

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE
2518 A TELEGRAPH AVE
BERKELEY, CALIF. 94704
647-4134

The New Stage In the Antiwar Movement: A Strategy for Young Socialists



The struggle against the war is being conducted on an international scale, but this international opposition has been mobilized with but minuscule aid from the Soviet Union and China, the two countries which have the power, and therefore the obligation, to provide the most effective military and political defense for the

The New Stage In the Antiwar Movement: A Strategy for Young Socialists



This draft resolution on the antiwar movement was written for the Young Socialist National Convention to be held at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, December 27-30, 1969. It was drafted by the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance.

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

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

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

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THE NEW STAGE IN THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT:

A STRATEGY FOR YOUNG SOCIALISTS

Vietnam and the World Revolution

In 1961 there were 3,100 American "advisers" stationed in Vietnam. Today, there are over 1,000,000 "allied" troops, including nearly 500,000 Americans, fighting against the Vietnamese revolutionaries. American deaths alone have now surpassed those of the Korean war. Total American casualties are more than a quarter of a million.

But in spite of this massive intervention, the United States has been unable to win a military victory in Vietnam. This is the central problem facing the ruling class of the U.S.

Instead of a successful counter-revolutionary venture under its belt, American imperialism enters the 1970s still mired in Vietnam, while at home it faces an increasingly angry and militant antiwar mood. Neither the change in administrations, nor the "cuts" in draft quotas, nor the phony troop withdrawals, nor the ousting of Gen. Hershey have eased the mounting pressure on the U.S. government to get out of Vietnam.

Recent tactics of the Nixon administration have been marked by attempts to pacify international public opinion in order to cloak continued U.S. aggression in Vietnam. American imperialism's basic goals are being pursued as staunchly under Nixon as they were under the reign of his predecessor. These goals stem from the necessity for American imperialism to maintain control over the Third World which has, since World War II, been the focus of continual revolutionary upsurge. In Vietnam, this means the defeat of the liberation fighters in the south and the hoped-for restoration of capitalist property relations in the north. These objectives flow from the necessity for imperialism to maintain a military and political beachhead in southeast Asia, for the immediate purpose of countering other national liberation movements and with the ultimate aim of overturning the workers state in China.

President Nixon reaffirmed his commitment to this basic strategy when he said on October 1 that he refuses "to be the first President to preside over an American defeat."

Why has the American military machine been unable to defeat the Vietnamese revolution? First and foremost, it has been the determined armed struggle of the Vietnamese themselves, who, in spite of inadequate aid from the Soviet Union and China, have resolved to continue their fight until the last American soldier is withdrawn from Vietnam. Secondly, the war has generated an international antiwar movement, spearheaded by the American antiwar forces, which has sharply curtailed the flexibility of the imperialists and has limited their ability to carry through the counterrevolution in Vietnam.

U.S. imperialism, hoping for a quick defeat of the Vietnamese revolution, is now burdened with the longest war in American history. Needing solid public support, as it had in the second world war, or at minimum passive acceptance as it had during the Korean war, it now has to deal with an American population overwhelmingly opposed to the war, and increasingly willing to act on this opposition. Seeking unanimous support from its "free world" allies, it now faces opposition from even that bourgeois quarter. In need of a unified capitalist class in this country to plunge ahead with the war in the face of these obstacles, it now faces deep tactical divisions within its own ranks which have served to encourage antiwar sentiment and make it impossible to isolate the antiwar movement. No section of the capitalist class disagrees with the ultimate goals of imperialism, but many feel that the Vietnam war is the "wrong" war at the "wrong" time. As long as leading spokesmen for the ruling class voice criticisms of the war it makes it difficult to brand the antiwar movement as a small group of "subversives." And finally, while Nixon needs social peace for the duration of the war, he now has to face an international radicalization of youth which, in the long run, poses as deadly a threat to his plans as do the Vietnamese themselves.

The struggle against the war is being conducted on an international scale. But this international opposition has been mobilized with but miniscule aid from the Soviet Union and China, the two countries which have the power, and therefore the obligation, to provide the most vigorous military and political defense for the

Vietnamese. Not only could the Soviet Union provide massive direct aid to the Vietnamese, but it could be instrumental in mobilizing the Moscow-oriented parties in defense of Vietnam around the world. But the foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy is in opposition to the needs of world revolution. This follows from its line of "peaceful coexistence" which always seeks accommodation to imperialism. In order to maintain its own privileged position, the Soviet bureaucracy puts its narrow nationalistically-conceived interests above the interests of the international revolution. The actions of the Soviet bureaucrats and their subservient followers around the world have earned them the much deserved contempt of antiwar militants everywhere.

The Chinese bureaucrats have issued proclamations which sound more militant, but they have given little concrete aid to the Vietnamese. They continue in their sectarian refusal to call for a united front of workers states in defense of Vietnam. This abstentionist stance provides Moscow and the Moscow-oriented forces with an excuse for their non-participation in antiwar actions, and makes it easier for Moscow to avoid giving meaningful support to the Vietnamese. This sectarianism has been reflected internationally by the various Maoist parties which refuse to join in antiwar united fronts--an example being the Progressive Labor Party in the United States.

The reformist social democratic organizations have either totally abstained from defense of Vietnam, or else have given outright support to the policies of U.S. imperialism. In many countries where they are the governing party, as in England, they have given open support to the war; elsewhere they have stood completely apart from the antiwar movement, as has the Socialist Party in the U.S. The major exception has been the Japanese Socialist Party, which participates in the mass Japanese antiwar movement.

The Cubans, in sharp contrast to the Soviet and Chinese bureaucrats, carry forward the tradition of proletarian internationalism in their outspoken defense of the Vietnamese revolution, although they are not in a position to provide much material aid. The internationalism of the Cubans, exemplified by Che's call for "two, three, many Vietnams," is an inspiration to antiwar militants throughout the world.

Because the traditional mass organizations of the working class have generally abstained from organizing and mobilizing opposition to U.S. aggression in Vietnam, the international antiwar movement has developed independently, both

politically and organizationally, of these organizations. The bulk of young militants who have engaged in antiwar struggles have tended to reject the Stalinist and social democratic politics of class collaboration and stand opposed to any accommodation with U.S. imperialism, although at the same time they are not immune from illusions about bourgeois "peace" candidates.

The international struggle against the Vietnam war has helped generate the worldwide youth radicalization which is sweeping every continent. At the root of much of this radicalization is opposition to American imperialism's exploitation and oppression of the Third World, and its policy of intervening to crush revolutionary movements everywhere. This radicalization has bypassed the Communist parties and reformists and discredited them. Its internationalism, militancy, and anticapitalist thrust have brought fresh forces into the revolutionary socialist movement, both in the industrialized capitalist countries and in the Third World countries. In the United States this has been manifested in the growth and development of the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party.

In this international movement of young militant antiwar fighters the YSA and our co-thinkers around the world have been in the leadership and provided initiative in action.

The Antiwar Movement in the U.S.

The antiwar movement in the United States has fundamentally changed the political fabric of American life. It began with a demonstration called by SDS in April, 1965. That demonstration, held two months after the U.S. first began bombing north Vietnam, showed that considerable antiwar feeling already existed. Since then the antiwar movement has mobilized millions in anti-imperialist action, and today it clearly speaks for the majority of the American people.

The antiwar movement has rolled back most of the vestiges of witchhunt thinking which permeated political life in the 1950s and even continued into the early 1960s. The cold war anticommunist hysteria, which provided much needed justification at home for U.S. imperialism's counterrevolutionary activity around the world, has been replaced by an atmosphere in which political ideas can be debated in a relatively free and open atmosphere. The antiwar movement's policy of non-exclusion--that is, anyone or any group opposed to the war is welcome in the movement--is largely responsible for this change.

It has been the antiwar movement, with its demonstrations, teach-ins, ral-

lies and strikes which has demolished the ruling-class claim that the American people have no right to oppose government policies. For millions the antiwar movement provides a way of opposing those policies in action and represents the sentiments of tens of millions more. The fight against the war has shaken the confidence of many Americans in the government, and has made it easier for them to begin to question other government policies and actions as well.

In addition, the antiwar movement has helped to explain and to popularize the demand for self-determination, which is beginning to become a widespread idea.

Along with the Afro-American struggle for self-determination, the antiwar movement has catalyzed a deep-going radicalization among American youth which has linked them to their counterparts around the world who are engaging in militant struggle against imperialism. Through involvement in the antiwar movement, hundreds of thousands of young people have begun to understand that U.S. aggression in Vietnam is not a "mistake" in an otherwise benevolent foreign policy, but is an integral part of imperialism's world plans. This has brought many to the correct conclusion that the other injustices in American life have at their root the same fundamental cause: capitalism.

The Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) is the organization of the militant student antiwar movement in the U.S. As such it is the main arena of antiwar activity for the YSA and will continue to be so in the future. The SMC is now a mass student organization with tens of thousands of adherents; on many campuses SMC has chapters with hundreds of members. After the precipitous decline of SDS since June of 1969, the SMC has now clearly emerged as the largest student political organization in the United States today.

The YSA's role in the SMC has won us the respect of broad layers of student activists and the YSA is clearly the leading political tendency in the SMC at this point. Such a role inside a large mass student organization is a new one for us, but one for which we have well prepared ourselves through our consistent antiwar activity since 1964. The recent rapid growth of the SMC presents tremendous opportunities for the YSA as well as for the antiwar movement as a whole.

The SMC was formed in December 1966 at a conference involving all the tendencies in the student movement. This conference represented a decisive step forward for the student wing of the antiwar movement. It took place after the Thanksgiving, 1966, Cleveland conference which first made plans for the massive April 15, 1967 mobilizations in New York and San

Francisco.

The discussion at this founding conference of the SMC centered on the need for students to organize themselves and link up with other sectors of the antiwar movement and to help draw new layers of the American population and the students into antiwar action. The SMC was formed on that basis--and began to satisfy a long unfulfilled need in the antiwar movement: the national organization of the student antiwar militants. The SMC was formed on the clear political basis of the demand for immediate withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam, an end to university complicity with the war, and abolition of the draft.

The April 15 demonstrations consolidated the SMC. The SMC organized successful Vietnam Week actions preceding April 15, and the role played by the SMC in building April 15 itself turned the SMC into an authoritative national organization. It acquired the necessary respect to begin organizing the tens of thousands of student activists in actions against the war.

The next major action was the October 21 Pentagon demonstration in Washington, D.C. The SMC did the major building of October 21. It had originally planned the demonstration at a conference of its own, and proposed it to the National Mobilization Committee (NMC), the adult antiwar coalition. The Washington demonstration was an overwhelming success, and the fact that an estimated 80% of the total turnout was made up of youth confirmed the SMC's estimate of the scope of antiwar sentiment on the campus.

On April 26, 1968 the SMC organized a remarkably successful nationwide student strike. With close to a million participants it was larger than any of the antiwar student strikes of the 1930s. The following day mass demonstrations were held in cities across the country. The largest--in New York--drew 200,000.

As the 1968 elections approached, those sections of the antiwar movement whose politics are limited to trying to influence the "progressive" sections of the ruling class--such as the Communist Party, the DuBois Clubs and the liberals--abandoned the perspective of mass action and turned toward the elections, with the aim of using their influence in the antiwar movement and in the SMC to drum up support for McCarthy and other procapitalist "peace" candidates.

As a result of these defections, many of the local antiwar coalitions tended to fall apart. The old National Mobilization Committee lost its united front character and came under the domination of frustrated ultraleftists who had given up

the perspective of mass action.

In the spring of 1968 a minority in the SMC, grouped around the Communist Party and the pacifists, split from the SMC, after having tried to change the SMC into a multi-issue organization with a reformist program. Their goal was to convert the SMC from an independent organization relying on mass action against the war, into an instrument which could be used to build support for one or another bourgeois candidate in the 1968 elections. Following the split, those who walked away from the SMC engaged in a red-baiting campaign and tried to label the SMC as a "YSA front." This red-baiting attack had little impact in the face of the SMC's success in mobilizing masses into action against the war.

The events this fall -- the Moratorium on October 15, the November 14 Student Strike, the November 13-14 Moratorium, and the November 15 demonstration -- have revealed an unprecedented explosion of opposition to the war. The numerical magnitude of this opposition, its breadth and depth, and the force with which it has revealed itself, have shocked and surprised everyone. This explosion comes after a year of false hopes in the new administration in Washington, illusions about troop "withdrawals," "secret plans" for ending the war, "Vietnamization" of the war, etc. The propaganda offensive from Washington, combined with the hopes of the masses of Americans that changes would come from a new administration tended to hold back the antiwar movement for a time, but prepared the way for a revived and much larger wave of protest as the impatience of the masses burst forth.

Beginning with the 1968 McCarthy campaign, continuing through the Presidential election itself, and spanning the "honeymoon" period of the Nixon administration, many antiwar forces relied on sections of the bourgeoisie itself to end the war. While there were in this period large antiwar actions in some local areas, and a big increase in activity by antiwar GIs, the antiwar actions never reached the size of the mass actions in April or October of 1967.

The large and successful April 5-6 demonstrations signalled the beginning of the end of this stage of the antiwar movement. April 5-6 not only showed that mass action was a realizable perspective, but also provided the organizational framework upon which both the SMC and the broad adult antiwar coalition were rebuilt. The massive outpouring on October 15 proved conclusively that the relative quiescence of the preceding period was due not to any lessening of antiwar sentiment, but to the temporary disorientation in the election and immediate post-election period. In fact, antiwar sentiment had continued

to deepen in this period, fed by Nixon's own "peace" rhetoric, until it exploded in mammoth proportions at the first opportunity for organized, united, mass action. The YSA which understood this process while it was occurring, and fought consistently for actions of the type that could pave the way for a renewed mass antiwar movement, emerged from this period in excellent shape to provide leadership and direction.

But we are not simply "returning" to the previous stage reached by the antiwar movement in 1967. The objective conditions are now much more favorable: today only an Agnew or a Nixon can dispute the fact that the American people are in their overwhelming majority opposed to the war. Moreover, the relationship of forces in the radical movement has shifted markedly in our favor. The revolutionary socialist forces are qualitatively stronger now than in 1967, and our political opponents such as the Communist Party and the SDS leadership are in a much less favorable position.

Labor and the Antiwar Movement

The organized antiwar movement up to now has been generally based on the students, radical political organizations, pacifist groups, and a number of individual figures. While there has been some trade union support in the past, especially around mass actions, most of the participation to date from the trade union movement has come from individuals acting on their own initiative and not as official union representatives.

Up to now, the primary manifestation of labor's lack of enthusiasm for the war has been its refusal to sacrifice and subordinate its economic demands to the "war effort." While this may not seem very significant to some student militants, to those who understand that capitalists have always used wars to dampen and disorient union militancy, this is a very important fact. Strikes and working-class militancy have increased as workers have fought to maintain their living standards and job conditions in the face of mounting taxes and inflation.

There are now indications that at least a section of the trade union bureaucracy, under rising antiwar pressure from the ranks, will be pushed into some form of collaboration with the organized antiwar movement. The endorsement by the Alliance for Labor Action of the October 15 Moratorium, and the agreement of Gibbons from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to speak in Washington on November 15 are two indications. As antiwar sentiment continues to grow, it becomes increasingly difficult for the union bureaucrats to stand apart from the mass actions against the war. Also, the moves to-

wards the antiwar movement taken by liberal politicians have encouraged some union officials to take similar stands. Even though Walter Reuther has not made Vietnam a central issue in his dispute with Meany and the AFL-CIO tops, it is clear that Reuther will have to adopt some form of demagogic adaptation to the mass antiwar sentiment as part of his over-all strategy.

The YSA can anticipate two trends to follow the intervention by elements of the top labor bureaucracy into the antiwar movement. First, and most important, the formal support from elements of union officialdom will open the door for increased rank and file worker support and participation in antiwar actions. Thus the antiwar movement has the potential to draw in new forces -- forces with social weight and leverage that the students lack. Our job as revolutionary socialists is to maximize the pressure on the bureaucrats to join the antiwar movement, while simultaneously fighting for a strategy of mass legal actions that will be attractive to rank and file unionists. The SMC can also appeal directly to the workers with such methods as leafletting of plants and factories with statements by unionists and others urging participation in antiwar actions.

We also anticipate that the entry of trade union bureaucrats into the antiwar coalition will result in the strengthening and emboldening of the right wing of the movement. Bolstered by union funds, trained bureaucratic hacks, and finding allies in the ranks of the opportunist liberal politicians who have recently "seen the light" on the war issue, these union officials will attempt to scuttle many of the political norms of the antiwar movement that have existed up to now. In particular, political battles will have to be fought over questions of support to liberal capitalist politicians as opposed to maintaining the independent character of the antiwar movement, the issue of political exclusion, "gradual" withdrawal as opposed to immediate withdrawal, and the value of mass actions.

Under these conditions, the conjunctural role of revolutionary socialists in the antiwar movement will tend to shift its axis. We will play less the role of direct leadership in a relatively limited mass movement, and more a role as leaders of a class struggle left wing among larger organized masses.

These pressures from the right will exert their strongest effect on the adult antiwar coalition, although they will also have an impact on the students. It is within this context that the role of the SMC will become more important than ever before. The SMC's role as the mass organization of the militant student

"immediate withdrawal" wing of the antiwar movement will assume ever greater importance. The SMC will be the strongest, best organized, most determined force for immediate withdrawal, mass action, non-exclusion, and independence from capitalist politicians.

As the antiwar movement broadens to include wider strata of the population, and as sections of the trade union bureaucracy and capitalist politicians adapt to this pressure, the Nixon administration will face a grave threat. It will certainly attempt to isolate the militant mass action and withdrawal section of the movement. This will include attacks on the student wing of the movement in general, and in particular the SMC. One of the methods that we anticipate will be used will be red-baiting. Because of our leadership role in the antiwar movement, it is likely that the YSA and the SMC will be subject to red-baiting attacks. These can be turned against the ruling class if we educate the movement to reply in forthright defense of the policy of non-exclusionism, that is, the policy that all groups and individuals willing to work against the war are welcome, regardless of their position on other issues. Anything less than this response would gravely weaken the antiwar movement.

The Antiwar Movement and Third World Struggles

It is among black and other third world peoples that opposition to the Vietnam war is deepest and most massive. As the most oppressed section of the American population, blacks and browns face the brunt of the draft calls, the welfare cutbacks, and the deaths due to the war. Blacks and browns struggling for liberation in the U.S. see no interest in dying to suppress the Vietnamese liberation struggle. Thus it is not surprising that opposition to the Vietnam war is predominant in almost every sector of the black and brown communities, including the more conservative elements.

This massive opposition to the war has hardly been tapped in action. The participation of black and third world people in the antiwar movement has primarily been limited to the campus and the army. College and high school students have participated in the mass antiwar demonstrations and strikes on a limited scale. And, within the army, black and brown GIs have played an active role in the GI antiwar movement. At Ft. Jackson, black and brown GIs were the leaders of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam.

Although almost every black and third world organization opposes the war, no third world organization or group of organizations has either the strength or the political understanding to be able to

tap this opposition in action.

The scale of third world antiwar sentiment means that the mobilization of the third world masses in the antiwar movement would be of profound importance both to the third world struggle and to the antiwar movement.

The struggle against the war and the draft is an essential part of the third world struggle for self-determination. Blacks and brown are forced to fight in a war solely in the interests of their oppressor. Mobilizing the blacks, Chicanos and Puerto Ricans against the war, provides an important opportunity for third world groups to organize the community. Such actions can build the type of third world movement that will create the mass independent black political party that is needed.

One of the necessary steps for the expansion of the antiwar movement is the involvement of black and third world people in the movement. Such a step would fuse the militancy and social power of the third world masses with the antiwar movement. One of the key tasks for the antiwar movement is to conduct its actions and formulate its demands in such a way as to maximize support from this sector of society.

Third world YSAers will continue to be active in building third world participation in the antiwar struggle. There must be flexibility in the organizational forms for this work; third world antiwar actions are still in their initial stages. At this time, it would be wrong to project one specific organizational form for third world antiwar action, especially on a national level. In some areas this work can be done directly through black student organizations, or through third world united fronts against the war. In other areas this can be done through the SMC and antiwar coalitions.

The GI Antiwar Movement

Perhaps those with the greatest stake in the antiwar movement right now are the GIs, whose lives continue to be the pawns in Nixon's maneuvers. The government can proclaim all the "lulls" it wants--the GIs know the war continues. The growth of the antiwar movement among the GIs adds powerful new forces to the antiwar movement--forces in a key strategic position from which to campaign against the war. Antiwar actions led or initiated by GIs are increasing. GI antiwar papers are proliferating, and on-post battles for constitutional rights to oppose the war are becoming a regular feature of life in the armed forces.

The YSA has a record of which it is especially proud on this question. While

other tendencies were oriented toward the individual acts of draft refusers, and viewed GIs as mercenaries who were "guilty" of sharing responsibility for the war, the YSA was explaining that GIs are a crucial sector toward which the antiwar movement should orient. In the past year high points of the struggle for GI rights to oppose the war took place at Ft. Jackson and Ft. Bragg where members of the YSA who had been inducted or who joined the YSA while in the service played leadership roles in the struggle.

Our position is based on the mass character of the imperialist army. The armed forces represent a cross section--heavily weighted toward oppressed national minorities and working-class youth--of this society. As such the armed forces contain the same explosive contradictions that exist in the civilian population. The acute pressures of wartime military life, and especially the conditions in combat zones, intensify these contradictions.

The pace of the GI antiwar movement is closely linked to that of the civilian movement. GI activity in isolation from civilian support and legal and political defense is unlikely to be successful. It is thus essential to understand that the GI antiwar movement is an important component of the antiwar struggle, but can not be viewed as a substitute for the mass actions of the civilian movement.

The approach of the YSA toward the GI antiwar movement is based on the following points:

- 1) As in the civilian movement, we are for mass action as opposed to individual acts such as desertion. Isolated acts may satisfy an individual's conscience, but only serve to isolate the individual from the mass of GIs. Within this framework we call for GI support to and participation in the mass actions of the antiwar movement.

- 2) The political situation inside, as well as outside, the armed forces calls for open activity rather than secretive "underground" operations. Those who argue for clandestine organizing claim that it is the only way to avoid repression; in actuality, this type of activity is most likely to lead to victimization. The military brass almost always have sources of information about antiwar activity in any form, and "underground" activity prevents potential supporters and defenders from being able to help whenever the brass does try to crack down. Usually, "undergroundism" is merely a "left-wing" excuse for inactivity.

- 3) We are in favor of fighting for the constitutional rights of GIs--for the concept of the GI as a citizen-soldier.

The fight for these democratic rights is a powerful tool in the hands of the majority, and that is whom the antiwar GIs represent. The military brass is deathly afraid of allowing democratic rights to be exercised in the middle of a war which is so unpopular to the majority of Americans. Many GIs can be brought into action around demands for their rights as citizens to discuss the war and other questions of concern to them. By fighting for their rights, GIs have already won important victories against the ruling class, although they will have to continue to battle for even the most elementary democratic rights.

4) We understand the importance of centering struggles around the issue of the Vietnam war, which is the issue of prime concern for all GIs. It is the issue which will attract the most support from other GIs as well as civilians, and it is the issue around which the broadest unity can be based.

A Revolutionary Socialist Strategy for the Antiwar Movement

The history of the antiwar movement has been marked by major disputes over strategy and tactics. While these disputes have taken various forms, the heart of the dispute has remained the same: whether or not the antiwar movement would continue to be built on an independent anti-imperialist axis of mass action. The attacks on this perspective have come from both the reformist right wing of the antiwar movement and from the ultraleftists.

The major threat faced by the antiwar movement since its inception has been the attempts by the Communist Party, the liberals, and the right-wing pacifists, to channel the movement into support for liberal capitalist politicians. This pressure has always been most intense during times of major bourgeois elections. At times, such as during the 1968 campaign, sectors of the antiwar movement have been diverted from independent mass action to campaigning for one or another "antiwar" capitalist politician. Due to the efforts of the revolutionary socialists of the YSA and the SWP this pressure has never been successful in completely derailing the antiwar movement into capitalist politics. Nothing could be more disastrous than for the antiwar movement to begin to rely on the opportunistic liberal politicians who are out hustling votes by their demagogic appeals for "peace," and to give up the perspective of mass action in the streets in favor of pushing doorbells for these phony "peace" candidates.

With the major gubernatorial and senatorial campaign of 1970, we anticipate that the pressure to substitute lib-

eral politicking for mass action will once again intensify. "Peace" candidates, whether Democratic, Republican or "third ticket," will proliferate more than ever before. Moreover, the increased participation of liberals and some sections of the trade union bureaucracy will increase the weight of these forces.

Therefore, we can expect that the main threat to our orientation for the antiwar movement, and the main threat to that movement itself, in 1970 will come not from the ultraleftists but from the right.

The second main threat to the antiwar movement has come from those ultraleftists who have advocated individual acts and small adventures which separate the vanguard from the mass movement. From this school comes the theory that physical confrontations with the police are the best way to radicalize people. This ultraleft line was carried to its logical conclusion when 200 followers of RYM I were repeatedly attacked and beaten in Chicago by the cops, while their leaders claimed success because several demonstrators had been wounded by police gunfire. The real result of RYM I's attempt to "tear pig city apart" was serious victimization of many demonstrators, as well as a public relations boost given to Mayor Daley and his police who were commended by the bourgeois mass media for behaving so "reasonably" in the face of attacks by apparent madmen. Small actions organized on a sectarian basis by groups such as PL and RYM II do no more to build the antiwar movement than RYM I's action.

Electoral Action

The YSA has argued that the antiwar movement, as a movement, should not get involved in electoral politics of any kind. As a predominantly middle-class movement, at a time when there are no mass working-class political formations such as a labor party or a mass socialist party, the antiwar movement as such could engage in electoral politics only within the framework of bourgeois parties and candidates. This is, of course, precisely what is advocated by the Communist Party and bourgeois liberals who are constantly urging antiwar activists to work for capitalist candidates.

In this context the battle to maintain the independence of the antiwar movement will be crucial. At the same time, the YSA will be campaigning for support from antiwar activists as individuals for the 1970 election campaigns of the SWP. We will be explaining that the SWP candidates will be the only ones out to build the antiwar movement, not to compete with it. The SWP campaigns will urge full support for mass actions against the war, and many of the candidates will be veteran

antiwar leaders and activists.

The campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party will be examples of the kind of electoral activity that antiwar militants should support. We think it would be a mistake, however, for the SMC or other antiwar organizations as such to engage in any kind of electoral activity, including support to SWP candidates. Those ready to support socialist campaigns will be only a part of the total number who oppose the war and who are ready to join in action against it. For any antiwar group to make support for any particular candidates a precondition for joining an antiwar demonstration, or belonging to an antiwar committee, would only reduce the numbers that could participate.

"Multi-issue" vs. "Single-issue"

The dichotomy between "multi-issue" and "single-issue" orientations for the antiwar movement is most often a smoke-screen thrown up by reformists seeking to turn the antiwar movement into a political organization with a reformist program. Some of these opportunists attempt to utilize the antiwar movement to provide themselves with a reformist political base. Such has been the role of The Guardian at times. Others, who argue for "multi-issue" programs, such as the CP, are trying to divert the movement directly into Democratic Party politics.

The Vietnam war cuts deeply into the fabric of society, raising a multitude of fundamental questions about racism, inflation, taxes, antilabor legislation, cutbacks in welfare spending, etc. All are intimately tied in to the war, which the YSA is the first to explain. But it would be a different matter for the entire antiwar movement to attempt to adopt a political program which speaks to all these problems of capitalist society. Would such a program be reformist or revolutionary? In either case it would exclude those who disagreed and introduce as the basis for antiwar action the political differences that are the basis for competing parties and tendencies. We are against the imposition of a reformist political program on the antiwar movement, smuggled in behind a facade of talk about becoming more "radical" by dealing with other issues. To those individuals who are interested in taking steps beyond antiwar activity and are ready for a "multi-issue" organization, we present the revolutionary program of the YSA and urge those who agree with us to join the YSA. But we do not try to impose the YSA's program on the entire antiwar movement.

A recent variation on this theme has been the call to transform the antiwar movement into an "anti-imperialist" movement. Some sections of SDS, The Guardian,

and others have argued for this idea. The argument, briefly stated, is that fighting against the Vietnam war is insufficient, it is necessary to build a movement based on "opposition to imperialism." The problem with this argument is that it fails to explain how any movement can be more anti-imperialist than one based on fighting against the imperialist war while it is going on!

Actually, this "anti-imperialist" movement is only an updated version of a "multi-issue" reformist organization. To say that opposing the war is not a full political program for changing society is absolutely correct. But to destroy imperialism it is necessary to have a revolutionary socialist program and a revolutionary party -- anything less would be a fraud. Moreover, to limit those who could join to those who proclaim their "anti-imperialism" would be destructive to the defense of the Vietnamese revolution. A few hundred "conscious anti-imperialists" in Chicago did less to defeat imperialism than the millions who protested against the war on October 15, even though these masses were not prepared to proclaim themselves "anti-imperialists." The key point is that they engaged in action against the imperialist war.

To make agreement with a general anti-imperialist program a prerequisite for participation in the antiwar movement would exclude the majority of people now active in the movement. It would restrict the movement in defense of the Vietnamese revolution to those few people who could come to some agreement on opposing imperialism in the abstract.

The YSA views the mass actions of the antiwar movement as objectively anti-imperialist, regardless of the consciousness of the individual participants. These actions are aimed against a specific ongoing imperialist war. The essence of these mass actions is very much "anti-imperialist" and most important, capable of succeeding in dealing blows to the imperialist war.

The United Front Tactic

The mass actions organized by the antiwar movement have demonstrated the power of the tactic of the united front and its application to the antiwar movement in the form of antiwar coalitions. If there existed in this country a mass working-class political party, one not totally rotten with reformism, the fight against the war could be organized by that party and carried out under its political leadership. But because such a party does not yet exist, the antiwar movement has evolved through the independent SMC and its chapters across the country, and united front formations on a city-wide, regional and national level.

The antiwar movement is so hetero-

geneous that it cannot serve as a basis for a coalition around a general political program. But united in action, the different component parts of the antiwar movement have been able to organize mass demonstrations in spite of the varying and even opposing views on other matters held by individual participants and organizations. No single group acting alone could have organized such large and militant actions.

Central to the united front tactic has been the non-exclusionary character of these coalitions--allowing revolutionary socialists to participate in them while maintaining their own independent political positions and being free to present their ideas without restrictions.

Immediate and Unconditional Withdrawal

From the beginning of the antiwar movement the YSA has fought for the demand for unconditional and immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. While we have been and will continue to be willing to join in action with those who were not ready to accept that demand, we have continually explained that this is the only demand that fully supports the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. At the same time it is the demand that can most successfully mobilize masses of Americans in militant opposition to the war. The demand for immediate withdrawal, as embodied in the slogan "Bring All the Troops Home Now!" has become the position of the majority of the antiwar movement.

In the past, the demand for "negotiations" or "stop the bombing" has been counterposed to the call for immediate withdrawal. Now these have been replaced by the call for various "schedules" of withdrawal (i.e., the Goodell resolution). None of these schemes for ending the war is consistent with the Vietnamese fight for self-determination. All of them would condemn still more American GIs and Vietnamese to death and imply a continuation of the fighting.

On the other hand, there are those who counterpose the slogan of support to the 10 point program of the NLF or the 12 point program of the Provisional Revolutionary Government to the demand for immediate withdrawal. This proposal is a retreat from support to self-determination, and would also lead the antiwar movement into the political trap of countering Nixon's token withdrawals with propaganda support to the NLF or PRG. This would allow Nixon to claim to be the one for "withdrawal." In this context it is important to note that the NLF itself advocates immediate withdrawal as the central demand which will aid the struggle for self-determination.

The SMC on Campus

The growth of the SMC on a national scale has resulted in the formation of SMC chapters on hundreds of high school and college campuses throughout the country. This development into a mass organization opens up possibilities for the SMC to organize expanded and ongoing activity against campus complicity with the war in addition to mobilizing for the periodic national mass actions. One of the key tasks of the SMC will be to initiate and lead successful actions and campaigns on campus around the war and war-related issues which are of prime concern to the majority of students.

The campus revolt which swept the country in the spring of 1969 demonstrated the militancy and willingness to struggle of thousands of students. That many of these actions ended only in partial victories or in defeats and victimizations was the result, in large part, of the ultraleft and sectarian leadership of SDS, which at that time was still a relatively large organization and which dominated political life on many campuses.

The SMC has a different method of organizing, which stands in sharp contrast to the adventurist and sectarian approach followed by many SDS chapters. The guidelines around which the SMC has organized national actions remain basically the same for campus actions. Decisions are made at mass meetings to which everyone interested in action around a particular question is invited and at which all basic policy questions are decided.

Just as SMC's national program--mass action, immediate withdrawal, self-determination for Vietnam and black America, end the draft, end campus complicity, and free speech for GIs and for high school students--is comprised of clear, defensively-formulated demands around which masses of students can be mobilized into action; demands around campus issues should be formulated in the same way. In actions which can involve a broad political spectrum on campus and for which support in other sectors of the population can be built, it is necessary to remain focused on the central issue in question--whether it is getting ROTC or military recruiters off campus, ending secret research, fighting for campus facilities for the SMC, or organizing an action like the Moratorium or the November 14 student strike.

The mass action approach is the only way in which victories can be won for the student antiwar movement against the university's attempts to preserve its ties to the war machine. However, tactics will vary from campus to campus, and from issue to issue. SDS to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no tactic which is militant in and of itself. Seizing a

building is not a militant tactic if it is done without the support and participation of the masses of students and for a set of demands which only a relative handful agree with. It is then simply an ultraleft adventure. Real militancy requires mass action around demands with which masses can agree--this may or may not mean occupying a building.

The opportunities for SMC action in the high schools are wide open. Nixon's draft "reforms"--an unsuccessful attempt to mollify angry college students--has opened the door to mass antiwar actions by high school students. Nixon's idea that he could cool the campus revolt by drafting 19-year-olds first instead of college students and young workers will backfire: it will mean a further extension and deepening of the radicalization in the high schools, the place where the 19-year-olds will come from.

Due to the repressive character of most high school administrations, the tactics of high school antiwar actions may vary from those used on college campuses. But the principles for action remain the same. In the high schools antiwar actions are often linked to the fight for basic democratic rights of high school students to carry out political activity, including the building of the antiwar movement.

The development of a mass high school antiwar movement is especially important because it constitutes a direct link between the antiwar movement and the working class and black and third world communities. The struggle by black and brown high school students to carry out antiwar activities, to protest against the armed forces recruiters who have free run of the high schools, and against the draft, can all be directly linked to the struggle by the black and third world peoples for control over their own education. In addition, high school antiwar militants will take their organizing experience with them when they are drafted or become part of the working class. Thus the extension of the antiwar movement into the high schools leads directly to a deepening of that struggle in other key sectors of the population: the armed forces, the working class, and the black and third world communities.

The International Fall Offensive

This fall, antiwar youth have been carrying out actions against the war on an international scale. An international fall offensive, initiated by the SMC, is encompassing actions in Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada and many other places.

The mass demonstrations and strikes that have been organized in Japan are the culmination of several years of build-up actions focused on the U.S.-Japan Security

Treaty and the continued occupation of Okinawa by U.S. forces, as well as against the war in Vietnam. In Europe, demonstrations are being organized under the two themes of opposition to NATO and support for the Vietnamese revolution. The Canadian Vietnam Mobilization Committee has called for cross-Canada antiwar actions. The Canadian antiwar movement is demanding the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Vietnam and an end to the complicity of the Canadian government.

The fall offensive was inaugurated in the United States with October 15--the largest single political protest held in this country in decades. The Moratorium was initiated by forces that came out of the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns, and it was seized upon and supported by numerous politicians of both capitalist parties. However, its character, impact, and main thrust were determined not by these forces but by the masses of militant young people who organized, built and participated in the actions around the country. The YSA and the SMC around the country joined in without hesitation and enthusiastically built the October 15 Moratorium. While we did not hesitate to criticize the political weaknesses of the "official" organizers, and pressed everywhere for the demand of immediate withdrawal, we understood that the action would be objectively anti-imperialist and if successful would be seen as the inauguration of the fall antiwar offensive and lead right into the student strike on November 14 and the march on Washington and San Francisco on November 15. In many areas, it was the SMC that organized the mass actions on October 15, both on campus and on a city-wide basis.

It is important to understand that the Moratorium itself has no mass organization and is therefore not a competitor to the SMC on a national scale. The SMC is able to draw in large numbers of students through its open, democratic structure and mass decision-making meetings. The SMC made big political and organizational gains from October 15. The SMC supports the Moratorium's November 13 and 14 "second round" actions, and seeks to link it to the November 14 and 15 dates. It has also done everything in its power to involve the Moratorium forces in actions initiated or supported by the SMC.

The YSA

The YSA participates in the antiwar movement on different levels. First, YSAers are recognized leaders and enthusiastic builders of the Student Mobilization Committee, both in local areas and on the national level. There is absolutely no contradiction whatsoever between being in the YSA and being at the same time a leader in the SMC. Our work in the SMC has helped build the SMC into the mass

student organization it is today, while at the same time winning respect and admiration for the YSA from thousands of antiwar militants. Also, by virtue of the YSA's participation in antiwar coalitions such as the New Mobilization Committee, every YSAer, including those who are not members of SMC chapters on campuses and in high schools, are members and participate in the antiwar movement. We are proud to be known as the socialist wing of the antiwar movement. On this level we have presented our views on the path the antiwar movement should take in our magazine, the Young Socialist, in our pamphlets, and leaflets, and at national, regional and local antiwar meetings and conferences. Our views and proposals carry considerable weight, and at key junctures have been decisive in maintaining and building the antiwar movement.

We have had absolutely no fear of becoming "over-involved" in this movement. We see the war in Vietnam as the central political issue on an international scale. Moreover, we have never viewed the antiwar movement or antiwar organizations as "competitors"--a mistake SDS repeatedly made.

The decision to join in an antiwar demonstration for the first time often is an individual's first step along the road toward an anticapitalist and prosocialist

position. It is the fight against the war in Vietnam that has raised the youth radicalization to a qualitatively higher stage. It is the war, along with the deepening black struggle, that has produced the deep alienation and willingness to fight against the government in masses of young people. Recruiting antiwar activists to the YSA is a prime task.

This orientation toward the antiwar movement has been central to the growth and development of the YSA in the five years since the antiwar movement began. The antiwar movement will continue to be central in all of our activities, and out of it we can confidently expect continued recruitment to the YSA of the best antiwar fighters.

We are confident that we can build a movement capable of bringing this war to a halt. And insofar as we are successful in building such a movement, we will strengthen the international revolutionary movement of which we are a part, and bring us closer to our goal of abolishing the cause of war itself--capitalism.

The Vietnamese have said that they will not rest until all foreign forces are withdrawn from Vietnam.

Neither will the YSA.

**Young Socialist Alliance
P. O. Box 471, Cooper Station
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