanding. The importance of responding in a massive fashion to attacks by the ruling class on the Afro-American community has been shown in the negative sense by the lack of response to the murders in Augusta and Jackson. Although it is true that the masses of white students didn't respond to the murders of Black people in Augusta and Jackson as rapidly or in as great numbers as they did around Kent State, it is also true that practically every section of the Black liberation movement reneged on its responsibility of mobilizing the masses of Black students and the Black community against the murders. This is one of the major lessons that has to be drawn from the experience of May, i.e., the necessity of the defense of the Black liberation movement being organized by Black people.

Another lesson that has to be drawn is the role that the campus can play in the mobilization of the entire community. The campuses must become organizing centers for the Black liberation struggle; along with teaching the truth about Black people, the establishment of adequately-financed Black studies departments under the control of the Black community will mean the availability of tremendous resources to the Black liberation movement for organizing and mobilizing other sectors of the Afro-American population.

Black Student Organizations

To be effective, struggles like the struggle for a "Black University" have to be given a conscious and consistent direction. The various Black student organizations should act in that capacity, i.e., they should play the role of being the most militant and consistent wing of the movement. By putting forward programs of struggle that transcend the campuses and high schools in their goals, but at the same time include them, that connect Black student demands with the broader demands of the Black community, that show Black students how their demands relate to these broader struggles, are an integral part of them, and can help to advance them, the Black student groups would be the most dynamic section of the movement and have the clearest perspective on what direction the struggle should take.

What is needed on the campuses are mass organizations of Black students built on the basis of nationalism and coordinated on a nationwide scale. The major reasons for the lack of this type of Black student formations are the

general crisis of leadership within the Black community and the weakness of the Black cadre of the revolutionary socialist youth movement. This results in the Black student movement having a lack of social perspective on the development of the coming American revolution and the role that the struggle for Black self-determination will play in that revolution.

The YSA's concept of what role the BSU's and Black student formations should play in the Black liberation movement is not the only idea that is being put forward today. At the recent National Association of Black Students conference in Detroit, several other concepts were advanced. NABS is an organization of NSA-type Black student leaders from around the country. With very few exceptions, these students lacked any perspective, but due to the heavy participation in the conference on the part of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the All African People's Union, and the YSA, the different strategies for Black liberation were able to be contrasted and debated fully at the conference.

One concept, popularized by the Black Panther Party, is the Breakfast-for-Children-Free-Medical-Clinic-Free-Clothing-Store strategy of making the revolution. This "social work" or "serve the people" approach to the struggle for self-determination in no way solves the problems facing the Black community today. In fact, attempting to substitute the vanguard party for the state by performing the functions the state should take on cannot lead to Black liberation. The correct approach is to organize and mobilize the masses of Afro-Americans against the capitalist state, demanding that their needs be met.

In terms of the role of Black student organizations in the Black liberation struggle, the "social work" approach lacks the understanding of how the struggles on the campus can aid the broader struggles in the community as a whole. People at the NABS conference who had this concept suggested that what Black student organizations should be concentrating on is programs like tutoring or simply encouraging Black students to become doctors, lawyers, scientists, technicians, etc., so that they could then better serve the community. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Black students studying to learn one skill or another, in fact, this is quite needed. However, the real way to achieve this is to put forward a program of winning Black control of the Black community. It will only be when Black people control the educational institutions in the Black community that these institutions will train Black students to serve the interests of Blacks.

More and more Black students are realizing the bankruptcy of the "social work" strategy and are looking for alternatives. It is in this context that organizations like the League of Revolutionary Black Workers have posed themselves and their programs as an alternative.

Although the League has criticized the BPP, both on its strategy and tactics, there exists no essential difference between the approaches of the two organizations. Just as the Panthers have done, the League attempts to substitute itself for a mass organization of the Black community fighting for demands linked to the present consciousness of the masses of Afro-Americans. The task facing revolutionary nationalists is to break the hold which the white capitalist class has on the Black community through the capitalist parties.

The difference between the League's approach and the "social work" approach outlined above is that the League stresses the workers rather than the "community." That is, the League has an economist approach which holds that the "real" struggle is at the "point of production." What this means in the concrete for Black students is that their struggle on the campus should be subordinated to "serving" Black workers. At one point in the NABS conference a League spokesman expressed the need for a "Black worker-student alliance" and aside from the nationalist tone of the proposal it could just as easily have come from Progressive Labor Party. This kind of strategy ignores the need for struggles on the campus and, in fact, as one League spokesman expressed it, sees the strategy of making the university an organizing center for the liberation struggle as a "utopian" concept.

The YSA recognizes the importance of the struggles of Black workers, but it is precisely the League's sectarian approach to the campus that cuts across relating the campus struggle to those of Black workers and the Black community as a whole. The YSA's strategy sees the possibility of using the universities to aid the struggles, not only in the factories, but also in the high schools, in the armed forces, and in the community as a whole. The struggles on the campuses for a "Black University" are an integral part of the struggle for Black liberation.

It has been a sectarian approach like the League's that has led to the demise of many Black student organizations. It is only by taking a transitional approach of mass action around the issues facing Black students and the Black community that political isolation from the Black community can be avoided and victories won.

Other Tendencies

In the Black liberation struggle, as in all the other movements, our main opponent is the Communist Party. The CP's and Young Workers Liberation League's reformist strategy flows from their anti-nationalist and class-collaborationist politics. Their class-collaborationist politics mean that the CP and YWLL fear the development of any independent political force in this country. They realize that the struggle of Afro-Americans has led to confrontations, often on a mass scale, with the basic institutions of bourgeois society and the capitalist state--the courts, the prisons, the police, the armed forces, the Democratic and Republican parties. Because of this the Stalinists seek only to divert the independent thrust of the struggle for Black self-determination.

The CP and YWLL attempt to do this through their support of Black Democrats. However, they are also quite capable of adapting to the various ultraleft currents in the Black nationalist movements and this can obscure their basically reformist politics. This is perhaps best illustrated in the way the CP and YWLL attempt to subsume the national oppression of Afro-Americans into some more general type of oppression in order to divert the struggle. For example, the CP used the ultraleft misconception that fascism is here to deflect the independent political thrust of the BPP at the Panther's United Front Against Fascism conference in July 1969. Although the defense of the movement is a necessary part of the struggle for social change, subordinating the struggle for Black liberation to a general "fight against repression" would both divert the Black struggle and eliminate the basis for really effective defense against attacks by the ruling class.

At this time, the CP and YWLL have more Black members than the YSA. However, the Stalinists' anti-nationalist line and reformist program will seriously hamper their ability to recruit and build a Black cadre. Where we can draw the CP and YWLL into united front actions, we will have an opportunity to discuss and debate with their members and recruit some of them to the YSA.

The strongest Maoist tendency-- Progressive Labor Party--takes the position that Black nationalism is reactionary and must be combatted. PL opposes the concept of Black control of the Black community and has opposed Black student struggles on the campus. They claim that the struggle for self-determination has prevented Black and white workers from getting together to "unite and fight" their common oppressor. The truth is that Black and white workers will only be

able to unite around a common program which recognizes the right of Blacks to self-determination.

United Fronts

The forces in the Black community that understand the need for a mass independent Black political party which counterposes itself to the capitalist parties, that understand how to use electoral and other forms of political action to organize and mobilize the community are at this point a small sector of the Black community. There are also few Blacks who understand the need to form a national Black student union.

To raise these concepts as agitational rather than propagandistic concepts would be to fall into the same trap as the ultralefts, i.e., substituting the initiation of a Black political party for united front mass action.

United front actions are, in fact, what will create both the subjective and objective conditions in which a Black political party can be formed. Struggles around transitional demands for changes in the system can lead to and become part of the overall struggle for power. The mobilization of the masses thus takes place as a process, with each struggle awakening, educating, inspiring, and organizing new layers toward revolutionary consciousness and action. This is one of the lessons to be learned from the Chicano liberation struggle and the development of La Raza Unida Party. This party grew out of the united front organizations and actions of the Chicano community.

The YSA's participation in the Black youth movement will center on building united front organizations and mass actions to combat all the different aspects of the oppression of the Black community--as it has in the past period. At this point, we will want to do this mainly around the issues of the war and women's liberation, high school rights, Black control of the schools, and the Black university.

Black Liberation and the Fight Against the War

The issue of the war in Southeast Asia is a relevant and a nationalist issue to the Black community. It is Black people and other oppressed nationalities that are most exploited by the war-exacerbated inflation. One

of the most blatantly racist acts of the U.S. government is to draft Black youth in highly disproportionate numbers and send them to the front lines in even higher proportion to kill or be killed in a war which is opposed to their own interests. The fight against the war relates to the struggle for self-determination, because the mobilization of the Black community against the war poses the question of who controls the Black community. One cannot speak of Black control of the Black community if Black people have no control over whether Black youth are drafted into the army, no control over whether the U.S. has troops in Vietnam.

The fact that the Black community is overwhelmingly opposed to the war is well-known. Black antiwar sentiment is so deep that in a survey taken among Black GIs in Vietnam, published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer June 21, 1970, 68.3 per cent of the Black GIs were "Fed up with fighting and dying in a war they consider the white man's folly." The increased participation of Afro-Americans in both the organized antiwar movement and its mass actions during the past period testifies to this fact. In cities like Detroit, Chicago and New York, the Black cadre of the YSA has been able to successfully draw other Black activists into the SMCs. In Detroit, the YSA helped build an antiwar coalition of Black students which had the support of groups ranging from Black fraternities and sororities to the All African People's Union. This coalition was able to hold several mass rallies to protest the murders in Augusta and Jackson and a university-wide teach-in, but when the leadership abandoned mass action the coalition fell apart. This experience points out the major deterrent to the further mobilizations of the Black community against the war--that is, the absence of any authoritative leadership in the Black community which is willing and capable of organizing this sentiment against the war.

The involvement of Blacks in the fight against the war accomplishes several tasks. The most important one is, of course, the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. Also, this form of organization has the transitional and united front character that the YSA proposes for the entire Black liberation movement. In the course of fighting against the war, political consciousness is heightened. It will be by organizing mass struggles, like the antiwar movement, that revolutionary nationalists can build a base upon which to construct a mass, independent Black Party. The YSA projects the fight against the war as an integral part of the struggles in every sector of the movement: in the student movement, the women's liberation movement, the labor movement, and the Black and Chicano

liberation movements. Black student organizations can use the issue of the war as a means of reaching out to organize the other Black students on the campus, high school students, and then to reach beyond the campus to involve the community as a whole in antiwar actions.

The building of Third World Task Forces and other SMC-type organizations on the campuses and in the high schools among Black students is a necessary and important step toward the building of broad antiwar coalitions in the Black community that can accomplish the task of mobilizing the Black community against the war. These SMC-type organizations provide a vehicle for educating Black students on the necessity of mass action and non-exclusion, and can be a left wing force in broader antiwar coalitions. It is important that the existence of these organizations not hinge on periodic mass actions alone. The organizations should also involve themselves in the connected issues of high school rights and the defense of the rights of Black GIs.

Women's Liberation

Another key and integral aspect of the struggle for Black self-determination is the fight for women's liberation. Black women are the most degraded, exploited and oppressed sector of the Black community. Even more than white women, Black women are denied decent educations, are discriminated against on the job, and cannot obtain safe, free abortions and adequate childcare facilities in capitalist society. Their oppression as women is exacerbated by the national oppression they face because they are Black. And since Black women are in their vast majority working women, they are triply oppressed. The goal of total control of the Black community being in the hands of Black people will not be achieved as long as the oppression of Black women continues. To speak of Black control of the Black community when 52 per cent of the Black population is denied the right to control their own bodies is ludicrous. Rather than being a diversion from the Black struggle, as some tendencies in the Black liberation movement say it is, the struggle of Black women for their liberation is an intensification of the Black struggle as a whole. The struggle of Black women for their liberation broadens the whole struggle, attacking all aspects of the oppression of Afro-America.

The rise of Black women's groups and the involvement of large numbers of Black women in the actions of the women's

liberation movement has clearly shown the relevance of feminist demands to Black women. Because of the unique character of their oppression, Black women have and should organize independently of other women in the movement. These independent Black women's organizations will play an important role in mobilizing the deep sentiment of Black women for women's liberation.

The YSA's participation in the Black liberation movement will include participation in Black women's liberation groups. Through the fight for women's liberation, we can help build the struggles of other sectors of the Black community. For instance, the demand for free 24-hour childcare--community controlled--has been raised as one of the demands for the Black university and can grow over into much broader struggles. These struggles will steel some of the best Black cadre who will be won to the YSA.

The Middle East

The Black liberation struggle has from its inception solidarized itself with the fight of colonial peoples to free themselves from the yoke of U.S. imperialism. Because of the central role played by U.S. imperialism in attempting to roll back the Arab revolution, revolutionary socialists have an important task of mobilizing opposition to this government's actions in the Mideast and Afro-Americans will be a key component of any opposition to U.S. intervention in the Mideast. Black people will not tolerate being sent to kill brown people in the Mideast any more than they tolerate being sent to kill yellow people in Southeast Asia, when Blacks are denied their basic democratic rights at home.

In the work that the YSA carries out on the question of the Mideast, it will be of the utmost importance to draw in support from Black student and community groups. Black student organizations should be supporting and building teach-ins and other activities that will be needed to educate the masses of Americans about the role of the U.S. in the Mideast.

Defense

As the struggle for Black liberation deepens and expands, the importance of the Black liberation movement being able to defend itself is clear. The most effective defense strategy is one which seeks to win mass support for the democratic rights of the victims of

ruling class attacks.

The reformist approach to defense is to rely on the institutions of capitalist society, such as the courts, as the way to guarantee democratic freedoms. This kind of legalistic approach characterizes the NAACP, for example.

The ultraleftists fail to understand that the civil liberties of the American people are not gifts of the capitalist ruling class, but have been won through struggle. In their defense strategy the ultralefts neglect the necessity of building broad support and attempt to substitute themselves for the masses. An example of this kind of sectarian defense is the campaign the CP is presently waging around Angela Davis.

The YSA will be active in the defense of all victims of capitalist attack in the Black liberation struggle. In fact, through the defense of the Panthers, Angela Davis, etc., we can help educate others in the Black liberation movement and help create a self-confidence which cuts across the defeatism spread by our opponents. This defense work will be best done through united front committees established clearly and precisely on the issue of the democratic rights involved.

Tasks of the YSA

The YSA's strategy for the struggle for Black self-determination flows from our Marxist understanding of the revolutionary dynamic of Black nationalism. The rich history and traditions of our movement have enabled us to come to that understanding. Because the YSA and SWP are the only organizations that have that understanding and perspective, it falls upon us to carry out that perspective. In the youth movement, the task of carrying out this perspective falls upon the revolutionary socialist youth organization--the YSA.

The coming American revolution will have a combined character; it will be both a socialist revolution and a struggle for the self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, against a single, centralized capitalist state. This fact dictates the necessity of organizing a multi-national revolutionary socialist youth organization and party to lead the American revolution to victory.

The major area of work in the next period for the YSA in the Black liberation struggle will be among Black high school and college students. We see the role Black students will play as a catalyst in

the general struggle of the community and we want to help build the Black student movement. It is on the campus and in the high schools that we can expect to win most of our Black recruits in the next period.

Whenever possible we should participate in Black student organizations and united front formations, playing active and leading roles in the movement. The current crisis of leadership in the Black community and the relative weakness in numbers of the Black cadre of the Trotskyist movement make the united front approach of crucial importance. At the same time that we will want to build and participate in Black student organizations, it will be necessary to build and participate in united front formations around various issues.

One of the main issues around which these united fronts can be built is the question of the war in Southeast Asia. Through our participation in SMCs, Third World Task Forces, and Black student organizations, the YSA can help construct broad united fronts on the campuses that will help mobilize Blacks against the war. The SMCs and Third World Task Forces will play a key role in the Black struggle in the sense that the antiwar struggle is part of the struggle for Black liberation. The YSA's participation in the Black student movement around the issue of the war will be greatly aided by the fact that the Black cadre of the YSA and the cadre of the YSA as a whole has a great deal of experience in the antiwar arena.

Black women in the YSA can play a crucial role in initiating and participating in Black women's liberation groups. These organizations will strengthen both the nationalist and feminist struggles as a whole. In addition, we will be able to recruit Black women to the YSA through our participation in these groups.

In order to have the most effective participation in the movement, Black comrades should have a thorough understanding of the Black liberation struggle and the Leninist position on the national question. This means an understanding of the concept of the permanent revolution and the history of the African and Afro-American peoples. Such education is also important, of course, for the non-Black comrades.

Another aspect of this education will be the political education and development of a Black cadre in the YSA. Their education and development should not be oriented solely around the Black struggle, but around the full program of Trotskyism--around our tactical and strategic attitudes toward the antiwar movement, women's liberation movement, and around the organizational principles

and experiences of American Trotskyism.

Part of the process of building the Black liberation struggle is the winning of Black youth to the YSA. The recruitment of Blacks to the YSA will be done, at this point, on the basis of our full program and through our propaganda. The most effective kind of propaganda is propaganda combined with participation in the struggle and directed at those involved in the struggle. Our propaganda should stress the YSA's strategy for Black liberation, but should also deal with our entire revolutionary strategy. Although, in an abstract sense, the YSA's tasks flow from the objective situation, in the concrete, they flow from our current organizational strength, i.e., whether or not we can capitalize on the objective situation. Just as in any other area of work and especially due to the smallness of our Black cadre--although it is steadily growing--the YSA's participation in the struggle must be thoroughly thought out, concentrating on the best possible use of our forces.

The YSA's support to the SWP election campaigns is a powerful way to get out our ideas on the Black liberation movement to Black students. The 1970 California campaign was a concrete example of this; Herman Fagg was able to speak to a number of BSUs and out of that the YSA recruited a local of mostly Black and Chicano comrades in Riverside, California. The SWP election campaigns serve to build the Black liberation movement by providing an example of the kind of campaign an independent Black political party would wage around the kind of demands such a party would raise, and by effectively propagandizing for a Black party.

YSA campaigns for student government can also play this role because our candidates run on and struggle for the demands for Black studies, for Black control of the schools and for the Black university.

Not only our election campaigns, but all the propaganda tools of the YSA and SWP, when used in conjunction with our participation in the movement, are effective means of drawing people to our ideas and winning them to membership in the revolutionary socialist youth organization. Forums, classes, and the sale of our press, all must be integrated into our Black work.

Obviously, recruitment is part of the whole process of building the YSA as a multi-national youth organization. In order to make the socialist revolution in this country, the understanding of political and organizational questions embodied in revolutionary Marxism must be brought to the Black struggle in a

concrete form--Black Trotskyists. That is, one of the key tasks for the YSA is the construction of a Black cadre who are more than specialists on Black liberation, a cadre who also understand all aspects of the YSA's program and work.

A theoretical and programmatic understanding of the concept of a multi-national revolutionary socialist youth organization and party can only be

validated in the reality of struggle. The YSA's recruitment and development of this Black cadre, our increased participation in the various struggles in the Black liberation movement, and the lessons and traditions of the Trotskyist movement will lead to the realization of a mass, multi-national revolutionary vanguard youth organization, and, finally, to the validation of our ideas in the victorious American socialist revolution.

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