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TWO LETTERS FROM THE YSA NATIONAL OFFICE

September 25, 1973

to the pre-convention discussion bulletin must be received in the National Office no later than December 17, 1973. "

TO ALL ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

The following letter should be read at the next YSA local meeting:

As required by the YSA constitution, the pre-convention discussion period opens on September 29, 1973 -- 90 days before the national convention, December 28, 1973 to January 1, 1974.

Contributions to the discussion bulletin must be submitted in typed, triple-spaced format to the National Office and should include title, author and author's local or at-large area. Contributions should be typed 60 characters or less to a line to facilitate the technical preparation of the bulletin.

As stated in the Convention Call, "All material submitted

Comradely,
s/ Rich Finkel
YSA National Office

September 29, 1973

TO ALL LOCALS

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a letter to the National Executive Committee on the formation of a political tendency. It will be printed in the YSA pre-convention discussion bulletin.

Comradely,
s/ Rich Finkel
YSA National Office

LETTER TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON THE FORMATION OF A POLITICAL TENDENCY

July 23, 1973

National Executive Committee
Young Socialist Alliance

Dear Comrades,

After close and careful reading of the general line documents submitted for discussion at the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International and those submitted for the 1973 convention of the Socialist Workers Party, the comrades listed below announce the formation of the Internationalist Tendency in the Young Socialist Alliance.

In addition it has come to our attention that the YSA National Committee has already without discussion among the rank and file declared its support to the views of the International Minority, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency.

The Internationalist Tendency of the Young Socialist Alliance expresses its basic agreement with the general line of the Draft Thesis "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" adopted by the IEC; the elaboration of this line in the document "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International"; and the political counterresolution put forth by the Internationalist Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party "The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America."

Upon commencement of the discussion leading up to the

1973 National Convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, the tendency will submit documents which will further elaborate our perspectives on the correct method and program for revolutionary socialist youth to follow in the United States in 1974. However, as fraternal supporters of the Fourth International, we request the right for all members of the Young Socialist Alliance to begin immediate participation in the political discussion that is currently underway in the Fourth International in preparation for the Tenth World Congress.

We call on all comrades in the Young Socialist Alliance who support the general line of the above mentioned documents to join with us in solidarity with our fraternal co-thinkers in the Fourth International, the International Majority Tendency.

We ask that this be sent to all YSA locals to inform the membership of our tendency. We submit this to the YSA discussion bulletin and through the YSA NEC to the International bulletin.

Comradely,
s/ Larry Nowicki -- Internationalist Tendency, Chicago YSA Local

for: Paula Westfall, Bloomington YSA Local
John Holton, Madison YSA Local

LETTER TO ANDREW PULLEY FROM JOHN HOLTON

Madison
October 3, 1973

Andrew Pulley
YSA NO

Dear Comrade Pulley:

I'm sure that you will join the YSA Internationalist Tendency in agreeing that the coming 10th World Congress of the Fourth International must reflect the fullest, freest, most democratic discussion on the level of the sections, sympathizing organizations, and fraternal organizations. Toward that end it is imperative that the membership of the Young Socialist Alliance be afforded the opportunity to hear all sides of the current debate within the International. To do less would make a mockery of the whole concept of democratic centralism. To facilitate a complete and democratic discussion within the YSA the Internationalist Tendency hereby formally requests the YSA National Executive Committee to provide financial support to bring advocates of the IMT position to the United States to present their political perspectives to the YSA members during the coming discussion in the locals.

We note that such a procedure is a norm within many of the sections of the FI, most particularly the ex-Ligue Com-

muniste. Furthermore we recognize that if the YSA NEC adopts such a procedure it will remove a heavy financial burden from the YSA IT and consequently will allow IT members to continue their financial commitments to the YSA. If such a procedure is not adopted we will have no other recourse other than financing the tours of IMT supporters ourselves and would necessarily have to reduce our sustainers.

In sum, we contend that it is in the best interests of the world Trotskyist movement to have the discussion in the YSA benefit from the representation of all points of view including those of the IMT. We therefore are asking that the YSA NEC provide adequate funding for tours of IMT supporters, especially from the European sections, so that they may present their views before all YSA members.

We trust that you will take up our request at the earliest possible opportunity and inform us as expeditiously as possible as to your decision.

Comradely,
s/ John Holton
Coordinator YSA Internationalist Tendency

LETTER TO JOHN HOLTON FROM THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

October 26, 1973

John Holton
Madison

Dear Comrade Holton,

In your letter to Comrade Pulley, you raise several questions relating to the pre-convention discussion in the YSA leading up to our 13th national convention. Specifically, you raise questions concerning the YSA discussion of disputed international questions currently being discussed within the world Trotskyist movement.

Prior to the opening of our pre-convention discussion period on September 29, all YSA members had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the questions being debated in the world movement. The YSA has made the International Internal Discussion Bulletin (the internal discussion bulletin of the Fourth International) available to all members since the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963. This has been done without restriction, whether or not the YSA was in a pre-convention discussion period.

Last June, we invited a supporter of the International

Executive Committee Majority Tendency to our national committee plenum, since to our knowledge no national committee member supported the views of the IEC Majority Tendency. An IEC Majority Tendency supporter from Canada attended the plenum and was given equal time to debate the two agenda points on disputed questions in the international movement.

During the pre-convention discussion period for the Socialist Workers Party convention last summer, the SWP internal discussion bulletin was made available to all YSA members. YSA members were invited to attend the oral discussion conducted within in all SWP branches and were also invited to attend the SWP convention held in August.

Before the SWP convention, a leader of the IEC Majority Tendency visited many branches of the SWP, and YSA members were invited to those meetings. In addition, international leaders of both the IEC Majority Tendency and the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency were given the opportunity to present their positions during the discussion on international questions at the SWP convention.

The SWP has again invited YSA members to attend its special pre-World Congress convention on December 26-

28 and purchase its internal discussion bulletins.

The upcoming YSA convention makes it possible for all YSA members to participate in the current international discussion. This will take place through the YSA internal discussion bulletin circulated to all members, oral discussion in every YSA local, and discussion at the convention itself.

In addition, we have requested that an international representative of the IEC Majority Tendency be made available to tour YSA locals prior to the convention to debate with supporters of the positions of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. A spokesperson for the IEC Majority Tendency Steering Committee will be touring YSA locals in mid-November.

Each YSA local organizes its own local discussions and decides on what reports it will have. Supporters of different documents, tendencies or factions within each local are responsible for presenting their positions. The local may decide to request that a speaker from outside the local report on a particular document if it feels that this would aid the discussion within the local. This procedure, however, is not the general norm of the YSA since the purpose of the oral discussion is to allow the members of each YSA unit the fullest opportunity to present and develop their positions on all national and international issues before the YSA.

Any presentations to YSA locals during the pre-convention discussion period by comrades who are not members of that local must be approved and coordinated by the National Office. The date, time, and format of such presentations are decided by the local. All expenses for special presentations must be paid by the tendency, faction or supporters of a particular document themselves and not by the local or the National Office.

The YSA as a whole bears no financial responsibilities for any tendencies or factions. The YSA finances only the activities which it democratically decides to carry out through its elected bodies -- the national convention, national committee and national executive committee.

Your letter asserts that the financing of international tours by sections or sympathizing groups "is a norm within many of the sections of the FI, most particularly the ex-Ligue Communiste." We are not aware of such a procedure within the former Communist League. In fact, to our knowledge no tours of Leninist-Trotskyist Faction supporters have been financed by any section or its local units anywhere in the world. We know this is true of France.

In your letter you urge the National Executive Committee to bear the expenses of bringing representatives of the IEC Majority Tendency to the U. S. The YSA National Executive Committee, however, will not subsidize the expenses of spokespeople for either the IEC Majority Tendency or the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction. In addition, you state, "If such a procedure is not adopted we will have no other recourse other than financing the tours of IMT supporters ourselves and would necessarily have to reduce our sustainers."

While you are correct in saying that supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency would have to finance such tours, you are mistaken in assuming that this would allow members of the Internationalist Tendency in the YSA to reduce their financial commitments to the YSA. Any tendency or faction expenses are in addition to the financial responsibilities of YSA membership. Being a member or supporter of any tendency or faction conveys no special rights or privileges of any type. All YSA members -- whether or not they are members of a minority or majority tendency or faction -- have the same rights and responsibilities. Thus the YSA cannot be expected to accept any actions by either members of the Internationalist Tendency or supporters of the views of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction which substitute tendency or faction financial commitments for their normal sustainers and national fund drive pledges.

Comradely,
s/ Delpfine Welch,
for the National Executive
Committee

DRAFT POLITICAL RESOLUTION

(The general line of this resolution was approved by the National Executive Committee.)

Since its founding in 1960, the Young Socialist Alliance has aspired to help provide the revolutionary leadership needed for the struggle to abolish capitalism and replace it with a socialist society democratically controlled by working people.

The YSA is a revolutionary youth organization of high school and college students, young workers, and Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican youth. We are united on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program, democratically adopted and carried out in action by our entire organization. We aim to bring to our generation the lessons of more than a century of working-class struggle.

We believe that the working class is the only force with the numerical strength and strategic social power to abolish capitalism and carry out the socialist transformation of society. To lead the working class to power, a mass revolutionary Leninist party must be constructed. The YSA supports and helps build the Socialist Workers Party as the nucleus of such a revolutionary party.

The coming American revolution will combine the struggle of the working class for socialism with the struggles of Afro-Americans and other oppressed nationalities for self-determination. Afro-Americans, suffering both class and racist oppression, will play a vanguard role in the revolutionary transformation of society because of the size and social weight of the Black community, its overwhelmingly proletarian composition and concentration in the major urban centers.

This draft political resolution for the 1973 YSA national convention is intended to discuss and analyze: 1) the world political situation; 2) the meaning of the Watergate crisis; 3) the current stage of the radicalization in this country; 4) opponent tendencies on the left; and 5) our strategy for building the YSA in the next year.

I. THE WORLD POLITICAL SITUATION

Internationally we are entering a new historical period. In addition to the continued rise of class struggle, this period is characterized by intensified competition among the major imperialist powers and by the detente between imperialism and the major workers states, the USSR and China. This new period reflects the economic and political consequences of the Vietnam war and marks a relative weakening of the strength of U. S. imperialism vis-a-vis its competitors in Western Europe and Japan.

Inter-imperialist competition

The shattered economies of Western Europe and Japan were reconstructed following World War II through massive

U. S. aid and investment. The U. S. was compelled to bolster both its former war-time allies and Axis enemies to prevent developing postwar social revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries. In doing so, U. S. imperialism thereby set into motion the rebuilding of the economic power of its future competitors.

The productivity advantage of U. S. industry over the Western European and Japanese economies is beginning to narrow. In the face of increasing competition, Western European and Japanese imperialism are also significantly aided by their far lower labor costs. New imperialist conflicts over trade, tariff and monetary regulations are on the agenda.

This relative weakening of the economic superiority of U. S. imperialism was exacerbated by the Vietnam war. Inflationary trends in the U. S. economy were spurred on by massive war spending and the increasingly unfavorable balance of payments, eroding the value of the dollar. In the late 1960s, the international monetary system was hit by a series of crises, leading to the downfall of the post-World War II monetary system which had been based on the strength of the U. S. dollar.

Internationally the advanced capitalist countries are attempting to strengthen their competitive positions by raising productivity and by lowering the costs of labor. In the U. S., Nixon's wage control policies and the employers' drive to speed up and rationalize production are consequences of this new period.

The U. S. ruling class is demanding that Western Europe and Japan pay more of the costs of the military defense of the imperialist system. Washington, for example, is demanding increased compensation from its NATO allies for maintaining U. S. troops in Europe.

Detente with the workers states

The U. S. ruling class's decision to shelve their post-World War II "cold war" strategy in favor of a policy of detente with the major workers states lies at the heart of the new world political situation. This new strategy flowed from the difficulties facing U. S. imperialism in its attempts to police the entire world through its own might, while at the same time maintaining its economic superiority and domestic social peace.

Vietnam helped to lay bare the limitations facing U. S. military intervention against the colonial revolution and the high costs of such action in terms of massive domestic opposition and the economy. U. S. imperialism had become overextended in its "cold war" military commitments, while its competitors were free to build up their economies.

The U. S. ruling class turned toward a policy of detente in order to help alleviate these problems and actively seeks the collaboration of the USSR and China to hold back the colonial revolution and other threats to upsetting the world status quo. In Vietnam, both Moscow and Peking proved their willingness to help extricate Nixon from his difficulties as a consequence of the detente.

The workers states also represent potentially large markets for trade, outlets for capital investment, and sources for raw materials and energy that may help cushion the economic crisis of world imperialism. Western European, Japanese and U. S. capitalists are each stepping up negotiations for expanded trade and new investment in the Soviet Union, China and the Eastern European workers states.

The ruling bureaucratic castes in Moscow and Peking hope to gain substantial economic benefits and a more stable diplomatic position in return for their cooperation in stifling revolutionary developments, a task they are all too eager to perform. The Soviet and Chinese Stalinists fear the repercussions of any new revolutionary upsurge -- both as a challenge to the stability of the world status quo and as a possible example for working-class opposition in their own countries.

Both Moscow and Peking try to justify their collaboration with imperialism by the false claim that it is in the interests of building socialism in their countries. In fact, just the opposite is the case, since socialism cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism on a world scale. Their vying for favors from imperialism reflects the counterrevolutionary logic of the theory of "socialism in one country," first developed by Stalin in the 1920s to justify placing the narrow nationalist interests of the Soviet bureaucracy ahead of the struggles of the oppressed.

Betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution

For more than eight years, the struggle of the Vietnamese masses for national and social liberation was the focal point of the world revolution. The example of a small semicolonial nation heroically resisting the most powerful imperialist onslaught in history inspired the international youth radicalization and liberation struggles in every part of the globe.

The 1973 Vietnam accords, however, marked a setback to the Vietnamese revolution. Although the accords granted some concessions to the Vietnamese masses, such as the withdrawal of most U. S. troops, the agreement as a whole was not advantageous. None of the fundamental problems that gave rise to the Vietnamese struggle were solved, U. S. imperialism remains firmly rooted in Southeast Asia, and a large part of South Vietnam is still ruled by a corrupt capitalist dictatorship. The threat of renewed U. S. bombing and direct military intervention still remains.

This setback was the fruit of the combination of U. S.

military pressure and the betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution by Moscow and Peking. Throughout the course of the Vietnam war, both the Soviet Union and China provided totally inadequate political and military aid to the Vietnamese fighters. Before and after Nixon's trips to Peking and Moscow in 1972, these bureaucracies exerted enormous pressure on the Vietnamese to cede to Washington's demands. The fact that the Vietnamese Communist Party and NLF echoed Moscow and Peking's claim that the accords were a "victory" has served to undermine the mobilization of the masses of Vietnamese workers and peasants and make the continuing struggle in South Vietnam more difficult.

Detente not a solution

Despite Nixon's hopes, the detente cannot end the unfolding and intensification of the international class struggle. Though Washington, with the help of Moscow and Peking, may be able to temporarily set back some of the struggles of the oppressed, new battles will erupt.

In Western Europe, there has been a new rise of working-class struggles. In southern Africa, struggles against the white settler regimes and Portuguese colonialism are being fought. The Arab East has once again burst aflame in war, and the struggle of the Arab masses will not be ended by a "settlement" forced on the Arab peoples by Washington and Moscow. Massive student protests have also erupted this past year in France, Greece, Thailand and many other countries.

The detente is incapable of resolving the contradictions that plague decaying capitalism: sharpening inter-imperialist competition, conflicts between imperialism and the colonial world, and the struggles of the working class and oppressed nationalities in the advanced capitalist countries. World imperialism is incapable of "peacefully coexisting" with the nationalized economies of the 14 workers states. Conflicts in this arena will increase as well, as imperialist needs for new markets and cheap raw materials grow fiercer and as more revolutionary upsurges against capitalism erupt.

Coup in Chile

The September 11 military coup in Chile was a tragic defeat for the Chilean and world working class. Financed, armed and inspired by U. S. imperialism, Chile's capitalist class and military plotted and carried through its coup, crushing the Popular Unity government and slaughtering thousands of workers, slum-dwellers, peasants and students.

A bloody pogrom was launched against the more than 14,000 political exiles who had sought refuge in Chile; mass executions were carried out; the Chilean workers' parties and trade union federation were banned. The military junta also quickly moved to reverse many of the nationalizations and other reforms carried out under Allende's regime.

The coup in Chile has once again demonstrated the bankruptcy of the Communist and Socialist parties' strategy of a "peaceful road to socialism." The Allende government -- a popular-front coalition of working class and capitalist parties -- arose on the basis of a powerful upsurge of the working class. This class-collaborationist government, however, held back and blocked the revolutionary mobilization of the workers. In the end, the Allende regime was overthrown by the very army whose authority he upheld and whose generals he at times incorporated in his government.

The events in Chile tragically confirm the absolute necessity of building a revolutionary Leninist party as the only instrument that can lead the workers and oppressed masses to victory.

The YSA will continue to defend the victims of this savage coup. By supporting the efforts of the U. S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, we have already helped to mobilize significant forces to defend the democratic rights of the political exiles and the Chilean political prisoners.

New Israeli aggression

The outbreak of a new war in the Arab East was a consequence of more than two decades of Israeli aggression against the Arab peoples.

The Zionist state of Israel was created with the backing of U. S. imperialism in 1948 against the will of the overwhelming majority of Palestinian and Arab peoples. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their lands and barred from returning, as their country was transformed into an exclusively Jewish state.

Since its inception, Israel has served as an outpost of U. S. imperialism in the Arab East, ready to strike against any upsurge of the Arab people against their oppression. Without U. S. military and economic aid, the Zionist settler-state could not exist.

The YSA is opposed to the existence of a Zionist state in the Arab East, and we support the Palestinian people's call for its replacement by a unitary Palestine in which the Jewish people would have democratic rights.

We are opposed to the current bourgeois Arab regimes; only a united socialist Arab East will be able to end the national and class oppression of the Arab masses. At the same time, we will defend the Arab states in any struggle against Israel and imperialism.

The YSA has worked to counter the barrage of Zionist propaganda used to justify the latest Israeli war against the Arab peoples. We will continue building an educational campaign to present the truth about the causes of the conflict in the Arab East and to win support for the struggles of the

Arab peoples. Teach-ins, rallies and the sales of our press will be important ways to continue to expose Israeli aggression and to protest U. S. arming and backing of the Zionist state. The YSA vigorously opposes direct U. S. military intervention in the Arab East.

Internationalism and the YSA

Internationalism has always been the cutting edge between revolutionary socialists and reformists. As revolutionists living in the heartland of world imperialism, we bear a special responsibility to oppose the crimes of the U. S. government around the world. We also recognize that to effectively fight against imperialism, the working class and its leadership must be organized on an international scale.

The YSA supports the building of the world Trotskyist organization, the Fourth International, even though reactionary U. S. legislation prevents us from belonging to it. We will continue to place our internationalist activities at the center of our work.

In addition to our activities in solidarity with the Arab liberation struggle and in defense of the victims of the Chilean coup, the YSA's defense of the Indochinese revolution will continue. Although our ability to help organize massive opposition to U. S. aggression in Southeast Asia has been sharply reduced by the withdrawal of most U. S. troops from Vietnam, we should take advantage of every available opportunity to oppose the intervention of U. S. imperialism in Indochina.

When Nixon ordered the saturation-bombing of North Vietnam last Christmas, the YSA responded by helping to initiate and build the January 20, 1973, demonstration of 100,000 people in Washington. We also helped build the June 16, 1973, actions against the U. S. bombing of Cambodia. We will continue to demand the freeing of the political prisoners in South Vietnam, an end to U. S. aid to Thieu, unconditional amnesty for all U. S. war resisters, and the immediate and total withdrawal of all U. S. forces from Southeast Asia.

The YSA will continue to defend the African liberation struggles by working with groups such as the African Liberation Support Committee and by helping to initiate campus meetings, teach-ins and rallies. We will participate in and help build demonstrations against the role of U. S. imperialism in southern Africa when such actions can be organized.

The YSA will continue to help defend our Trotskyist co-thinkers of the former Communist League, which was banned by the Pompidou regime in France. We will help bring pressure to bear on the French government to lift its reactionary ban and drop all charges against former leaders of the ex-Communist League.

Our activities in solidarity with the struggle in Ireland will continue. During the past year, we have helped build demonstrations in support of the struggle of the Irish people against British domination and against the repression of Irish freedom-fighters.

The YSA will continue to work with international students living in the U. S. both to defend their rights and to act in solidarity with revolutionary struggles in their countries. Last spring our efforts played an important role in winning a major victory for the rights of international students when the U. S. immigration service was forced to halt deportation proceedings in the well-known case of Babak Zahraie, an Iranian student.

II. THE MEANING OF THE WATERGATE CRISIS

The Watergate scandal has exposed to millions in this country and throughout the world the corruption and bankruptcy of the U. S. capitalist government. The American people's lack of confidence in the government -- which grew dramatically as a result of mass opposition to the Vietnam war -- has now reached mammoth proportions. This mass distrust in government and capitalist politicians is part of the current radicalization and will help spur on struggles of the oppressed.

Illegal government attacks on democratic rights are not an innovation of Nixon's Watergate gang. The ruling class has always used both legal and extralegal violence against the struggles of working people and the oppressed. Nixon's Watergate-style measures were above all aimed at crushing the mass antiwar movement and the Black liberation struggle. The Watergate scandal, however, broke open when Nixon was caught using these same secret-police methods against the capitalist Democratic Party.

The Watergate revelations have shown what an enormous impact the massive antiwar demonstrations had on the government. The New York Post reported that Nixon was "almost obsessed with any protests against his war policies," and his staff was "prepared to take 'any means -- legal or illegal' to keep demonstrators away from him."

Following the May 1970 antiwar upsurge against the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent and Jackson State, Nixon ordered a top-secret "domestic security" plan put into action against the antiwar movement, the Black struggle, and radical and socialist groups. The illegal and police-state measures authorized in this plan included break-ins, burglaries, mail tampering, wire-tapping, bugging, spying and the infiltration of hundreds of police agents and provocateurs into antiwar, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and student organizations.

Millions of people now see that government agents were responsible for the "violent conspiracies" attributed to the antiwar movement. Testimony at the Camden 28, Gainesville 8 and other frame-up trials has helped to expose how

agents provocateurs provoke illegal actions to discredit and destroy social movements of the oppressed. The defense victories in the Angela Davis, Pentagon Papers and other "conspiracy" trials testify to the opposition of the American people to the Vietnam war and the use of police agents to frame-up and railroad antiwar and Black activists.

Nixon's racist "law and order" demogogy has been dealt a stunning blow by revelations of criminal behavior on the part of his closest associates, including former top cabinet officials and the former vice-president. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have been damaged by the mounting disclosures set in motion by Watergate and the growing public distrust in the government.

A solution to Watergate?

Throughout the Watergate scandal, the ruling class has been divided over how confidence in the government can be restored. Nixon still hopes to weather the storm, while demands for his removal are increasing. The YSA, however, denies that any reform of the capitalist political structure can prevent future Watergate-style infringements on democratic rights.

The "return power to the Congress" cries are intended to try to reestablish confidence in at least some part of the government machinery. But the capitalist politicians in Congress are no less representatives of the ruling class than the occupants of the White House. Impeaching Nixon is also no solution, since he would merely be replaced by another capitalist politician. The YSA's answer to Watergate includes throwing Nixon out of office, but to prevent future Watergate activities, we need to overturn this entire rotten capitalist system and establish a workers government.

Attacks on democratic rights -- to a greater or lesser extent depending on the immediate circumstances -- are necessary to the capitalist class to maintain its rule. Socialists, however, are the staunchest fighters to defend and extend these rights in order to provide the most favorable conditions for the development of the class struggle. In doing so, we explain why it is necessary for the oppressed to rely on their own power, independent of the capitalist parties and government, to defend their democratic rights. Through such struggles, it becomes clearer to the working class that the fundamental problems of society flow from the capitalist system itself and not simply from a lack of rights.

Socialist offensive

The Young Socialist Alliance, together with the Socialist Workers Party, has launched a campaign to explain the meaning of Watergate and to set an example of how to effectively fight government harassment.

In July 1973, both the YSA and SWP filed suit against Nixon and the entire Watergate gang, charging that the

government directed "illegal acts of blacklisting, harassment, electronic surveillance, burglary, mail tampering, and terrorism" against members and supporters of the YSA and SWP. This suit also demands that permanent injunctions be issued prohibiting the government from future assaults on our rights and that the Attorney General's "subversive list" be abolished.

The Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF) has been organized to publicize this case and raise funds for legal expenses. PRDF hopes to win the broadest possible support from groups and individuals who oppose government harassment of dissenters, regardless of their positions on other issues.

The Political Rights Defense Fund can set an example for the entire radical movement on how to rally support for the rights of dissenters. The lawsuit by the YSA and SWP against government harassment can help expose that the main victims of Watergating are Blacks, Chicanos, antiwar activists, and all radical and socialist groups. PRDF can become an important vehicle for involving students and other supporters of democratic rights in on-going and effective activities aimed at demanding a halt to such harassment.

In the next year, the YSA will continue its efforts to build the Political Rights Defense Fund. We can help PRDF organize teach-ins and educational meetings on the campuses and in the high schools. We will continue to aid PRDF in gathering sponsors for the defense committee, raising funds for the legal expenses, and publicizing the issues involved in the case.

In addition, through sales of the Young Socialist, The Militant, International Socialist Review, and Pathfinder Press's Watergate: A View from the Left, and through our forums, speaking tours and support to SWP election campaigns, the YSA will be able to popularize the socialist analysis of Watergate and win new adherents to the revolutionary socialist movement.

III. THE CURRENT STAGE OF THE RADICALIZATION

At the present time, there is no single issue like the Vietnam war that is serving as a focus for mobilizing masses of people in action, but many varied struggles are occurring and receptivity to our ideas remains high. The willingness of thousands of students to listen to our ideas on the meaning of the coup in Chile, the conflict in the Arab East and Watergate illustrates the depth of radical thinking on the campuses.

Among the major issues in U. S. politics today are questions that are coming to the fore as a result of the political and economic consequences of the Vietnam war. Both the Watergate crisis and rising prices, for example, are helping to deepen the radicalization and stimulate new struggles.

The Black liberation struggle

The struggle of Afro-Americans against racist oppression

has been a central factor in the development of the current radicalization. Each new upsurge of struggle within the Black community has helped inspire other oppressed layers into action. At the same time, no national organization within the Black community has yet emerged that has been able to organize effective mass struggles against the grinding oppression of Black people. This crisis of leadership has been one of the major obstacles to the political advance of the Black struggle. As a whole, the Black community remains in the political stranglehold of the capitalist Democratic Party.

During the past year, Nixon's wage controls, soaring food prices and cutbacks in social services have hit the Black community the hardest. The problems facing Afro-Americans -- from deteriorating housing, inferior schools, to police brutality and massive unemployment -- have continued to grow worse. Nixon's cutbacks in programs that have benefited the Black community have also begun to reverse some of the gains won earlier by the Black struggle.

In the face of these mounting economic and social problems, there is a growing combativity among Black people. Nixon's outright appeals to racism have met with little success, as the election of Black mayors in Los Angeles and Atlanta underscores. Watergate has made a mockery of government calls for more "law and order."

Afro-Americans remain the most radicalized sector of the working class. In cities such as Atlanta and Detroit, there have been new struggles by young Black workers and growing sentiment and action against police brutality. Across the country, there have been many demonstrations against Nixon's cutbacks. The September 8 Chicago rally against high prices and cutbacks mobilized thousands of Afro-Americans and other working people. There has also been a modest increase in struggles by Black students during the past period.

The cutbacks in funding of education have caused the greatest hardship for Black youth. Because of inadequate funding and racism, the urban school systems attended by most Black youth continue to deteriorate, with the length of the school year even being reduced in several cities. The Black high schools are overcrowded and understaffed, lacking needed textbooks and facilities. The urban high schools resemble prisons for Black youth, patrolled in many cases by armed cops.

On the college campuses, special programs to recruit and financially aid Black students are being cut back, and many Afro-American studies programs are being curtailed or eliminated. At Antioch College last spring, Black students led a student strike to protest administration attempts to renege on already promised financial aid. At the University of Wisconsin this fall, Black students organized demonstrations to protest the closing of the Afro-American and Native American centers.

The predominantly-Black colleges and universities are

also the first to feel the effects of cutbacks in federal and state aid to higher education. Rising tuition costs, deteriorating facilities and cutbacks in curricula are reducing enrollment at many Black institutions. In addition, the forced mergers of several Black schools into predominantly-white university systems have resulted in further reductions of Black faculty, students and staff.

The YSA must be alert and ready to become involved in every kind of protest in the Black community, from struggles for more Black control of education to protests against police brutality. By vigorously responding to these issues, the YSA can become better known as an uncompromising opponent of every form of racism.

The Black high schools remain tinderboxes for revolt. We should continue the regular sales of our press at Black high schools. We want to set up speaking engagements for SWP candidates in the high schools, organizing Black high school supporter groups wherever possible. We should be ready to participate in and win support for Black high school struggles as they unfold.

On the college campuses, the YSA should continue to support and participate in struggles by Black students to defend Afro-American studies departments, preferential admissions programs for Black youth and other gains won earlier by Black students. We will help mobilize campus support for struggles that break out in the community.

An important part of our activity in the Black liberation struggle is our defense of Black political prisoners. We want to participate in local and national defense cases, helping to win support for all victimized Black activists. We will continue to publicize the Attica inmates defense and other new cases that develop.

The sales of the Young Socialist and The Militant on a regular basis to Black youth will remain a central priority of the YSA in the next year. In addition, our support to SWP election campaigns, our forums, speaking tours and educational classes can help us reach radicalizing Black youth. We want to talk to Black students and young workers about how racism flows from capitalism and why they should join a multi-national revolutionary socialist youth organization.

The Chicano struggle and defense of the Farm Workers

The most significant recent development in the Chicano liberation struggle has been the fight of the United Farm Workers Union against the combined assault of the growers and the Teamster union bureaucrats. The UFW began this struggle for its very existence after the giant farm owners in California refused to renew UFW contracts last spring and instead signed "sweetheart" agreements with the Teamsters.

The United Farm Workers' successful initial organizing drive in the 1960s was part of the nationalist awakening of the

Chicano people and the general radicalization in this country. The UFW emerged as a fighting social movement and appealed for the support of students and all opponents of racism and exploitation. The attempt by the growers and the Teamster officialdom to destroy the UFW is a challenge to the Chicano struggle, the labor movement and every other social movement of the oppressed.

Because the Farm Workers were unable to win their strike in the grape field this summer, they have turned to the boycott of scab produce to place pressure on the growers. An effective national boycott of scab produce is an extremely difficult undertaking, and for the Farm Workers to be successful, their boycott will have to become the cause of millions. Mass picket lines and rallies will be needed in cities across the country to win broad support for the boycott effort.

As a youth organization, the YSA can make a particular contribution to the Farm Workers struggle by helping to win mass support for the UFW on the campuses and in the high schools. Together with other groups, we can help mobilize students to reach out and win support for the Farm Workers struggle from the Chicano community, labor unions, the Black and Puerto Rican communities and other forces. We can also make sure that high school and campus cafeterias honor the boycott of scab grapes and lettuce.

The struggle of undocumented Raza workers in the Southwest is another important development within the Chicano struggle. The growing movement to organize Mexican workers who do not have "legal" immigration papers is aimed at ending the superexploitation of the so-called "illegal aliens." The YSA stands in solidarity with this struggle and calls for an end to the racist immigration laws and witch-hunt deportations of Latino workers.

The 1974 elections will pose both new opportunities and tests for the Raza Unida parties. These formations are the most advanced expressions of independent Chicano political action, and we support them as the nuclei of potential mass Chicano parties. The Raza Unida parties represent an example not only for the Chicano community, but for the Black community and the labor movement of political independence from the capitalist parties.

The YSA will continue to support and participate in the struggles of Chicano high school and college students. Like Black students, Chicanos are among those most affected by educational cutbacks. They are also victims of campus administration attacks on special programs for the oppressed nationalities. Raza youth face acute forms of racist oppression that the YSA will continue to fight against. We also want to bring our press and the SWP election campaigns to Chicano youth, urging them to support our statewide campaigns and to join the YSA.

The women's liberation movement

The January 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion was a historic victory for women in this country. It is now more possible for millions of women to decide whether or not to bear children. The abortion rights victory has helped to give women more confidence in themselves and in their power to win concessions from the government.

The abortion victory was a product of the rise of the women's liberation movement and of the overall radicalization in this country. From 1968 to 1972, polls showed that support among the population for the right to abortion grew from 15 percent to 64 percent.

The Women's National Abortion Action Coalition, which the YSA helped initiate and build, played a role in setting the stage for this victory. WONAAC's activities -- from demonstrations and rallies to petitioning and court action -- helped to mobilize the women's liberation movement and broader forces in support of abortion as a woman's right.

Although no single issue has emerged as a new rallying point for the women's liberation movement since the abortion victory, women are struggling around a wide range of issues. The YSA will continue to support struggles by women trade-unionists and Black women, protests against high prices and cutbacks in child care services, and actions to defend the right of abortion from right-wing attacks.

We will help build local and statewide actions for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, especially in states where it is before the legislature. The YSA supports the ERA as a basic democratic reform. We should answer those like the Communist Party who raise the false argument that the ERA would hurt women workers by eliminating protective labor laws. By fighting for the ERA and for the extension to men of those protective laws that are actually beneficial, women will advance the fight for equal pay and equal opportunities in all areas.

On the campuses, the YSA will continue to participate in women's liberation groups, helping to build educational and action campaigns around issues like child care, sex discrimination, campus health and abortion care and women's studies. We want to mobilize campus women to support broader social struggles that affect women, such as local protests against high prices and cutbacks in social services.

We oppose the tracking of high school women into home economics and secretarial courses, and the YSA will help fight for the right of high school women to have abortions and access to birth-control information and materials.

We will continue to try to involve Black, Chicana and Puerto Rican women in protests and struggles that develop. In New York, the YSA is helping to build the National Black Feminist Organization which is fighting against the special

oppression of Black women.

There is widespread interest among women for knowledge about the causes of women's oppression and how to end it. By participating in feminist groups and women's studies programs, and through our support to SWP election campaigns and other propaganda activities, the YSA will be able to reach many women with our Marxist analysis of women's oppression and win new supporters for our ideas.

Struggles against inflation and cutbacks

The most dramatic and far-reaching response to the high cost of living in the past year was the week-long meat boycott in early April. Tens of millions of people refused to buy meat to protest soaring food costs; the capitalist press estimated participation in the boycott at 50 percent of the population. The demonstrations, picketing and leafleting against high prices last spring showed that many working people were willing to use the methods of struggle most recently popularized by the Black and antiwar movements.

The unions, however, have done little or nothing to build protests against high prices because of their entrenched and conservative bureaucratic leadership. Nevertheless, two important signs of increasing pressure on the labor movement to become involved in protests against inflation and cutbacks were the April 28 San Francisco demonstration of 3,000 people sponsored by the Bay Area trade-union movement and the September 8 Chicago march and rally of 6,000 called by a coalition of Black and labor organizations.

On the campuses, there have been initial struggles against the rising costs of education which have mainly been led by Black students. These include protests last spring against attempts to impose tuition at the City University of New York and protests this fall against a tuition hike at the University of Michigan and against cutbacks at Goddard College.

Inflation is an inescapable curse of declining capitalism. The source of inflation lies in massive war spending and the enormous public debt. Inflation is built into the capitalist government's fiscal policies and its evils cannot be ended except through the abolition of capitalism.

To combat the effects of inflation and to protect the standard of living of working people, socialists propose a wide range of demands, including: 1) halt all war spending and end government cutbacks in social services; 2) cost-of-living escalator clauses in all union contracts and 30 hours work for 40 hours pay; and 3) mobilize the full power of the labor movement to fight for these and other demands, such as forming worker-consumer price-watch committees, opening the financial records of industry, nationalizing the food monopolies, and forming an independent labor party.

On the campuses and in the high schools, the YSA focuses on demands against government war spending, rising tuition

costs and cutbacks in education, pointing out that a free university education should be available to all. We raise the concept of a guaranteed income while students are at college and guaranteed jobs at union wages for both high school and college graduates.

Widespread social protest

The depth of the current radicalization is illustrated by on-going protests aimed at nearly every social institution in this country -- from demonstrations by Black sailors against racism in the navy to continuing actions in the struggle for the rights of prisoners.

Last spring's occupation of Wounded Knee evoked widespread sympathy for the struggle of Native Americans. This support and the solidarity actions held across the country helped prevent the government from launching a full-scale military assault to retake Wounded Knee.

This fall a rally of 3,000 people in Minneapolis helped initiate defense efforts for the 600 activists who were victimized by the government during and after the Wounded Knee occupation. The YSA should help to expose this mass victimization of Native Americans and aid local defense efforts around the country.

The Puerto Rican independence movement has continued to focus attention on the colonial U. S. domination and exploitation of Puerto Rico. There is also mounting opposition within Puerto Rico to U. S. plans for a giant oil tanker "superport" that would have a devastating effect on the environment of the island. The YSA supports the struggles within Puerto Rico against U. S. imperialism and the call for an independent Puerto Rico.

In New York City, the YSA has participated in the struggle of the Puerto Rican community of School District 1 to gain community control of education. Together with Black and Chinese residents of the Lower East Side, the Puerto Rican community is fighting against the racist offensive led by the Shanker bureaucracy of the United Federation of Teachers to destroy the gains won under the pro-community control administration of District 1 superintendent Luis Fuentes.

The YSA opposes all forms of oppression and discrimination facing homosexuals in this society. We will support local gay liberation struggles and oppose any administration attempts to deny university recognition to campus gay liberation groups.

IV. OPPONENT TENDENCIES ON THE LEFT

During the course of the radicalization, all of the political tendencies on the left have sought to win radicalizing youth to their ideas and organizations. It is important for the YSA to understand the program and perspectives of other left currents that are competing with us for the allegiance of

radical youth. We must be able to explain the differences between the various groups and demonstrate where our political opponents go wrong.

Young Workers Liberation League

The Young Workers Liberation League, the youth group of the Communist Party USA, is the most important national youth organization presenting an alternative perspective to that of the YSA. Although the YWLL is somewhat weaker than the YSA, it is and will remain our main competitor because of its ties with the Moscow wing of the world Stalinist movement.

The program of the CP and YWLL is based on total subservience to the policies of the bureaucratic ruling caste within the Soviet Union. This fall they have parroted the Kremlin's response to the coup in Chile and the war in the Arab East. Both the CP and YWLL continue to maintain that the Paris accords were a historic victory for the Vietnamese revolution.

The CP and YWLL's slavish toeing of the Moscow line is reflected in their full support for the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and their recent apologies for Stalinist frame-up trials of dissidents in the Soviet Union. The Daily World, the CP's newspaper, is engaged in an all-out campaign to justify the Kremlin's persecution of dissenters and suppression of workers democracy.

The Young Workers Liberation League and the Communist Party support the liberal wing of the Democratic Party as their way of furthering Moscow's goal of "peaceful coexistence" with U. S. imperialism. They were caught off guard, however, when the Kremlin negotiated its detente with Nixon, whom the CP had considered "Public Enemy No. 1." To avoid being at odds with Moscow, the CP began to be more critical of McGovern late in the 1972 elections. To justify this criticism, CP leader Gus Hall utilized left rhetoric, going so far at one point as to say that the CP's entire electoral strategy since 1936 of support to the capitalist Democratic Party had been wrong! The Communist Party, however, has not fundamentally turned to the left, and it is continuing to support liberal Democrats, such as Thomas Bradley in Los Angeles and Herman Badillo in New York.

The CP and YWLL have recently sought to present a more open and aggressive image. They have begun to run more CP election campaigns, and this summer the YWLL began republishing its monthly newspaper, the Young Worker.

Because the Stalinist movement represents significant forces in this country, the YSA will continue to try to draw the CP and YWLL into united-front actions where these are warranted. In some areas, we have worked with the CP and YWLL in opposition to the National Caucus of Labor Committee's hooligan attacks on socialist and Black groups. More recently, we have been able to involve the YWLL and CP in

some united-front actions in defense of democratic rights in Chile.

We will want to talk to YWLL members about the disastrous consequences of the CP's line in Chile, Moscow's betrayal of the Vietnamese revolution, and the Kremlin's persecution of Soviet dissidents. We should explain to YWLL members our Trotskyist analysis of the development and nature of the Soviet bureaucracy and our programs for the Black liberation struggle, women's liberation and the student movement.

Maoism

At the present time, the Guardian newspaper is attempting to regroup the splintered Maoist forces in the U. S. into a new pro-Peking Stalinist party. The main groups involved in this project are the Attica Brigade, Revolutionary Union, October League, Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization, Black Workers Congress and I Wor Kuen. In New York, a series of forums sponsored by the Guardian to try to draw these groups together at times attracted up to 1,000 people.

The evolution of this attempt to form a Maoist party should be carefully followed by the YSA. The groups involved represent diverse forces with conflicting positions on key national and international questions. They have already been discussing forming a new Maoist party for about a year, but have yet to hold a founding conference and appear to have made little progress in this endeavor.

Where Maoist groups represent significant forces, the YSA will want to try to involve them in united-front actions that we can support. This will be difficult, however, because of their sectarianism and abstention from many struggles that the YSA is active in.

The Maoist tendencies are at present dredging up long-discredited slanders against Trotskyism to try to harden their forces and periphery against our ideas. We will continue to refute these Stalinist lies in our press and on the campuses and attempt to win people away from their milieu.

The detente has helped to undermine the myth that Peking stands as a genuine revolutionary alternative to Moscow. We will continue to expose China's betrayal of the Vietnamese, its support to the capitalist Ceylonese government's crushing of the youth movement in 1971, and its opposition to the struggle for independence in Bangladesh.

Young People's Socialist League

The Young People's Socialist League, the youth group of the Social Democrats USA, stands far to the right of most radicalizing young people. YPSL's basic orientation is to uphold the privileges of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and justify the racist and chauvinist policies of figures like Albert Shanker and George Meany. These aspiring young trade-union

hacks backed the U. S. State Department in the Vietnam war and are rabidly anticommunist.

YPSL is now carrying out a major effort to whip up support for the Zionist state's new war against the Arab people and Israel's continuing aggression. Through the "Youth Committee for Peace and Democracy in the Middle East," they are organizing pro-Israel rallies and meetings on many campuses. The YSA will continue to counter their efforts by helping to expose how Israel acts as an agent of imperialism, trying to crush and demoralize the oppressed Arab masses.

V. STRATEGY FOR BUILDING THE YSA

Unlike our opponents on the left, the YSA has supported every struggle against capitalist oppression that has emerged in the current radicalization. We energetically participated in the antiwar movement, the Black liberation struggle, the Chicano struggle, the women's liberation movement and other struggles by college and high school youth. We have sought to mobilize the largest numbers of people in independent mass actions against the government and at the same time win the best fighters of the new radicalization to the revolutionary socialist movement.

The YSA recognizes that the socialist transformation of society will be impossible until decisive sections of the working class are radicalized and mobilized in political struggle to overturn capitalism. "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International," a document whose general line the YSA adopted at our 1969 convention, outlines our strategy for linking the struggles of youth to the struggles of the working class.

The YSA's main arenas of activity are the campuses and high schools. It is among students that the YSA has the greatest opportunity to lead struggles and to win young people to the revolutionary socialist movement. During the past year, we have made progress in strengthening our forces on the campuses.

A central campaign for every YSA local and at-large area in the next year will be work aimed at recruiting more Black youth to the YSA. We want to continue and increase our current efforts aimed at developing a base in the high schools and colleges attended by large numbers of students from the oppressed nationalities.

Participation in unfolding struggles

Since our last convention, the YSA has participated in many varied local struggles. In the Black liberation struggle, the YSA in Detroit helped organize high school and college students in the successful campaign that led to the abolition of STRESS (Stop the Robberies -- Enjoy Safe Streets), a racist police terror unit. In Atlanta, we helped rally support for wildcat strikes and other protests by Black workers.

On many campuses and high schools, the YSA helped build the African Liberation Day actions last May. At Wayne State University, we helped oppose racist attacks on the Black student newspaper, and at the Greater Hartford Community College, the YSA is participating in a struggle by Black students against cutbacks.

The YSA has helped win support for the United Farm Workers struggle in cities across the country. In some areas, our efforts helped force an end to the sale of scab grapes and lettuce on campus. In New York, the YSA is participating in the struggle for Puerto Rican, Black and Chinese control of education in School District 1.

In the women's liberation movement, the YSA has continued to participate in many campus feminist groups. In Georgia and Ohio, we helped organize rallies and actions in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. In San Francisco and several other cities, we have been involved in struggles against cutbacks in child care services.

On the campuses, the YSA has been involved in many different protests. At Boston University, the YSA participated in several demonstrations against administration attempts to bring Marine recruiters back on campus. At Bowling Green State University in Ohio, the YSA helped initiate a campaign that forced the removal of police surveillance cameras from the campus.

We can expect that there will be many different local struggles in the next period. Each YSA local will have to take the initiative in seeking out and becoming involved in such developing struggles. We want to make sure that we know what is going on in the high schools and on the campuses and are ready to participate in new struggles as they unfold.

Sales of our press

In the next year, we will continue our efforts to increase the sales and circulation of the Young Socialist and The Militant. The Young Socialist is our major vehicle for introducing young people to the YSA, our program and activities. The Militant presents the views of the revolutionary socialist movement on a week-to-week basis, enabling us to respond quickly to events.

This fall we have already made considerable progress in regularizing YS sales on the major campuses and in expanding our sales to new high schools and campuses. We will continue to place special emphasis on sales of the YS and Militant at schools with large enrollments of Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican students. We want to aim toward involving every YSA member in the regular weekly sales of our press. We will also continue to help expand the circulation and distribution of the International Socialist Review, Intercontinental Press, and Pathfinder Press books and pamphlets.

Socialist election campaigns

Young Socialist election campaigns on high school and college campuses enable the YSA to present its views to students on the most important issues of local, national and international politics. Our student election campaigns in the past year have been successful in both presenting our answers to the most immediate questions facing students and at the same time projecting our overall strategy for revolutionary change.

During 1974, we will support the statewide and municipal election campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party. We will energetically seek to win the support of students and young workers for the statewide SWP campaigns, setting up young socialist supporter groups in as many areas as possible. The SWP election campaigns will also be supporting various struggles that break out and publicizing our offensive against the Watergate-style harassment of dissenters.

Recruiting to the YSA

The recruitment and training of cadres in the program and organizational norms of revolutionary socialism is the most important task before the YSA on its way to becoming a mass revolutionary socialist youth organization. Every activity of the YSA should be planned to aid our work in recruiting young people to the YSA.

In the mass movements and various struggles, we need to plan time to talk to people about our politics and the necessity of building a revolutionary socialist movement. Every YSA member can play an important role in this process of working with new people and convincing them of our ideas.

Our efforts to win people to the YSA should not only be directed to newly radicalized layers, but also to radicalized youth who have been participants in earlier struggles. Many of these activists who may previously have held ultraleft or reformist positions on various issues are now more open to our ideas because of their past experience.

Regional expansion

During the past several years, we have found that many opportunities for recruitment to the YSA exist in new areas where we do not yet have YSA locals. Campuses and cities in the outlying regions are important areas for expanding our influence, leading struggles and winning new members to the YSA.

In the next year, we will continue fielding Young Socialist teams as an effective way to reach students in the regions and win them to our ideas. We will continue to professionalize our regional follow-up work from the centers by maintaining full-time regional organizers wherever possible and by consistently collaborating with and helping to build new YSA locals.

Education

The systematic education of the YSA membership in Marxist theory, the history of the revolutionary socialist movement, and our strategy and tactics is essential to the building of the YSA. Every YSA member should be conscious of the impor-

ance of reading and studying our press, educational materials, and the writings of the Marxist movement. In addition, through regular educational classes, forums, summer schools and national conferences, we can help maximize the education and development of the cadres who will help lead the American socialist revolution.

STATE OF THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

By Andy Rose, Upper West Side Local

(The following contribution to the discussion is reprinted directly from the May 1973 issue of the International Socialist Review.)

Three years ago this month, in May 1970, American campuses were engulfed by the largest wave of strikes and demonstrations in history. The upsurge began on Thursday evening, April 30, when Nixon announced on nationwide television that he had ordered American troops into Cambodia. Mass meetings and demonstrations began immediately on many campuses, and the next day on hundreds more.

Several demonstrations over the weekend were attacked by cops, and the National Guard was mobilized in some states. On Monday, May 4, Guardsmen opened fire on a demonstration at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding at least nine others. This cold-blooded murder of unarmed students shocked millions of people. It was the spark that set off explosions of outraged antiwar protest on a scale never seen before.

A study sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education reported that the May upsurge had a "significant impact" on 57 percent of the nation's campuses. "Essentially peaceful demonstrations" were estimated to have taken place at 70 percent of the colleges and universities with enrollments over 5,000! At 21 percent of these larger schools, a "student/staff strike [for] one day or longer" was reported. (*May 1970: The Campus Aftermath of Cambodia and Kent State*, McGraw-Hill, 1971)

There is no doubt that the upsurge involved literally millions of students, most of whom had not been politically active before, and that the actions were supported by the

overwhelming majority of American students. A Harris poll conducted in May 1970 found that of students at colleges where protests occurred, 58 percent said they had participated and 75 percent said they supported the goals of the protests.

The peak of the May upsurge lasted at most a few weeks. The largest nationally-coordinated demonstrations took place May 9, when over 100,000 people marched on Washington, D. C., and tens of thousands more took to the streets in Seattle, Chicago, Boston, Minneapolis, Denver, San Diego, and other cities and towns.

On May 15, Mississippi state troopers fired hundreds of rounds into a dormitory at Jackson State College, killing two Black students. By this time, however, the upsurge was beginning to ebb, and except at some Black colleges no significant new upswing occurred in reaction to the Jackson State murders.

Many campus administrations declared the schools closed early for the year and ordered the students to return home. By May 6, California's Governor Reagan had ordered all state colleges and universities shut down and urged private schools to do the same. With the closing of school, the upsurge gradually faded out. National demonstrations called for Memorial Day, May 30, drew considerably smaller numbers than those earlier in the month. On June 3, Nixon pledged that all U.S. troops would be out of Cambodia by the end of the month.

The significance of the May events lies both in the vast number of stu-

dents who participated and in the character of the actions they carried out. These were the most advanced yet seen in the student movement and stand as an example for the future.

The instinct of millions of students was to reach out to the rest of the population. The Carnegie Commission study found that at 60 percent of the institutions with enrollments over 5,000 there were "student efforts to communicate with local people about the war."

These efforts were carried the furthest with the creation of "antiwar universities": On many campuses the upsurge went beyond the stage of a strike to "shut down" the university—such strikes took place almost immediately with virtually 100 percent effectiveness—to a stage of occupying and "opening up" the university by taking over campus facilities and turning them into instruments for organization of the antiwar movement.

Students organized dormitory by dormitory and department by department to utilize university resources—rooms, printing presses, radio and television stations, telephones—to spread information about the war and build antiwar actions. Decisions were made by mass meetings of thousands of students, while democratically-elected strike councils helped direct activities. These antiwar universities served as bases for the student activists to attempt to involve more powerful social forces in action.

The Carnegie Commission's summary of its findings painted this picture of the campuses in May 1970:

". . . at hundreds of institutions the outbreak was so massive that college authorities were powerless to take countering action. Typically, it was not a matter of countering force with force; when students and professors decide they no longer want to learn and teach as usual, no number of policemen or National Guardsmen, let alone administrators' exhortations, will make them do so. . . .

"Expressions of protest across the country took every conceivable form and were carried out under every conceivable banner, slogan, and cry. There were strikes, boycotts, and shutdowns; there were marches, rallies, and campuswide convocations; there were flag-lowerings, black armbands, memorial services, vigils, and symbolic funerals; there were special seminars, teach-ins, workshops, and research projects. There were students talking to residents in their homes and where they worked, and there were invitations to the public to come to the campus and talk."

The campus scene is quite different now, three years later. A spate of articles in the bourgeois press with headlines like "Youth Rebellion of Sixties Waning," "Calm Returns to Campuses," and "Student Mood: Less Inclined Now to Violence" has heralded the supposed death of the student movement.

A recent *New York Times* dispatch from Madison, Wisconsin, contrasted the "violent fever" and "political frenzy" of 1970 to the mood at the University of Wisconsin today. The writer assures us that "as red-jacketed crews skim across Lake Mendota in slim racing shells in the glorious spring sunshine that is breaking over Madison, and as long-haired students are throwing baseballs instead of bricks," a recent demonstration was regarded as "a quaint relic of the past." (April 1, 1973.)

The story is mainly concerned with the mayoral campaign of "radical" Paul Soglin. It ends: "In short, electoral politics within the system is the wave of the future to Paul Soglin and many other leftists in Madison."

U. S. News & World Report has also found "a significant change at the nation's universities. Relative

quiet reigns after years of turmoil. Discontent? Yes—but many students are turning to peaceful means of changing 'the system.'" (October 25, 1971.)

Some commentators even dare dream that the new climate on campus signifies "a return to the fifties, when another generation felt the need for respite from years of war and personal displacement."

Of course, the eagerness of these publications to bury the student movement is not unrelated to the political outlook of their ruling-class owners. The same may be said of their assurances that even if students do still have a few gripes, they will in the future have the decency to "work within the system" to resolve them. But the truth is that there *has* been a significant shift in the mood on campus. Since May 1970 there has in general been less student activism than in the preceding period.

What shaped the student movement?

By putting the student movement in the context of the key objective factors that generated it and shaped its development, as well as the subjective factor of its leadership, and by examining both the limitations and the accomplishments of the student movement, we can better take stock of the stage of the movement today.

In the U. S., the Black liberation struggle and the Vietnamese revolution have been the main rallying points of the student revolt. Changes in the development of these struggles have rapidly been reflected in the student movement.

Since 1965 resistance to the war in Vietnam has been the dynamo of the student radicalization. Millions of youth first awakened politically in opposition to the war and rallied to the defense of the Vietnamese. As Johnson escalated the war from 1965 through 1968 in pursuit of an outright military victory, seemingly with no regard for the consequences, antiwar protests mounted apace. Although there were ups and downs in the level of activity, the trend was toward deepening antiwar sentiment and growing antiwar mobilizations.

Students led the way with teach-ins, pickets, rallies, and marches that began to educate and mobilize the general public. They demonstrated against the war, against the draft, against ROTC, against Johnson wherever he appeared, against corporations like Dow Chemical that produced for the war, against university war-related research.

In the middle of 1968, in response to the Tet offensive—which proved that a rapid military victory for U. S. imperialism was a pipe dream—and to the growing opposition to the war, America's rulers shifted tactics in their attempt to crush the Vietnamese revolution. This began with Johnson's rejection of General Westmoreland's request for 200,000 more troops, and his announcement of the beginning of the Paris negotiations and a halt in the bombing of North Vietnam. Johnson himself was forced to step down from the presidency. The shift was continued by Nixon as "Vietnamization," that is, the attempt to substitute U. S. bombing and increased aid to Saigon for use of U. S. ground combat troops.

The opening of negotiations and Nixon's promise of a "secret plan to end the war" bought him a little time, but in the spring of 1969 the antiwar movement began to build up steam again. In the fall there was a mammoth outpouring of antiwar sentiment with the October 15, 1969, Moratorium and the November 15 marches in Washington and San Francisco. The next February the Student Mobilization Committee held a conference of over 4,000 young people, and national antiwar actions were held on April 15, 1970. This series of actions, in the context of growing disillusionment with Nixon's promises and a sense of betrayal at the prolongation of the war, laid the basis for the May strike.

In retrospect it can be seen that the antiwar movement entered a new stage after May 1970, as the gradual withdrawal of U. S. troops, the lower U. S. casualty rates, and lower draft calls began to have a dampening effect on antiwar activity.

At the same time, Nixon's rhetoric about "winding down the war"

served to deepen and legitimize general antiwar sentiment and increase expectations of peace. A strong organized antiwar movement was consolidated in this period, which kept the pressure on Nixon to continue withdrawing troops. But massive mobilizations occurred only when Nixon pushed too far and broke down the illusions that the war was ending, thereby unleashing the potential for action that lay just below the surface.

The invasion of Laos in February 1971, which did not involve U.S. ground troops, did not result in another upsurge on the scale of the May events, but it spurred participation in the April 24, 1971, march of almost one million people on Washington and San Francisco.

Nixon's renewed bombing of North Vietnam in April 1972, and the mining of North Vietnamese ports in May, set off the biggest upsurge of the international antiwar movement since 1970. The developing wave of protest was undercut by the Moscow summit meeting in May, which generated illusions that the war would soon end.

Nixon's success in enlisting the complicity of Moscow and Peking while he rained bombs on Vietnam through the summer and fall of 1972, along with the diversionary effect of the McGovern "peace" candidacy, kept demonstrations small. After Kissinger's October announcement that "peace is at hand," very few people were willing to take to the streets against the war.

But the latent explosiveness of popular hatred for the war was again shown when in December Nixon broke off negotiations and resumed bombing of North Vietnam. Within just a few weeks the antiwar movement pulled together one of its most significant demonstrations—the January 20 march on Washington of over 100,000 people—despite the fact that by the time the demonstration took place the bombing of North Vietnam had been halted again and the press was full of rumors of an impending cease-fire!

Now Nixon has succeeded in imposing on the Vietnamese a negotiated "settlement" that solves none of the social problems that gave

rise to the war. This was accomplished as part of his grand detente with the Stalinist betrayers in Moscow and Peking, who refused to provide adequate military or political defense for the Vietnamese and who in fact pressured them to accept such a "compromise."

Although the "settlement" will inevitably break down, for the time being the end of an active U.S. military presence in Vietnam has eliminated the basis for a mass antiwar movement in the U.S. This change is one important reason why student activism has declined.

The Black struggle

The modern American student movement was born out of the rise of the Black liberation struggle in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The sit-ins, freedom rides, voter registration drives, and marches of the early civil rights movement steered a layer of young Black leadership and initiated the radicalization of some white students.

Black students were the key activists and leaders of the movement from the beginning. Beginning in the mid-1960s with the rise of "Black Power" consciousness, they initiated struggles for open Black admissions and more scholarships, for Black studies under Black control, against the war, and other demands. These actions of Black students as students were intimately linked to the needs, aspirations, and struggles of the entire Black community. They pointed in the direction of transforming the university from an instrument perpetuating racist oppression into a vehicle for struggle in the interests of the Black community—a "Black university."

The civil rights movement won victories over many of the most blatant forms of legalized discrimination. It awakened a new sense of confidence and self-awareness among Black people and thus, in combination with the ideas and example of Malcolm X, laid the basis for the rise of Black nationalist sentiment on a mass scale. But the civil rights movement was unable to bring about any *fundamental* improvement of the condition of Black people, as the ghetto rebellions of 1965-68 furiously pro-

claimed to the world.

The problem was sharply posed of developing a leadership that could transcend the liberal-pacifist, pro-Democratic Party orientation of the civil rights leaders and begin to organize and mobilize the Black masses to win full liberation. No such leadership emerged.

The most advanced nationalist organizations, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party, veered off into ultraleft adventurism that left them more and more isolated and vulnerable to police attack. A terrible toll was taken of Black leaders framed-up and imprisoned or brutally gunned down by the cops.

At the same time, the ruling class moved in to buy off militants with foundation grants and poverty-program dollars. Thus the most promising Black leadership was destroyed, and the leadership of the movement fell by default to the more conservative forces.

This crisis of leadership, not any improvement of conditions in the Black community or lessening of its nationalist consciousness, has resulted in a lull in activity in the Black struggle since about 1969.

The conviction that Blacks could win a better life, and the expectation that big changes were on the way, has for many been replaced by hopelessness and despair. The sharp increase in drug usage points to the desire to escape from rather than fight against the poverty and oppression of the Black community. For many there is a genuine fear that any uncompromising Black militant will meet the same fate as Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Fred Hampton, and George Jackson.

In a speech in 1972, Socialist Workers Party leader Derrick Morrison pointed to the devastating effect the failure of ultraleftism had on the Black student movement:

"The ultraleft politics of the Panthers burned out and disoriented a whole layer of revolutionary-nationalist youth. . . .

"Since the Black Panther Party was the most influential independent Black political organization in the eyes of campus activists, its decline had grave consequences for the

Black student movement. Black student militants retreated from the struggle for Black studies and the Black university. They became disillusioned with the whole idea of revolution and equated any notion of revolutionary struggle with ultra-leftism or adventurism. Many were bought off with scholarships or jobs in various government-financed projects in the Black community." ("Malcolm X and the struggle for a mass independent Black political organization," *The Militant*, March 17, 1972.)

The radicalized white students had naturally been attracted to the power and militancy of the Black movement, and sought to support and link up with it. Most of the big campus struggles in the 1968-69 period were connected with the actions and demands of Black students. The 1968 Columbia strike, which raised demands against university construction of a new gymnasium at the expense of the Black community, and against university complicity with the war, was a typical example.

The role of Black students since 1960 in sparking and leading the student movement gives an indication of the significance the downturn in their struggle has had on the movement since 1969.

However, during the past year there has been a partial revival of the Black movement. Actions have taken place around the issues of police brutality; Black community and student control of education; and U. S. imperialism's role in Africa. The renewed self-confidence and determination that have characterized these activities reveal the still tremendous depth of nationalist sentiment and the potential for a new upsurge in the Black student movement.

A mood of dissatisfaction

The rebelliousness of students has been at the center of a more generalized process of radicalization in the U. S. Growing numbers of people from all walks of life are beginning to question and reject the established norms, beliefs, values, morals, customs, and institutions. There is a widespread mood of dissatisfaction with the status quo, distrust of the powers-that-be, and be-

lief that drastic changes are called for in society.

The radicalization became a mass phenomenon through the antiwar movement, spearheaded by the students. The antiwar movement opened millions of people's eyes to the brutality, hypocrisy, and deceit of the government. It altered the entire political climate in this country, spreading and legitimizing protest and dissent. It began to affect broader layers of the population, who in turn became aware of their own oppressed condition and the possibility of taking action to change it.

The student revolt itself broadened and spread to smaller and more remote campuses and into the high schools. The April 26, 1968, student strike against the war marked the entrance of large numbers of high-school students into antiwar action. In New York City alone, 200,000 high-school students went on strike. Black high school students organized strikes and demonstrations for better conditions and for Black studies, more Black teachers, and Black community control of the schools.

The Chicano and Women's liberation movements were the most powerful new social movements to emerge. As different movements arise they interrelate, overlap, reinforce, and learn from each other. Women who had been active in the antiwar movement were an important core of the leadership of the developing women's movement. Chicanos were affected by the growth of Black nationalist consciousness, and some Chicano militants went out ahead of the Black movement by breaking with the Democratic and Republican parties to form independent Raza Unida parties. The different movements tended to develop in new and independent forms. They were not under the domination of the capitalist political parties, the trade-union bureaucracy, or any of the reformist tendencies in the radical and socialist movements.

Radical means of protest were automatically seen as appropriate to new issues of concern, like consumers' rights and the environment. Native Americans, prisoners, GIs, welfare recipients, homosexuals—

the most downtrodden began demanding to be treated as human beings.

The working class has not been unaffected by the ferment in society. Thousands of workers have supported or been involved in the various protest movements. Workers have tended to radicalize as Blacks, as Chicanos, as women, or as young people opposed to the war—not as workers entering political struggle around wage and job issues. The trade unions, dominated by a racist, jingoistic, thoroughly reactionary bureaucracy, have usually abstained from or openly opposed the struggles of the new radicalization. Nor have they taken any effective action to defend the interests of the working class in the face of mounting assaults by the corporations and government upon their wages, working conditions, and rights.

The prolonged delay of the labor movement entering the process of politicization and radicalization has had a serious detrimental effect on the other movements. Instead of taking the lead and adding its decisive weight to their struggles, the labor movement has acted as a brake on their development. An important part of the explanation for the current lull in student activism lies in this uneven development of the radicalization.

Students began to question and then oppose the status quo not exclusively or even primarily around narrowly-defined "student issues" such as grades, school conditions, etc., but rather around the major questions of national and international politics. Students did not radicalize earlier than other people because they suffer greater oppression than others, but for just the opposite reason: their relative freedom from family or job restraints, their easy access to information, and their leisure time to read and discuss make students particularly sensitive to these issues. They are struck by the contradictions between the ideals of freedom and democracy they are taught and the reality of oppression and brutality that prevail in capitalist society; between the potential of modern technology to provide material abundance for all and the reality that

poverty and exploitation are the lot of most of the population. Students tend to be freer to move into action against these evils than a person encumbered by family responsibilities and worried about possible loss of a job.

But the university itself is an institution of class society, run to further the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not students or the masses of people. It discriminates against women and the oppressed nationalities, and denies students freedom of political expression and activity. Although its supposed ideal is to seek the truth, the university distorts and suppresses the truth in order to uphold the ideology of the rulers. It conceals the real history of the working class and oppressed nationalities. It perverts science into the service of the war machine. It perpetuates the sexist myths used to justify the oppression of women.

The vast expansion and transformation of the educational system since World War II, carried out to meet the needs of modern industrial capitalism for more highly educated and technically skilled workers, has exacerbated these contradictions. Students are jammed into huge university complexes where they are treated more like assembly-line products than human beings. What and how they are taught is determined by the needs of big business, not by the interests and aspirations of the students themselves.

The expansion of higher education has also given students a greater social weight than they ever previously had. In the U. S. today there are about 9 million college students and over 15 million high-school students. As of 1970, 34 percent of all persons aged 18 to 21 were in college. The majority are from working-class families and are destined to join the workforce when they graduate. They are increasingly concentrated in huge factory-like universities, many in the major urban centers, and their skills are indispensable to the running of the modern capitalist system.

The "New Left"

But students by themselves are not capable of transforming soci-

ety. Only the working class has that power. The key problem posed to students, then, is how (or even whether) they can act effectively to bring about social change. This problem is made most acute today by the fact that over the entire period of the student radicalization the working class as such has remained politically quiescent.

The "New Left" of the early 1960s, based on their own empirical observation that the working class was politically conservative, wrote it off as a force for social change. They developed theories that students and a "new working class" of intellectuals and technicians could play the revolutionary role traditionally assigned by Marxists to the industrial working class.

The young radicals of the "New Left" were repelled by the conservatism of the Stalinist Communist Party and the Social-Democracy, the main tendencies they knew that espoused Marxism. They therefore incorrectly rejected Marxism itself as dogmatic and outmoded. But without a program based on Marxist principles, the "New Left" was condemned to react pragmatically and impressionistically to every new event.

SDS, the main "New Left" organization, went through a tortuous political evolution from its origins as a left-liberal, pacifist, pro-Democratic Party offshoot of the Social-Democracy. It did play an historic role in the beginning of the antiwar movement by calling, the April 17, 1965, march on Washington, encouraging all different political groups, including revolutionary socialists, to participate.

But soon afterward the SDS leaders turned away from the antiwar struggle, proclaiming that most Americans would never see the war as an issue that directly affected them and that "local organizing" was the road to reaching the masses.

At one time, under the impact of the rise of Black nationalism and the popularization of "Black Power," SDS called for "Student Power." But they saw the significance of "Student Power" only in terms of purely campus issues and not in students' potential for linking up with the needs and power of the working

class and oppressed nationalities.

Around 1967 SDS veered more toward ultraleft adventurism. From liberalism—believing that the ruling class would be pressured or persuaded to reform its policies—they flipped to ultraleftism—believing that small groups of radicals could change society alone. They substituted spectacular actions of a handful, like taking over a building, for a strategy of educating and mobilizing the greatest number of students around defensively-formulated demands.

Ultraleft leadership led to the defeat of a number of struggles and the victimization of militants, leaving the campus disillusioned and demoralized. For example, the effects of the crushing of the 1968-69 strike at San Francisco State College are felt to this day. SDS miseducated the student movement through its identification of radical activism with ultraleft adventurism. Following the wave of campus actions in 1968-69, increasing numbers of radicalizing students who had been attracted to the militancy of SDS began to reject its ultraleft tactics.

The May-June 1968 student and worker upsurge and general strike in France dramatically refuted the "New Left" theories that the working class in the advanced capitalist countries was hopelessly bought off. Students began to look to the working class as the prime agency of fundamental social change. But in many cases this correct appreciation was negated by a one-sided and mechanical approach to involving workers in the struggle. Various factions of SDS reacted by moving toward sterile "workerist" views that students had no role to play in the revolutionary process except by leaving school and "going to the factories." Some elements of SDS ended up going full circle from their original rejection of Marxism, because they identified it with Stalinism, to embracing the Chinese-brand of Stalinism of Chairman Mao!

In the summer of 1969 the pressures of political differentiation that had been building up inside SDS and the organization's inability to respond to new developments finally blew it apart. The various ultra-

left splinter groups that emerged from the wreckage of SDS played almost no role in the May 1970 events. They were swept aside by the mass upsurge.

May 1970 posed in concentrated form the limitations of even the most powerful student protest. The upsurge encompassed virtually the entire student movement. It was one of the most powerful series of actions students could ever hope to carry out.

The May events altered the course of the war, forcing the U. S. to withdraw its troops from Cambodia even though the puppet Lon Nol regime was left in worse shape than before the invasion. Splits and divisions opened up within the ruling circles over conduct of the war. The upsurge further tied the hands of the war makers, showing the danger of such U. S. re-escalations and confirming the necessity to withdraw U. S. troops to placate anti-war sentiment.

The upsurge led to rifts within the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, with some unions breaking from George Meany's prowar line and participating in antiwar actions for the first time. If the upsurge had been extended to the masses of the working class or oppressed nationalities, a prerevolutionary situation could have ensued.

But the mass of workers did not join in the upsurge. The sustained mobilization of students alone could not be prolonged; it ended without having forced Nixon to end the war. This led to disappointment and frustration on the part of many activists who could not see that their actions had led anywhere.

In fact, the student movement has many accomplishments to its credit; more than most students realize. Not the least of these is the transformation of the political climate in the U. S. Other important victories are the contribution made by the student antiwar movement to the withdrawal of U. S. troops from Vietnam; reduction of draft calls to near-zero; passage of civil rights legislation and verbal acknowledgement that equality for Blacks is a legal right; Congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment; the Supreme Court decision that women have the right

to abortion; and the 18-year-old vote.

Students also won reforms on the campuses such as elimination of ROTC at scores of colleges; higher enrollment of Blacks and Chicanos; Black, Chicano, and women's studies departments; an end to various restrictions on students' democratic rights; and various minor educational reforms.

But students have not through their own struggles been able to bring about the more fundamental changes many desire. As some gains are won it becomes clear that even more sweeping changes will be required to eliminate social evils like racism, poverty, and the oppression of women.

The present passivity of the working class is a very real and acutely felt phenomenon. For example, Nixon was able to win the 1972 election through a skillful combination of posing as a "peace" candidate and at the same time appealing to the most racist and reactionary sentiments of sectors of the white working class. He now pretends that his reelection was a mandate for reaction. The specter of Nixon attacking Blacks and the poor, railing against "permissiveness," demanding more of the "hard work ethic" and "law and order," and attempting to roll back many of the gains won through struggle in the 1960s, seemingly without impediment, must be discouraging to many unorganized radicals.

The change in consciousness in the student movement since May 1970 is largely a matter of growing skepticism that anything can be done and hesitancy to take action. Students tend to be more cautious, and question what tactics are effective. But the degree of discontent and desire for change has not lessened.

Campus opinion

A comparison of surveys of campus opinion from 1969 through 1971 illustrates some of the trends in the student movement.

Asked to choose among different attitudes toward the American way of life, the percentage of students who think "The American way of

life is superior to that of any other country" has dropped from 17 in 1969 to 12 in 1971. The percentage who think "There are serious flaws in our society today, but the system is flexible enough to solve them" dropped from 70 to 61 over that period. The percentage who agreed that "The American system is not flexible enough; radical change is needed" went from 13 in 1969 to 22 in 1970 to 19 in 1971. But the decrease from 1970 to 1971 did not indicate a decrease in radicalism. It was registered because in 1971 a fourth choice was added—"The whole social system ought to be replaced by an entirely new one. The existing structures are too rotten for repair"—and 8 percent of students agreed with that! (*The Changing Values on Campus*, New York: Washington Square Press, 1972.)

The poll also asked students in 1971 what they considered the best methods for "achieving meaningful social change." The method with the highest rating (78 percent) was "individual doing what he can in community." "Working within the system" was picked by 65 percent, but a large minority favored more radical methods. "Organize a new political party" was listed by 25 percent; "nationalize private industry," 24 percent; "create class consciousness," 14 percent; and "create conditions for revolution," 11 percent.

The mood in the student movement today is in reality complex and contradictory. Are students now committed to "working within the system"? Obviously many students still support election campaigns of the Democrats and Republicans as a possible avenue for change. But there is nothing new about that. SDS in 1965 campaigned "Part of the Way with LBJ," and most of the students who were storming administration buildings in 1968 supported Eugene McCarthy.

What is in fact new is the growing disillusionment of young people with the two capitalist parties. Record numbers are registering as independents rather than Republicans or Democrats, and the low turnout in the 1972 elections indicates that many thousands were so disgusted

with both Nixon and McGovern, or saw so little difference between them, that they did not bother to vote. Small but significant numbers of students have consciously broken with capitalist politics to support the Socialist Workers Party campaigns or other independent campaigns like those of the Raza Unida parties.

Some students have turned away from political action altogether and toward various utopian schemes. The tendency toward counterinstitutionalism on the campuses represents a frustrated and individualistic response to the limitations of the student movement.

Others, attracted to the "workerist" sects in the radical movement, have attempted to substitute themselves for the development of a real radicalization of the labor movement by going into a few plants and initiating tiny radical caucuses.

The Young Socialist Alliance

Today there is also a widespread interest on the campuses in the ideas of Marxism, and many students have decided to join the Young Socialist Alliance. The YSA has a strategy for the student movement that is based on an understanding of both the strengths and limitations of the movement. The creation of "antiwar universities" in May 1970, and the fight of Black students for a "Black University," point toward this strategy.

We think the educational institutions should be transformed from instruments serving the needs of the capitalist rulers into organizing centers for the struggles of the oppressed and exploited, into arenas for mobilizing youth in the struggle for the complete transformation of society. Students can maximize their effectiveness by using their base of strength in the high schools and universities to reach out to and involve workers and the oppressed nationalities.

In this way the student move-

ment has the potential to trigger mass action by the working class and to serve as a transmission belt helping to develop radical political consciousness of other social layers.

The antiwar movement, in which the YSA played a central leadership role, provides the best example of the success of this strategy. Over a period of several years, the student-based antiwar movement was instrumental in changing the attitude of most workers from supporting the war in Vietnam to opposing it. Especially during and after the May events, the movement successfully drew thousands of individual workers into mass action against the war.

The experience of other countries, most notably France in May-June 1968, and Argentina in 1969, also offers examples of how students have initiated struggles that brought in broader social forces.

Contrary to the predictions and hopes of the bourgeois commentators, the student movement is far from dead. Students are still the most radical and politically aware section of the population. If at this time many are hesitant to take action, it should equally be noted that the mood on campus can shift very rapidly. The student population is continually renewed with new layers of youth from the high schools and junior high schools, whose entire lives have been spent in an atmosphere of radicalization and who can imagine nothing more natural than taking a picket sign and marching in a demonstration.

None of the fundamental contradictions that generated the student radicalization have been resolved, and the same factors that made the students the first to radicalize make the student movement quicker to recover from temporary periods of downturn and demoralization. The French student movement, for example, experienced a lull in activity for several years after May-June 1968, but this spring hundreds of thousands of French high-school

and college students have demonstrated and gone on strike in a huge nationwide protest against abolition of draft deferments.

Many struggles have in fact taken place on American campuses recently. When two Black students were murdered by cops at Southern University last November, demonstrations of protest erupted on scores of campuses around the country. When Indians occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota, this spring to dramatize their plight, students took the lead in organizing rallies to demand of the government "Hands Off Wounded Knee—No More Massacres!"

As Nixon slashes government spending for education, the issues of tuition hikes and cutbacks in educational services are coming to the fore. These cutbacks hit hardest at Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican students. Protests involving up to several hundred students have already taken place on a number of campuses.

Members of the Young Socialist Alliance have been participants and leaders in these struggles. We seek to mobilize the greatest possible number of students around the demands of immediate concern to them, while putting forward our approach of linking these struggles with the working class. We are eager to work together with all other forces willing to carry out action around a particular issue.

We cannot predict where or how the next student upsurge will occur. But we think that the struggles going on now can, with correct leadership, begin to mobilize students again, build up confidence that the movement can win victories, provide an example of how to fight, and prepare the movement for future upsurges.

At the same time we encourage all students and other youth who want to be part of the struggle for a complete socialist transformation of America to join the Young Socialist Alliance.