

# REVOLUTIONARY MARXIST CAUCUS Newsletter

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## THE DIRTY COLONIAL WAR AT HOME AND ABROAD

Historically, the American ruling class has had a business eye on Southeast Asia for at least a century but has only become directly involved in the area since World War II, when the U.S. replaced Europe as the center of world imperialism. The military involvement in Vietnam resulted from a long-term effort to "stabilize" Asia for American business, beginning with American aid to the French colonial war from 1946-54 and the installation in Saigon of the U.S. puppet Diem in 1954. For the most part, in the early 1960's, the major sectors of the American bourgeoisie agreed on the "necessity" to prop up the Saigon regime-- John Kennedy made the first heavy commitment of thousands of U.S. "advisors" in 1962-63, and in 1964 the U.S.-instigated clash with North Vietnamese patrol boats brought forth the Tonkin resolution from Congress, which in effect gave sanction to the President's actions. The U.S. had plans for the isolation and, eventually, "liberation" of China by U.S. imperialism.

### A Split Develops

Beginning in 1965 a serious split developed in the ruling class which continues in altered form to this day. LBJ's massive direct intervention with U.S. troops beginning in 1965 (continued on page 2)

## STALINISM IN BOSTON

Since the beginning of May the PL/WSA faction of SDS has used strong-arm tactics three times to attempt to intimidate its political opponents in the Boston area. In perpetrating these crimes PL/WSA has accomplished little except to drive the rank and file of the SMC and YSA closer to its sellout leadership, which has used the attacks to solidarize its position and to discredit SDS's criticism of the YSA/SMC's antiwar pop front with the liberal bourgeoisie.

### Gangsterism At Harvard

The first of the attacks took place on 3 May at Burr Hall at Harvard University when eight members of PL/WSA administered a beating to Bob Bresnahan of the Boston YSA/SMC. This assault occurred during the Sunday session of the YSA's New England Socialist Educational Conference. Bresnahan was attacked during the conference lunch break when relatively few people were present, in a spot secluded from the main conference room. Fortunately the assault was quickly detected and the assailants were either driven off or captured (Those captured were promptly released and were not treated badly considering the provocation). The editor of New Left Notes and others associated with the national and regional staffs of SDS took part in the attack.

Some PL/WSA patriots may be inclined to suggest that Bresnahan and the YSA attacked PL/WSA members on May 3. However, it is a fact that although they were recognized as SDS members, several of the  
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brought forth cries of protest from many liberals like Walter Lippmann who pointed out that such intervention was contrary to the traditional U.S. methods in Asia (i.e., intrigue and behind-the-scenes diplomacy). The split was deepened in late 1965 when in Indonesia right-wing generals took over in a coup and slaughtered the largest Communist Party in non-Communist Asia (about 500,000 members)--thereby undermining political arguments for American military intervention, since this defeat set an example for the rest of the Asian liberation movements and served to isolate China. Some of the more far-sighted bourgeois politicians like Senator McGovern began to push for a negotiated settlement as a wiser method of achieving "stability" for imperialism--but the bourgeoisie cannot always arrive at the best tactics even for its own interests, and instead LBJ pushed the military commitment further, involving the U.S. in a major land war.

### A Deal is Possible

Given the nature and history of the leaderships of the Asian liberation movements, the liberals have a good case for arguing that a deal is possible for imperialism. While having non-capitalist planned economies (and hence requiring unconditional military defense from all revolutionaries), the so-called Communist countries are run by bureaucratic, authoritarian leaderships with narrow nationalist perspectives--much like the narrow-minded bureaucrats of a craft union, they prefer the closed-door deal to mass struggle and think only of their own particular base of power.

In Vietnam, when the masses of workers and peasants rose after World War II to take power and throw out the imperialists, the Communist leadership under Ho Chi Minh sought to contain the struggle, and in 1946 Ho signed the infamous March 6 accords which allowed French troops back into Indochina in exchange for paper promises of sovereignty within the French Union (!). To enforce this betrayal Ho & Co. engaged in the assassination of all who opposed the accords, including left-wing nationalists and the Trotskyists, who had a significant following in Saigon and other cities. (The Trotskyist leader Ta Thu Thau was one of the assassination victims.) The French betrayed the accords, of course, and thus was launched the French Indochina war, 1946-54. Similarly in 1954, when the Viet Minh held most of Vietnam, they gave back South Vietnam at Geneva in exchange for a promise of elections which were of course never held. These Geneva accords were backed by both the Soviet Union and Communist China as part of a bigger diplomatic deal. (Interestingly, the PL pamphlet "Vietnam, Peoples War or Negotiations?", a history of the war, fails to mention the Chinese part in the Geneva accords and criticizes only North Vietnam and the Soviet Union--PL's way of covering up the sellouts of Mao while attacking other Stalinist leaderships. A few years ago Spartacist was attacked by PL as "counter-revolutionary" for daring to criticize North Vietnam. Needless to say, PL has not yet sent its apologies to Spartacist.)

### Working Class Must Lead

The basis of these bureaucratic nationalist liberation movements is the Maoist thesis of guerilla warfare which sees the cities and hence the working class as the enemy to be "surrounded" from the countryside--instead of seeing the working class as the necessary core of leadership of the socialist revolution, the center of socialist consciousness and politico-economic power. The Maoist "bloc of four classes" functions to tie the workers and the Communist parties to various bourgeois nationalists (the "patriotic bourgeoisie") who in the end only betray the struggle and attack the workers, as happened in Indonesia, where the Maoist CP looked to Sukarno for leadership. Such a policy was responsible for the recent coup in Cambodia, where both the Soviet Union and China had been wooing the "neutralist" prince Sihanouk for years with arms and aid. (The Cambodian army is now fighting the NLF forces with an assortment of Soviet and Chinese weapons.) To top it off, the Chinese are now harboring Sihanouk in Peking in hopes of re-installing him as head of Cambodia! (Perhaps there is now a fifth class--the patriotic nobility?)

In Laos, the Pathet Lao have had some cities in the south such as Saravane surrounded for years but did not attempt to take them until the recent U.S. invasion of Cambodia disrupted traditional North Vietnamese supply routes on the Ho Chi Minh trail and forced some military offensives. In Vietnam, which has had a strong history (cont. on pg. 3)

of working class struggle in the cities, the NLF (being a popular front whose program calls for "peace" and "neutrality", not socialism) has deliberately failed to mobilize the working class, which displayed open unrest in 1965 under Buddhist leadership.

Throughout Asia, there is a vital need for a communist leadership to mobilize the working class in cities at the head of the peasant struggles against imperialism. Such an internationalist struggle could cut through the petty nationalisms and conservatism of the Stalinist leaderships.

As part of our own revolutionary struggle, it is our duty to point out this need. This is in fact one of the most serious defects of the American "revolutionary" groups involved in anti-war struggles. The SWP-YSA, immersed in middle-class pressure groups like the SMC, cannot provide a working class analysis of the Asian situation. PL, while pointing out the betrayals of the Soviet Union and criticizing the tactics of North Vietnam, still covers for China as they have not broken from Stalinist politics. The pseudo-Trotskyist Workers League to this day has not provided a Trotskyist analysis of the Asian situation, concentrating their fire instead on the Soviet Union in the PL manner while cheering the liberation fronts of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. (The Bulletin of 20 July proclaims "Cambodian Workers Drive Invaders Back!") The International Socialists, the "third-camp" socialists who only relatively recently came out for victory to the NLF, has been unable to pose any concrete "third" alternative except maybe Buddhism. We do note that a detailed class analysis of the Stalinist-led liberation movements and the role of Maoism has appeared in Spartacist publications since the group's inception in 1964.

#### U.S. Military Failure

The fact that the U.S. has been fighting a massive social revolution, albeit a misled one, has prevented any decisive U.S. military victories--despite the commitment of half a million men and an incredible barrage of firepower. This fact of military failure, coupled with the economic and political unrest it has brought forth at home, has demoralized the bourgeoisie and greatly strengthened the bourgeois opponents of the war. The war has dragged on for so long and is connected to so much unrest that significant sectors of the bourgeoisie--represented by Fulbright, ex-Sec. of Defense Clark Clifford and others--are willing even to advocate unilateral withdrawal to get out of the mess and restore some stability. To the bourgeoisie, there is no "good" solution anymore, but the best of the bad alternatives appears to be dumping South Vietnam in exchange for restoring stability in Asia and at home. Thus we find the outrageous situation where the vigorous war proponents of the recent past, such as Averell Harriman, now pose as the "peace" advocates against the warmongers! The "peace" wing of the bourgeoisie is organizing around the Hatfield-McGovern amendment to enforce an American withdrawal by June 30, 1971.

Under these circumstances Nixon is under heavy pressure and has been forced to initiate a slow withdrawal of American troops. But being an old McCarthyite anti-communist, he is taking steps to ensure the survival of anti-communist governments in Asia. This was the reason for the invasion of Cambodia, which actually backfired both militarily and politically since it failed to capture the Communist headquarters as intended and exposed the U.S. as a naked aggressor. In addition, the U.S. now has more territory to worry about, especially since the Cambodian army is fairly worthless.

#### The Role of SMC and SDS

In this light, the role of SMC politics becomes particularly pernicious. In insisting on single-issueism and inviting liberals of both parties into the anti-war movement the SMC actually functions as a vehicle for the bourgeois politicians to parade their anti-war stances and mobilize support for Hatfield-McGovern. This is the "success" of the SWP-YSA-SMC!

The recent spurt of growth exhibited by the Young Socialist Alliance, SDS's major competitor in the youth field, has significantly come at SDS's expense--even, on several occasions as happened recently in

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Tallahassee, from within SDS's own ranks. It is particularly ironic and tragic that this occurs at just the moment, when the YSA's political degeneration is accelerating even faster than its organizational growth. We will put it more bluntly: that the shameless, classless--and seemingly endless--popular front "peace" demonstrations run by the YSA as a phony substitute for the struggle for consciousness within the workers movement can be allowed to parade themselves without serious challenge as a more effective and "revolutionary" political course than that presently offered most young radicals by SDS is not only a severe (but wholly justified) indictment of the present SDS leadership, but also the best reason around for throwing them out and electing a political alternative leadership which stands clearly and consistently to their political left.

But a radical group like SDS still has great opportunities. Almost no one can argue for the war anymore, making it much easier to propagandize than in past years. The Kent State massacre focused national attention on the student struggle and even developed some sympathy for the students in the general population. Unfortunately SDS under PL leadership failed to provide any significant political leadership to the student struggle in that period, and became involved in RYM-type confrontationist struggles with police over ROTC, as at Berkeley. This resulted in the discrediting of SDS and made it vastly easier for the right-wing Hatfield-McGovern forces to pick up a following on campus after Kent State by presenting a "realistic" political alternative. (At Berkeley, SDS has been banned from campus and has been unable even to mount an effective struggle to regain its legal status.) Now, in a new turn back to the student movement, the PL-SDS leaders have abandoned even their inadequate working class perspective (the CWSA) in favor of mainstream New Leftism. To prevent any discussion of these twists and turns, the National Office of SDS has put off the National Convention twice already, thereby perpetuating themselves in office, without even an explanation in New Left Notes. (The June convention was postponed till August "so as not to interfere with the work-in", according to verbal explanations; a few weeks later the work-in was dead and the August convention has been postponed till November "so as not to interfere with planned demonstrations". And now we hear it's been postponed until Christmas!) To highlight their political bankruptcy, the PL-SDS leadership led by Pennington launched a gangster assault on the SMC in Boston recently, thereby creating sympathy for the SMC right wing. The SMC must be exposed through a political fight and a class program--not gangsterism! The RMC has defended and will continue to defend SMC and other tendencies against physical assaults by the PL-SDS leadership. Scrupulous avoidance of anti-proletarian methods of struggle--i.e., hooliganism--is required if the anti-imperialist forces are to politically annihilate the class-collaborationist tendencies exemplified by the SMC leaders.

#### A Working Class Program

Clearly, in order to move the struggle forward we must seek to assist the working class to head the struggle against capitalism, both here and in Asia. To our slogan, "U.S. out of Southeast Asia Now, No Negotiations!", we must add "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" This is the only "solution" for the Asian situation, and such a slogan separates us from the bourgeois politicians who want to withdraw now because they've lost, to fight again another day.

As socialists we must see to it that the American working class leads the fight against the war. The power of the working class must be brought to bear: we must build for anti-war general strikes! In this regard, SDS should organize campus work stoppage committees, as have spontaneously sprung up in some places, to propagandize for anti-war political strikes. In such work we do not seek to become footmen for various "left"-leaning bureaucrats like Victor Gotbaum. Rather, we seek to link up radical students and militant workers around shared political goals against the bureaucrats as well as against the imperialist war. We want to assist the militant rank-and-file in struggle against our common enemies both within the labor movement and in wider political arenas. Political strikes against the war will be a major step toward applying real "pressure" against the government over the war, and will assist workers, demoralized by decades of narrow, bureaucratically strangled trade union activity, to understand their strength and the indivisibility of "local" and "economic" matters and wider

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political issues.

In this regard, we must denounce the hold of the bourgeois "anti-war" politicians on the American workers, and encourage workers on the road of independent political struggle. The two parties stand exposed; chances are opportune for fighting for a working-class party based on the rank-and-file trade unionists with a class program. Such a party does not have to become reformist--just as the CIO when founded did not have to become reformist--but can become what we help make it. Some radicals, especially around PL, argue that we should not urge the formation of such a party, because of its potential reformist deformations. To them we must reply that a political expression for class-conscious but not yet fully communist workers is essential to their revolutionary development, and that if the revolutionary consciousness among workers and their allies is not strong enough to fight off the opportunists in the workers own party, it will not be strong enough to overthrow the entire system which breeds the opportunistic virus.

In resolution form for the SDS Convention, we propose that:

A) SDS adopts the following positions to be widely publicized in our literature such as New Left Notes:

1. All Indochina Must Go Communist!
2. For Labor Political Strikes against the War!
3. For a Workers Party based on the rank-and-file against the bureaucracy!

B) SDS will devote a major portion of its energies in the next period to organizing campus work stoppage committees which will attempt to build labor political strikes against the war.

C) SDS declares that political differences within the left can be resolved only through the free exchange of political views. In this context, SDS condemns as gangsterism the recent physical assault on an SMC meeting in Boston May 24 led by John Pennington and the SDS National leadership. SDS leaders and members will take all necessary steps to ensure that such incidents do not happen again.

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assailants moved freely about the conference area prior to the attack (no doubt casing the place) without incident. Further, PL/WSA, in the face of detailed accusations appearing in The Militant, has maintained an exquisite total silence about 3 May. This is hardly likely behaviour if they had been attacked or the attack was an unauthorized case of over-exuberance on the part of their members.

As for the contention that Bresnahan had previously engaged in fights with PL/WSAers, this is true, but he did so as a disciplined member of his group who had made the political decision to defend the speakers platform at the April 15 antiwar rally on Boston Common against an SDS takeover, and before that decided to defend the RYM splitters right to exclude PL and WSA from an "open" SDS meeting. While RMC supporters agreed with and fought side by side with PL/WSA to defend their and our right to attend SDS meetings, and disagreed with SDS's carrying out a physical assault to gain the speakers platform, these were both political acts, as were Bresnahan's defense activities. The assault of 3 May was simply gangsterism, simply an attempt at intimidation, and a priceless gift to the SWP tops.

#### The Fight At MIT

In contrast to the events of 3 May, PL/WSA has widely publicized its version of the fight between about 50 of its supporters and the SMC which took place on 24 May at the SMC National Steering Committee Meeting at MIT. The PL/WSA position has been laid out in two leaflets in the name of New England Regional SDS entitled "Why SMC/YSA Lie About SDS" and a reprint of Nat Goodman's letter to the Boston Globe entitled "Globe and SMC Go Hand-in-Hand". Both are calculated lies, worthy examples of the Stalinist school of falsification.

"Why SMC/YSA Lie About SDS" begins accurately enough in that it states that Nat Goodman (MIT SDS, PLP) tried to get into the meeting

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without registering after being asked to do so. Goodman in his letter to the Globe is outraged that this should be called gate crashing, and in fact says that when he was asked to register he said "where?" and was jumped a "moment" later. This contradicts the earlier version of the events put out by his own organization, but it sounds a little better and most people who read the Globe didn't read the regional leaflet.

It is admitted that twelve members of SDS and PLP were registered and admitted to the conference without incident. It should be clear that the whole incident could have been averted if Goodman had been willing to register instead of trying to push his way into the conference (Both the SMC and Regional SDS agree that he did). Given the incident of 3 May (which Goodman should have known about), anyone with an ounce of sense could deduce that the SMC/YSA would not fraternally overlook the registration requirement for a member of PLP and SDS.

The SMC had a right to require all who attended their conference to register, and had the right to physically enforce that regulation. Goodman was roughed up. What did he and PL expect given their antics on 3 May? One has a right to be sceptical about PL/WSA's version of the events that followed, namely that the SMC/YSA attacked each PL/WSA-er as he came out to 'see' what had happened to Goodman.

First, the SMC's version of the events states Goodman was pushed back by the ushers at the door but not hit. Further they claim that the PLP and SDS members who came out to see what was happening demanded Goodman be admitted without registering and that the scuffle began when PL/WSA tried to force their way back into the meeting with Goodman. This version of the events was subscribed to by representatives of the Workers League, Female Liberation, NOW, and the International Socialists, none of whom are particularly friendly to the SWP and who hold pretty diverse views. Consequently it carries considerable weight.

Second, although the SMC/YSA does fear criticism of their rotten politics (witness the Cleveland SMC conference), they were firmly in the saddle at MIT and had nothing to gain by martyring PLP or SDS.

Finally, if SMC/YSA enjoys beating up members of PLP and SDS, as is implied, one has to explain why they passed up a golden opportunity to do so on 3 May, but instead released their captives relatively unharmed.

#### THE MASS STRIKE On June 2

Contrary to the indignant howls of PL/WSA about SMC accusing them of having a "history of attacks on the movement", the accusation is true. The 3 May attack on Bresnahan is history. Other attacks by PLP members on members of other political tendencies can be documented. Just one week after the 24 May attack, on 2 June, two members of THE MASS STRIKE, a group with Labor Committee politics, were shoved, had their papers taken from them, and were "detained" by a team of six Challenge sellers at a Westinghouse plant in Hyde Park (Boston). This is somewhat more substantial evidence of gangsterism than Goodman's argument that SMC/YSA is gangster because it hits hard in a fight.

#### Back To 24 May

"Why SMC/YSA Lie About SDS" contains still more inaccuracies and omissions of an interesting nature. It fails to mention that after the incident of the morning, the SMC meeting voted by an overwhelming margin to not totally exclude PLP and SDS, but to permit one representative from each group to address the afternoon session to give their version of the incident and explain their political views. This offer was declined.

When fifty or so PL/WSAers returned en masse for the afternoon session, the SMC set up a defense line to enforce the decision of the meeting. The PL/WSA group faced off "eyeball to eyeball" with the SMC defense line, which parted to admit John Pennington and Neil Goldstein as representatives of PLP and SDS. Pennington gave his version of the events of the morning. Then the PL/WSA group rushed the SMC defense line hoping to overpower it and get into the meeting. "Why SMC/YSA Lie About SDS" describes this as "When we tried to get to the registration table we were attacked by an equal number of people while sey-

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eral campus police appeared on the scene." How stupid of the SMC defense line to confuse an eager scramble to register with a mass charge! Really! PL/WSA's logic is identical to that of the U.S. imperialists who are puzzled why the Vietnamese workers and peasants shoot at their helicopter gunships, which after all are there to save the Vietnamese from the V.C. Goodman is, as usual, even worse, intimating that the SMC leadership was out with blackjacks to keep PL/WSA from addressing the honest rank-and-file which was just panting to hear them. As far as the campus cops go, they didn't intervene, rather enjoying watching 'radicals' fighting among themselves.

### Oppose Stalinist Violence!

Events such as 24 May don't serve to expose the sellout politics of SMC/YSA but aids reformism by driving the rank-and-file anti-war activists in a reformist direction. Inexperienced anti-war militants who may be sympathetic to SDS's criticism of the SMC/YSA can only be repelled by the hooligan antics of PL/WSA and the half truths they concoct to justify their actions. Substitution of the fist for political struggle hampers the struggle for revolutionary consciousness which can only arise through the unhindered factional struggle between tendencies in the working class, and on the testing of competing ideas in practice. The Bolshevik Party, the only party which has ever led the working class to state power, was created and tempered by such principled factional struggle.

SDS can still play a key role in the building of a revolutionary Leninist party in the U.S. and can defeat the wretched, class collaborationist anti-war front of the SWP/YSA. But in order to do so, to salvage some of its reputation for revolutionary integrity within the radical movement, it must repudiate the use of gangster tactics within the movement.

#### RESOLVED:

1. That the National Convention of SDS repudiates gangster tactics within the movement and will support all defense efforts against violent attacks.

2. That the National Convention of SDS appoint a commission which will hold public hearings on the events of 3 May and 24 May, 1970 taking testimony from all interested parties including members of the SMC and YSA in order to determine what happened and who was responsible for the acts of gangsterism. That SDS condemn those responsible.

### PL, SDS AND THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The relationship of SDS to the large and rapidly growing radical women's movement is a matter of great concern to most SDS members. Unfortunately, however, the prevalent SDS position--that of the PL-WSA group--on Women's Liberation has long rendered the task of participation by SDS members in independent women's groups difficult if not well-nigh impossible. The general disrepute in which SDS stands in this regard is all too well deserved, for the PL-WSA stand, as expressed at Los Angeles and New Haven, represents a complete repudiation of the traditional Marxist approach to the oppression of women under capitalism. In arguing for the "progressive" role of the family under class society in the struggle for a proletarian revolution, PL and the SDS leadership contradict everything that Marx, Engels and Lenin ever wrote on the subject. In contending that women are oppressed solely as workers, rather than oppressed as workers and additionally specially oppressed as women, PL-WSA abandons not only a century of Marxist tradition but also common sense. The final absurdity, however, is the one that makes co-operation between the women's movement and SDS virtually impossible: PL's position that separate women's groups are reactionary, and that the only organizations needed to combat the special oppression of women are women's caucuses within SDS and the labor movement.

Thus, when at the New Haven conference, the WSA leadership adopted a single point from the RMC position paper on women's liberation (an amendment recognizing the revolutionary duty of SDS members to participate in the independent women's movement in order to bring revolutionary politics to women involved in radical struggle) the results were

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quite predictable: disaster. The political level of the women's liberation movement in some areas is no doubt considerably lower than that within SDS, yet even in those areas the women radicals possess a quite acute comprehension of the special oppression of women and many have read Marx, Engels and Lenin on the subject. When such women are made aware of the WSA stand against legalized free abortion and in favor of the family as an institution--views that are capped by the WSA line that separate women's groups are inherently reactionary and necessarily petty-bourgeois--what could be expected except that they would simply write off SDS as irrelevant and male chauvinist? By its wrong and absurd positions, the WSA inadvertently strengthens the most incorrect trends in the women's movement. Those women who regard sex rather than class as the most important social division--a position which directly cuts across the development of working-class consciousness--are then often able to use the WSA position to convince women who are new to politics, but serious and militant, that "Marxism" (an appellation they incorrectly apply to the WSA stand) is totally irrelevant to the struggle for a sexually egalitarian society. This attitude was compounded when Challenge, PL's pseudo-mass press, added insult to injury by publication of a separate women's page, complete with recipes and household hints! In the minds of women's liberation activists, this demonstrates the contempt of "Marxist-Leninists" and multi-issue organizations generally for women as political people. No wonder, then, that more than one SDS chapter has lost the majority of its women members, while few chapters are able to attract the same number of women as men, despite the increasing radicalization of young women everywhere.

Within the ranks of PL-WSA, the realization has thus grown that such positions are doing irreparable damage to SDS, so that many serious and committed SDS comrades have launched a struggle from within against the deficient position purveyed by PL; so that at the Cleveland anti-war conference, SDS for the first time came out in support of the demand for free and legal abortions (incidentally incorporating a major part of the RMC program). This position paper constituted a very real step forward for SDS.

#### One Step Forward and Two Steps Back

Against this background it was doubly unfortunate that SDS at the same Cleveland conference was distributing an issue of New Left Notes which seemed guaranteed to undo whatever progress had been made. An article by Jill Shafer of New Orleans SDS harshly attacked a well known figure in the women's liberation movement on grounds so blatantly sectarian and in part unfair as to entirely undercut the impact of SDS's belated espousal of free and legal abortion.

"Racism + Roxanne Dunbar = Southern Female Union" reads the headline to this article (back cover of NLN, Vol. V, no. 13). The body of the article adds "elitism" and "hypocrisy" to the charges levelled against participants in the Mount Beniah women's liberation conference of May 9-10. These accusations are indeed very serious, and the article would have done well to explain them in detail and persuasively. This the article did not do. For example, most of the "proof" of Dunbar's supposed racism arises out of the practical arrangements for the conference, in total disregard of the fact that SFRU had simply rented the conference facilities. But instead Shafer went on to suggest that Dunbar's pre-eminence in the women's liberation movement is the result--not of political immaturity and confusion, not of the lack of a clear working-class perspective, not of the lack thus far of aggressive Marxist intervention on a correct program in the women's liberation movement to combat and politically defeat Dunbar's ideas--but of a plot by the "capitalist press" to keep "a woman with such a strange political outlook in the forefront of the women's movement," thus hinting deliciously that if Dunbar is not a conscious agent of the ruling class she is at least an unconscious one. What response could be expected from such an attack, except that women militants will solidarize with Dunbar and dismiss any further criticism by SDS from their attention?

In a later issue of NLN (no. 15) an outraged letter signed by Alan H. Weber appeared. Since NLN is hardly in the habit of printing critical material or minority viewpoints (for example, not a single position paper, letter or article by the RMC has ever appeared in the paper!) it seems safe to assume that the Weber letter represented the reaction of a large number of readers whose protests the editors did not dare to

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ignore. Weber writes, "Even assuming that the article is unexaggerated, it is still hard to believe that the attack is meant seriously."

One facet that it's hard to take seriously is the article's condemnation of Dunbar for failing to invite the Black kitchen workers to participate in the conference. According to Shafer, when the subject was broached the SFRU response was that "these people can't understand the theoretical things we're discussing--they speak a different language, we'd just bore them." Jill Shafer should ask herself: when has the WSA managed to involve large numbers of Black workers--kitchen staff or otherwise--in SDS conferences? Certainly not at Los Angeles or New Haven. Of course this is not necessarily the WSA's fault. One of the many unfortunate facts of capitalist society is that Black kitchen workers in Mississippi, terribly exploited and oppressed and systematically excluded from the kind of education which most SDS members have had, have hardly flocked to the radical movement in droves. One effect of debilitating oppression is that most Black kitchen workers will tend to be drawn into radical struggles on the basis of rebellion against their overt immediate oppression and not by the kind of discussion which takes place in SDS or women's liberation conferences. This fact is recognized by SDS in practice, of course, but is denied when factional advantage seems to be served. The result is to confuse what might be correct criticisms of Dunbar with obvious unfairness which women's liberation activists--for whom the Shafer article was presumably written--will see through and despise.

#### WSA's Pseudo-Workerism

What PL-WSA espouses is ritualistic gestures in the direction of a pseudo-workerism. These gestures serve as a twofold line of defense for PL's theoretical positions which are indefensible on purely logical grounds. First they provide an excuse for debasing the level of the argument to the point where nothing is true and nothing false, on the pretext that to be valid an argument should be comprehensible to the most deprived sections of the working class. Second, they enable PL to attack as "racist" or "elitist", and on ostensibly Marxist grounds, any opponents who attempt to discuss the complex economic and social phenomena of interest to Marxist revolutionaries. PL-WSA's orientation is basically anti-intellectual and for this reason inherently anti-Marxist. They posit a hypothetical, nearly mindless worker as representative of the proletariat, thus idealizing the worst qualities of the most backward sections of the working class under capitalism. Hence the CWSA line, demonstrating how PL-WSA is drawn to the most unskilled, most deprived workers (maids, janitors and cafeteria workers) and not to teamsters, auto workers or machinists. PL's orientation operates to keep it from understanding the revolutionary capabilities of the proletariat so that SDS's activities in practice amount to do-gooder social work.

Lenin long ago recognized the complementary nature of these twin failings (anti-intellectualism and a resultant flight to a dogmatic pseudo-workerism). Writing in What Is To Be Done, one of his major political polemics, he quotes with approval from Karl Kautsky (before his "renegade" days):

Socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so: both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat but the bourgeois intelligentsia: it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians, who in their turn introduced it into the proletarian class struggle.

Lenin appends to this passage, which he terms "profoundly true and important" a footnote of his own:

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This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only when they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and develop that knowledge. But in order that working men may succeed in this more often, every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers in general; it is necessary that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of "literature for workers" but that they learn to an increasing degree to master general literature. It would be even truer to say "are not confined", instead of "do not confine themselves", because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia, and only a few (bad) intellectuals believe that it is enough "for workers" to be told a few things about factory conditions and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known.

It is clear that Lenin would have rejected the line of argument which denounces a conference as "elitist" because the discussion would not have been of much interest to most kitchen workers, and would rather have fought to extend and deepen the educational background of the working class to the point where it could be receptive to the contribution of the revolutionary intellectuals. In present day terms, then, we think Lenin would have fought as does the RMC for free "open admissions" for all workers, opposing the patronizing anti-intellectualism of the WSA, which accepts the privilege of higher education for SDS students while opposing it for working people.

#### Whose Hypocrisy?

Lenin's position stands at far remove from that of the spirit animating the caption to the illustration for Shafer's article: "White people must follow the lead of, learn from and unite with black workers; not form groups which exclude them." This ritualistic and essentially empty obeisance toward workers takes the place of any real solution to the essentially middle-class composition and petty-bourgeois origin of the women's liberation movement. Its petty-bourgeois character remains one of the major problems of the entire left today; we may add that conversations with women's liberation members from Gainesville, New Orleans and Tallahassee have shown them to be well aware of the problem. What is needed is not empty generalities but an analysis of how to build a class-conscious women's movement. Failure to seriously confront this problem cannot be concealed by hysterical attacks on political opponents.

For SDS to berate women's liberation for its lack of working-class appeal would be correct if it were not the grossest hypocrisy. For the same SDS leadership which damns Dunbar and her conference has stated in the same issue of NLM that "to have third-world students in the predominantly white student movement would be a false unity that would weaken the pro-working class student movement"! The recent decision that junior or community colleges should be "off limits to SDS" since these are predominantly working-class in character expresses an identical outlook. Whatever one may think, then, of Dunbar's rationale for the absence of Black women workers at her conference, is it not clear that the SDS leadership has gone a thousand steps further and made a principle out of deliberately excluding "third world" and working-class-derived students from its organization?

But actually the WSA position is not as paradoxical as it appears: rather it is simply a reflection of those same inadequacies of PL's politics that lead it to a frantic and frenetic but purely verbal workerism--a recognition that SDS's politics, under the present SDS leadership, are simply incapable of attracting and holding masses of working-class youth and to insulate and isolate the SDS membership from the criticism that such tactics as the CWSA and the apolitical Work-In would be bound to receive from them.

#### For Working-Class Politics!

In this article we do not for a moment mean to suggest that New Left Notes should abstain from criticism of the politics or current

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direction of the women's liberation movement. But it is vital to recognize that vituperation and slander will never supplant the need for a persuasive and reasoned analysis. One of the most striking weaknesses of Shafer's article is (typically!) the incredibly small amount of space she devotes to serious political criticisms. It is only in the last two paragraphs of her article that she even mentions the basic weakness of the women's movement--its tendency to see sex rather than class as the primary division in capitalist society. The inadequacies of Dunbar's politics could provide material for several articles: her notion of a union of housewives and maids ("houseworkers' union"), her allegiance to the position of the Black Panthers that abortion and contraception constitute genocide when applied to Blacks (a male chauvinist position, viewing Black women as breeders rather than potential revolutionary fighters who must have freedom of choice, which incidentally seems also to be the position of the SDS leadership), her espousal of separate female trade unions rather than militant rank and file struggle to combat male chauvinism in the present union movement. Our purpose must be to subject wrong ideas to serious Marxist criticism in order to win women over to Marxism, not to "use these attacks on Roxanne Dunbar to smear the Women's Liberation Movement" as a whole (quote from Alan Weber's letter). What Shafer has done, with the assistance of the editors of New Left Notes, has been to direct an indiscriminate and sometimes slanderous attack on Dunbar in order to imply that the entire women's liberation movement is not just heterogeneous, middle-class and frequently wrong but is an agent of the ruling class, elitist and racist, and thereby to excuse SDS's insufficient intervention into the movement and SDS's present ill reputation among militant women. Its intention is to console SDS members who are concerned over the organization's obviously declining state. But SDS leadership is always talking about "sectarianism" (by which they usually mean discussing political ideas) but the Shafer article embodies sectarianism of the worst and most cynical sort, with an attitude and line that cannot but constitute a serious impediment to future SDS work in the women's liberation movement.

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#### PERSPECTIVES ON THE CAMPUS WORK STOPPAGE MOVEMENT

Most of the students participating in the general campus strike during the Cambodia-Kent crisis realized that the strike had to be spread to other sections of society or disintegrate. Thus, in campuses throughout the country (e.g. Berkeley, Stanford, Harvard, Columbia, New York University and the New School) work stoppage committees were formed to work for a general labor anti-war strike. Perhaps more importantly, these groups provoked a positive response among anti-war trade unionists. For example, a couple of hundred trade union activists from a wide variety of unions participated in two mass meetings organized by the New School Work Stoppage Committee.

#### Pole for Student Activists: A Student Auxiliary to the Trade Union Bureaucracy?

Labor interest in the student anti-war movement has not been limited to rank-and-file militants. Liberal trade union bureaucrats, notably Victor Gotbaum, head of the New York State, County and Municipal Workers, and David Livingston, head of the New York Distributive Workers, have also discovered the need to work with the student movement. During the crisis, trade union bureaucrats such as Gotbaum and Livingston moved to establish a "Labor-Student Coalition".

For the liberal labor bureaucrats, their "labor-student coalition" has three purposes: a) to under-cut left (anti-war) opposition within their own unions. Most of these unions have black or Puerto Rican or white collar constituencies and for the bureaucracy to take a Meanyite position on the war would greatly strengthen internal opposition. b) to establish a reputation as "progressive, democratic" labor leaders and garner middle-class liberal support strengthening their position within the labor movement. It's an open secret that Gotbaum is out to replace Van Arsdale as head of the New York City Central Labor Council, and c) to keep the radical student movement within the "mainstream" of American politics.

And how did the anti-war labor bureaucrats relate to the student work stoppage groups? To begin with, they squelched the impulse toward  
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anti-war labor strikes and transformed it into a simple rally. By now this truth should be obvious to those, such as the Workers' League, who believed and argued that the rally was a step toward a general strike. It was a deliberate substitute for anti-war strike action. However, even the celebrated rally was a token affair. Organizing the members of the sponsoring unions was done perfunctorily. The rally was held during lunch hours and no arrangements were made for workers to take the afternoon off, so that workers were expected to run down and back over their lunch break. Needless to say, the turnout was poor and was, at best, half the number involved in the pro-Nixon rally organized by the building trades union the previous day--one of the very few times when a right-wing counter demonstration has out-numbered an anti-war rally in New York City. The rally was just about the least the bureaucrats involved could do and still maintain their reputation as anti-war labor leaders.

The political content of the rally was to build support for liberal anti-war candidates, presenting the like of Paul O'Dwyer, Democratic Party hopeful for senator. Under the guise of uniting students with labor, the trade union bureaucracy is slated to play a major role in bringing the radical student movement back to respectable bourgeois politics. Victor Gotbaum and David Livingston are the Eugene McCarthy's of 1970.

#### Against Mindless Labor Activism

While the work stoppage movement represents a significant turn toward the working class, it would be a mistake to think it is the first attempt to involve the student movement with the unions. Even during the heyday of the New Left, the radical student movement involved itself in various labor struggles (one thinks of the Kentucky miners' wildcat, the grape workers organizing campaign and boycott, the Richmond, California oil workers' strike). The problem with these actions was that they had a purely episodic, transitory character and had no cumulative development. After the strike was over, the workers went back to their jobs and the students went back to the campus and waited for the next situation to develop. Thus, the not inconsiderable involvement of student radicals in various labor struggles over the past five years has had a zero effect on the American left.

This was because student involvement in labor struggles had a purely supportive, semi-social work character--mobilizing material and moral resources for particular struggles (the limited assistance which students could offer was generally not crucial to the successful carrying out of these strikes in any case). Little or no attempt was made to locate radical workers or win workers over to a left-wing political program that, alone, is capable of providing a basis for permanent collaboration between the radical student movement and the most politically conscious workers. In part, this reflected the New Left prejudice that only intellectuals could be conscious socialists and the best ordinary workers could be was trade union militants.

It is all too easy to fall into a pattern of running from this strike to that labor rally without accomplishing anything and without being sure what one is trying to accomplish. What are we trying to do? The events during the Cambodia-Kent crisis made it obvious that no section of the trade union bureaucracy is going to organize a general anti-war strike or otherwise pursue radical policies. Before the power of organized labor can be effectively turned against the ruling class, the existing trade union bureaucracy has to be thrown out and replaced by radical workers. The primary task of the work stoppage groups is to contribute to the process of throwing the bureaucrats out and replacing them with radical workers. Our main job is to help our worker comrades become the leaders of the American labor movement.

#### Toward Political and Organizational Unity

Except for U.S. imperialism, the concept of an alliance or coalition implies a two way street. It is not enough that students wish to unite with workers. There must also be workers interested in the student movement. In other words, students cannot unite with workers purely through their own efforts. Walking on a picket line or handing out leaflets at a factory is not a "worker-student alliance". At best, it is an attempt to build one. Worker-student unity requires individual

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## WHERE WE STAND

The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus is the left opposition in SDS fighting for an aggressive socialist policy in contrast to the narrow social work approach of the PL-controlled leadership. Rejecting campus parochialism, we seek to build an SDS which can provide a militant leadership for all major social struggles, particularly those centered around the labor movement. We want to intervene in these struggles with a radical socialist program through which we can recruit other revolutionary workers and students. Important elements of our program are a break with the capitalist parties and formation of a worker's party; a shorter work week with no decrease in pay to eliminate unemployment; opposition to racial oppression, particularly within the labor movement; labor strikes against the Viet Nam war and other manifestations of U.S. imperialism; defense of all left groups against police repression (the Panthers and Weathermen); for a class analysis of sexual and racial oppression.

The need for a revolutionary socialist youth organization, open to all political tendencies seeking revolutionary change, was clearly demonstrated by the recent spontaneous upsurge of students and workers over the Cambodian and Kent State crises. Neither SDS nor any other left group was able to provide militant leadership and direction to the movement. Only an organization offering serious political alternatives can lead the anti-war movement to a mass opposition against the capitalist state. We call upon all those who see the need for a militant socialist policy to join and support the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus!

Helen Cantrell, Newsletter Editor                      Mark Tishman, RMC Coordinator  
(SDS, Art Students League, Spartacist)                      (New School SDS, Spartacist)

CAMPUS WORK STOPPAGE COMMITTEES....continued from page 12

workers who are engaged in continuous organized activity with students. This, in turn, requires a common organization of workers and students, such as the Workers' Action group, or a united front of worker and student organizations. If such organizations are to exist beyond particular struggle situations they must be based on a political program shared by the workers and students involved.

Some of us who have been active in the campus work stoppage groups are now working in the New York Workers' Action group. Workers' Action is a national organization of radical trade unionists and their supporters, which includes students. Major elements of its program are the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops from Indochina and labor strikes against the war and other manifestations of American imperialism; a shorter work week with no decrease in pay to eliminate unemployment; opposition to racial oppression, particularly within the labor movement; and a break with the two capitalist parties and formation of a workers' party and a workers' government.

We urge all students and student groups that generally agree with this program and want to work with rank-and-file union oppositionists to support and participate in the activities of Workers' Action.

Roger Aarons, Peggy Dorfman                      Mark Tishman  
David Wagner    New School Work Stoppage Comm.  
Columbia Work Stoppage Comm.                      Workers' Action  
Workers' Action    Spartacist League  
(for more info. about Workers' Action, write: Action, Box 313, Canal Station, New York, N.Y. 10013)

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## JOIN THE RMC!

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