

# Strategy and Tactics In the Struggle For Black Self-Determination



Vol. 13, No. 2

Nov. 30, 1969

This resolution 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. This draft resolution is a continuation and elaboration of the line developed in the resolution approved by the Thanksgiving 1968 YSA Convention, entitled "On the Revolutionary Struggle of Black America for Self-Determination." (Available from the YSA National Office for 25¢.) That resolution, along with the "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" (Available from Merit Publishers, 873 Broadway, NY, NY 10003 for 25¢.) should be read along with this resolution.

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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November 30, 1969

Published by:

Young Socialist Alliance  
P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station  
New York, New York 10003

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STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THE  
STRUGGLE FOR BLACK SELF-DETERMINATION

"Arriving on white campuses in larger numbers than ever before, black students are demanding a new encounter with themselves in every possible academic discipline, and a new vision of their role beyond the university. Such a demand, so troubling a vision, often involves the call for total reorganization of the disciplines and their traditional boundaries. It questions the meaning of supposed scholarly 'objectivity' when scholars and their disciplines could foster against black people lies of silence and words and ignorance for so long. So students now strike and picket and boycott and seize buildings for much more than courses in black history. Instead they demand that all of the study of America and the world be saturated with the significance of the black presence, so that every relevant event, man and movement is evaluated. (They demand too, to be taught by faculty persons who are internally free enough to do this.)...

"The Black surge in academic matters, then is clearly a demand for a new definition of America and its institutions, a total re-evaluation from a Black perspective. This approach is sensed by the students as one which changes meaning even more than coloration. It questions America as a civilization, and by implication all of Western life and culture. It demands that the Black and other non-white agonies beneath the development of the Western capitalist success story be closely examined. Under this microscope America becomes a profound tragedy, oppressive reality." (Dr. Vincent Harding, Director of the Institute of the Black World in Atlanta, from an article in the August 1969 issue of Ebony magazine entitled "Black Students and the 'Impossible' Revolution.")

It is this motion of black students that reflects the current stage and scope of the struggle for Black self-determination. The white power structure, in letting a few crumbs fall from the table of capitalist prosperity, now finds Afro-America demanding the whole loaf.

The various struggles going on - in the high schools and colleges, on the job, in the community and in the barracks - reflect a widespread nationalist consciousness which continues to contribute mightily to the turbulence we see in America today. In the resultant polarization, millions of people, especially the students, have been stimulated in a radical direction, while for other sectors, "law and order" has a strong appeal.

Whereas there is as yet no nationwide organization or Black political party coordinating all the various struggles going on, groups and individuals around the country are taking up the question of mapping out an overall strategy for the movement, the question of what types of organization are needed, and the question of how to continue the struggle around the many sharply defined demands that have been raised.

This upsurge of nationalist activity has also tested any and every political program that purports to call for fundamental change in North American society.

The various factions of Students for a Democratic Society, while finally coming out with verbal support for self-determination, have shown in most instances in practice that they do not really know what self-determination is. At one point they decided that it was the prerogative of SDS to designate the Black Panther Party as the sole repository of all knowledge and analysis of the struggle for self-determination. At other times, especially in the spring of 1969, SDSers on many campuses attempted to seize control of and monopolize struggles involving Black demands.

More recently, some elements of RYM II have resurrected the old "black belt" theory which was introduced into the American Communist Party by Stalin in 1928. The CP at that time advocated that Black people should form a Black republic in the "black belt" area of the South. This position contradicted the very concept of self-determination, since this means the right of an oppressed group to decide for itself what it wants, and how, and when.

The Weathermen have paid little attention to nationalist struggles for self-determination, concentrating mainly on putting into practice their romantic conception of "street fighting," much of which is oriented toward proving to themselves that "whites can fight too."

The Maoist Progressive Labor Party, in its super "proletarian" stance, takes the position that Black nationalism is dangerous and reactionary and must be vigorously combated. PL has stood in opposition to the Third World student struggles on the campus and has denounced the struggle for Black community control. One of the reasons for this is that in PL's search for alliances with "the working class" it views the Black

struggle for self-determination as the obstacle rather than the racist inclinations of white workers. PL says white workers aren't attracted to Black caucuses because the Black workers are putting forward demands that cut across class lines. This is not the case. White workers aren't supporting the struggles of Black workers because their racist consciousness supersedes whatever class consciousness they may have at this time.

The Socialist Party expressed itself on the national question when Albert Shanker, head of the United Federation of Teachers in New York, conducted a racist strike against the right of Black people to decide the educational destiny of their children. During the strike, Shanker received the support of another Social Democrat, Bayard Rustin. The Socialist Party, continuing in its notion that racism and capitalism can be peacefully abolished by way of the Democratic Party, can in no way relate to the anti-capitalist implications of nationalism. Its counterparts abroad, such as the British Labor Party and German Social Democratic Party, follow the same policies in relation to the colonial revolution, only they do it from the vantage point of being the ruling party.

The attitude of the Communist Party toward nationalism is conditioned by its abject policy of support to the Democratic Party and to liberal politicians of both capitalist parties. Since the thrust of nationalism threatens to break Black people away from the Democratic Party, the CP's policy is to prevent that by supporting such Black Democrats as Carl Stokes and Richard Hatcher, and by deflecting the independent course of the revolutionary nationalists whenever that is possible. This tactic of deflection was exercised at the Panther Party's United Front Against Fascism Conference last July. There, the CP was not so much interested in defending the Panthers as in blunting and diverting the independent political thrust of the Panther Party.

### The Young Socialist Alliance

In contradistinction to all of this ideological chaos and confusion, the revolutionary Marxist tendency, as represented by the Young Socialist Alliance, calls for complete and unconditional support to the right of Blacks, Latins, and other Third World minority groups to self-determination.

The position of the YSA stems from an understanding that the national question, that is, the struggle of Afro-American and other Third World peoples for the right to determine their own destinies, will be a key part of the North American socialist revolution. The proletarian, or working-class composition of Blacks

and Latins makes the nationalist struggle all the more explosive. The class composition of Blacks and Latins puts these oppressed nations in a position to detonate, to set into motion the whole working class. This is the essential dynamic of the motion toward ending national oppression. The solution to national oppression is interwoven and inextricable from the solution to class oppression.

This interaction between the class and national questions is very clear in the colonial world. The countries that have torn themselves out of the imperialist empire, e.g., China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba, are precisely those countries which were forced to carry through a socialist revolution in order to achieve national liberation. And those countries that haven't accomplished this, e.g., Indonesia, Algeria, the Congo, Ghana, and Mexico, have fallen into the subservient relationship with imperialism known as neo-colonialism.

These examples illustrate that the ideology providing the theoretical framework for the unity of the class and national questions is Marxism. And it is the vanguard Marxist organization that provides the framework for the fusion of these two concepts in practice.

The YSA as a Marxist vanguard is multi-national in composition. Drawing its members from the oppressed Third World nationalities, as well as from whites, the task of the revolutionary socialist vanguard is to unite the struggles against class exploitation and national oppression through one centralized organization in order to achieve maximum effectiveness against the single, centralized capitalist state. The existence of the multi-national revolutionary socialist vanguard is not a substitute for nationalist formations, i.e., an all-Black, or all-Latin, or Third World organization, but it is an essential component for the success of the struggle.

While the YSA has a long-range perspective of socialist revolution, it attempts to analyze and orient toward struggles in the here and now, because orientation toward present-day struggles will decide whether victory can be achieved tomorrow. It is to this end that the subsequent pages

### The Black Student Movement and the Rise of Nationalism

Afro-American and other Third World youth have initiated, sparked, and served as the driving force in the struggle for liberation. The youth provided leadership and bases of support throughout the early civil rights movement. They formed a big portion of the com-

bustible material that flared up in Black rebellions from Watts to Detroit. And in the developing organized struggle for self-determination, it is they who spearhead the actions in the community, the factories, the high schools and colleges, and the armed forces. The youth are and will be the backbone of the socialist revolution in this country.

Among Black youth, as it is with the world's youth, it is the students on the college campuses and in the high schools, who are the most rapidly developing layer, politically. The ideological and social restraints are more tenuous on the campus than in the factories or barracks. With the entrance of relatively large numbers of Black students from the working class and ghetto backgrounds, action in line with a nationalist political outlook is facilitated. The students foreshadow the social ferment that will sooner or later occur among the workers and soldiers.

Since we are about to enter the decade of the '70s, an outline and assessment of the development of the Black student movement in the '60s would be very instructive.

The movement today has its roots in an event that occurred on February 1, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina. That was the day when four Black freshmen, from North Carolina A & T College conducted a sit-in at a Woolworth's lunch counter which barred Blacks. This action, when broadcast over television, radio, and in the newspapers, started a veritable tidal wave of sit-ins across the South against restaurants and lunch counters which discriminated against Blacks. Black students organized and conducted sit-ins in Texas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana. Within a year, 50,000 people had participated in demonstrations in more than one hundred cities. For a country where the predominant view of the Black man was that of a down-and-out, servile outcast, this activity by the students seemed to border on virtual revolution.

Just two and a half months after Greensboro, on Easter weekend, April 15-17, a conference of this burgeoning student movement was held at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. The conference had been initiated by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was formed as a result of the 1955 Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott.

It was decided by the over 200 participants at the conference to form a temporary coordinating committee which would be independent of SCLC. Just a month later, in May, the Raleigh Conference met at

Atlanta University and decided to form the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. In June, SNCC came out with its first publication, The Student Voice.

By the end of 1960, many restaurants and lunch counters had been desegregated in some parts of the South. Having pierced the Great Southern Wall, SNCC collaborated with CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) in the spring of 1961, to desegregate interstate bus travel in the South. In spite of the pacifism and brotherly-love-all-folks outlook of the demonstrators, the thrust of the freedom rides, as they were called, was to establish the right of the Black man to sit anywhere on the bus that he so chose. A fight was also conducted against the segregated "white" and "Negro" facilities at bus stations.

The organized brutality and violence inflicted by Southern whites on the freedom riders brought the movement to the consciousness of the whole world. Embarrassed, the Kennedy Administration moved toward some type of face-saving accommodation. This came down in the form of a ruling by the Interstate Commerce Commission barring discrimination in bus terminals. But the federal government's enforcement of this ruling was in line with its enforcement of the constitutional rights of Black people in the South. Investigations and printed papers documenting case after case of racist discrimination, yes; action, no.

However, as a result of the action initiated by the students, the psychology of the Black masses, especially in the South, began to change. The people began to manifest a new sense of confidence, hope, and positive awareness of self. All types of repressed emotions and desires began to come to the surface. Although only meager gains had been won, a new day was being ushered in.

It was this new awareness that became very concrete when SNCC initiated voter registration campaigns in Mississippi and Southwest Georgia during the fall of 1961. For the next period, voter registration would become the central focus of SNCC activity. Through this activity, the masses of Black people would be propelled into action in places like Macomb, Mississippi; Selma, Alabama; and Albany, Georgia. The catalyst in these actions was students from the high schools and campuses.

But the civil rights movement came to a climax over two events: the August 1963 March on Washington and the August, 1964, challenge flung at the Democratic Party convention, meeting in Atlantic City, by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

The August March on Washington of over 200,000 people marked the opening of

deep chasms in the civil rights movement. The occasion was the objection by a white archbishop, who was scheduled to speak, to the remarks that John Lewis, then chairman of SNCC, was going to make at the rally. All of the speeches were being checked in order to delete any unnecessary criticism of the Kennedy Administration. When push came to shove, Rustin, James Farmer, and others in the civil rights establishment pressured Lewis into striking out the "unkind" remarks that were critical of the federal government.

At this same march, another event occurred. William Worthy, the radical-minded Black journalist of the Baltimore Afro-American, issued a call in the form of the Declaration of Washington for an all-Black political party, the Freedom Now Party. Worthy felt that, given the 100-year record of bankruptcy on the part of the Democrats and Republicans in respect to the struggle for "Freedom Now", an all-Black party was the only recourse. Such a party, Worthy figured, could wring more concessions from the white power structure because it would be independent. And such a party, basing itself on the principle of self-defense, would be able to rally Black people around the correct handling of racist terror. Operating from the powerful Black ghettos in the North, the all-Black party would be of national and international significance. The Party had to be all-Black in order to win the confidence and undivided attention of the masses.

Worthy's call got no response from the civil rights movement, not even its radical wing, SNCC. The reason was that the civil rights ideology saw the liberal sector of the Democratic Party and the federal government as part of the solution, not the problem. In addition, any all-Black organization amounted in their eyes to segregation and racism in reverse. Some of the militants in SNCC tended in the direction of self-defense and a Black-led movement, but didn't as yet raise these ideas as a definite program.

But the Freedom Now Declaration took hold and began to sprout some small roots in some of the northern ghettos among the budding Black nationalist organizations. The issues then dividing the nationalists from the civil rights movement were self-defense, all-Black organization, identification with the colonial revolution, and independent political action.

The existence of the movement led by Robert F. Williams in Monroe, North Carolina, helped give form and substance to their idea of self-defense. Even though Williams had fled the country in August of 1961, he was well known, and his book, Negroes with Guns, the story of Monroe, was widely read.

The emergence of the new African nations was a source of inspiration for the nationalist ideas of all-Black organization and international solidarity. The Chinese and Cuban revolutions also contributed to this awareness.

However, the nationalist movement was very small with the exception of the Nation of Islam, and even smaller numbers were attracted to the idea of a Freedom Now Party. Only in Detroit, Michigan, did the FNP blossom into a sizable organization capable of getting 12,000 signatures to achieve ballot status in the 1964 elections. The feat was accomplished by a combination of several forces: a small group of Black Socialist Workers Party members, a layer of independent Black radicals, the Rev. Albert B. Cleage's church, and a group headed by Milton and Richard Henry, the Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL).

In the summer of 1964, while the Michigan FNP was getting ready to mount a state-wide election campaign independent of the Democrats and Republicans, SNCC, CORE, and SCLC, were mapping out plans that would enable the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) to challenge the regular Democratic Party for its seats at the national convention in August.

As it turned out, the MFDP got a token offer of two seats. The established civil rights leaders wanted to take the token, but the MFDP and SNCC rejected it. The whole maneuver ended the faith of some SNCC militants in the Democratic Party. This rejection of liberal capitalist politics was to help pave the way for the development of an independent Black political party in Lowndes County, Alabama, a year later.

While SNCC militants were getting an education about the racist nature of the Democratic Party, the state-wide campaign of the FNP in Michigan began to reflect some illusions as to how easy it would be to disengage Black people from the Democratic Party. Some of the candidates even thought they would win this first time around. Most members thought that the party would at least get 100,000 votes state-wide. However, after the November elections, the tally was a little over 4,000 votes. This was a significant tally, given the Johnson-Goldwater "lesser-evil" fraud that trapped quite a few people. The civil rights establishment had even called a moratorium on demonstrations so as to insure Johnson's election.

But since the leadership of the party had a notion that the party would grow overnight into a mass organization, the FNP became wracked with disillusionment and demoralization. Thus, having assimilated no long term perspective and searching for a shortcut, the party folded. In spite

of this, the Michigan Freedom Now Party remains the first historic attempt by Black people to break out of the two-party rut.

During the hey-day of the FNP in 1964, it had established some contact with Brother Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU). Since Malcolm's split from the Nation of Islam in March of 1964, he had attempted to work with and unite the various currents of nationalism which existed around the country. Malcolm's articulate and spirited denunciation of the Johnson-Goldwater fraud, and in turn the two-party con-game, assisted and aided the FNP in bucking the swamp of lesser-evilism at that time. At the time of the dissolution of the FNP, Malcolm was taking up the task of expounding, formulating and popularizing all the central concepts which characterize Black nationalism as we know it today. But Malcolm's assassination cut short the process of even consolidating a leadership in the OAAU which fell apart shortly after his death.

In the absence of any national leadership and organization, 1965 was a very bleak year. But, at the same time, it was also a turning point. The fire and smoke that spewed forth from the volcano called Watts signalled the dramatic entry of northern Black masses into the struggle. This memorable event occurred on August 11, 1965.

In the winter of 1965, something of equal importance took place in Lowndes County, Alabama. This was the decision of the Lowndes County Christian Movement, which had been formed in March of 1965 in collaboration with SNCC on a voter registration project, to organize the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) in order to achieve Black political power in the county. Their target was the November 1966 county elections in which everything from auditor to sherriff would be up for grabs.

The leadership of the LCFO understood the long hard task of breaking Black people, who composed 80% of the county's population, from the influence and dependence upon white land owners. When it got over 1/3 of the votes in November 1966, the LCFO leadership saw this as a victory.

SNCC at the time was approaching a crisis. It had galvanized a nationwide movement around the idea of Black Power. Coming out against the war in Vietnam and later supporting the Arab and Cuban revolutions, SNCC had internationalized its stance. But while its ideological influence was strong and grew throughout 1967, it was organizationally weak and isolated. The white liberal money, shocked over SNCC's nationalist course, was fast drying up. The only alternative was to build a nation-

wide base on the experience of Lowndes, i.e., constructing Freedom or Panther political parties around the country. This orientation, coupled with the rising Black student movement, would have ended SNCC's organizational isolation. Instead, SNCC felt that a kind of "urban guerrillaism", a more organized version of the amorphous ghetto rebellions, was the wave of the future, not political organization.

Meanwhile, Black students, inspired by the rebellions and the formulation "Black Power" began to organize themselves. These first steps toward organization appeared between the fall of 1966 and the spring of 1967, the thrust of which was to establish the right to form an all-Black organization on campus. This right was contested more heatedly by the power structure and the school administrations then than it is now. The mood among the students was that of discovering self, researching the African past, and getting together a Black understanding of the present.

Some of the students, especially upon predominantly Black campuses, began to move from awareness into action. In March of 1967, Howard University students ran General Hershey off campus. The involvement of Black students at Texas Southern University in struggles in the Houston community led to the police attack on the TSU campus in May of 1967. In that attack, between two and three thousand rounds of ammunition were fired at a college dormitory by the Houston police. Black students in the north and west began to mount struggles with the beginning of the school year in the fall of 1967.

It should be kept in mind that these struggles emanated from a general nationalist awakening characterized by an emphasis on cultural nationalism. Recently, some of the sectarians and ultra-lefts have counterposed the stage of political struggle to that of cultural awareness. On the other hand, such reformists as Ron Karenga and LeRoi Jones have attempted to use and distort cultural nationalism to derail the movement for self-determination and to keep it within the confines of liberal capitalist politics.

Unlike the reformists or ultra-leftists, revolutionaries understand that cultural nationalism and knowledge of the past is a pre-condition for and part of a revolutionary analysis of black liberation. This system has Black people so messed up physically, mentally, and spiritually that it requires virtual explosions in the major U.S. cities to legitimize the statement "I'm Black and I'm proud."

Consciousness of the Afro-American and African past prepares the way for effective political action. Knowledge of the past

is a pre-condition for a revolutionary analysis of the problem. The ultra-lefts refuse to concede the fact that the level of consciousness generated by the ghetto rebellions was not an explicit, instantaneous revolutionary awareness, but an awakening along nationalist lines. There will be a transitional or preparatory road to follow in order to reach the stage where the masses have an explicitly revolutionary consciousness and are ready to carry out the final solution to the problem, which is the destruction of capitalism. It is up to revolutionary nationalists to find ways and means of translating the cultural awareness into effective political action.

The thrust of the demands of the Black student organizations was directed first of all toward the inclusion of Afro-American and African history courses into the curriculum. In May of 1968, Black students at Northwestern University in Illinois not only obtained courses in the Black experience, but got the administration to agree to set up an all-Black dormitory. This spurred various bygone civil rights spokesmen to holler about violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act in respect to the establishment of an all-Black dorm.

But these same gentlemen were mute when it came to student protests over blatant discrimination in extra-curricular activities. At the beginning of the fall of 1967, San Jose State College couldn't hold any football games in its stadium until it answered some of the Black students' demands about the discrimination practiced against Black athletes. In March of 1968, an invasion by highway cops onto South Carolina State College resulted in the murder of three Black students in what became known as the Orangeburg massacre. The whole event grew out of an attempt by Black students to desegregate a bowling alley in Orangeburg.

The seizure of a campus building at Columbia University in the spring of 1968 foreshadowed the stages of the struggle to come. This action was prompted by Columbia's bid at expansion into the Harlem community through the construction of a gym in Morningside Park. The move was condemned and opposed by the Black residents. When faced with an aroused community and determined students, Columbia dropped construction plans. For the first time, the demands of the students merged directly with those of the community. It wasn't purely a campus action or a community action, but a combination of both.

An added element to the restiveness of the Black student community for the 1968-1969 school year was the negation of promises made by various university administrations following the assassination of Martin Luther King in April. At the University of Illinois in Champaign-Ur-

bana, for example, the administration had matriculated 500 Black freshmen straight out of the Black communities in Illinois. The students were given promises of housing, scholarships, and all types of aid. When the students found out that the scholarships were really loans and work-study programs, while some of the housing didn't exist, they began protesting. The liberal administration dropped its mask and called in the cops to have 244 people arrested who had staged a mill-in in the student lounge.

At Brandeis University, near Boston, the Black students occupied a building and shut down the campus for a couple of weeks over the administration's procrastination in respect to the establishment of a Black Studies program. The University had set up a sand box committee following the spring to hammer out such a program, but the discussion just went round and round until January 1969. At issue was the right of the Black students to control the program. Exasperated, the students took action. Similar situations unfolded at universities and colleges from coast to coast.

At San Francisco State College and the University of California at Berkeley, the essence of the Black student revolt was manifested in all of its ramifications. These two actions illustrated in glaring relief the power and potential of the struggle for self-determination by Afro-American and other Third World minorities. The programmatic demands for open admissions in respect to all Third World students and a Third World-controlled School of Third World Ethnic Studies, stimulated the Black, Chicano, Asian-American, and Native American (Indian) communities into action. Everybody from white students to striking oil workers was drawn into the struggle. The San Francisco State strike, lasting from early November into the middle of March, triggered a teachers strike at the school for union recognition. At Berkeley, the teachers union struck in support of the students during the strike struggle in February.

Unlike other Black student groups, which either didn't attempt to relate to the white student majority or let the white students "do their own thing," the Third World Liberation Fronts at both San Francisco State and Berkeley made an endeavor to provide conscious direction and leadership for the white students.

Part of the reason that the TWLFs were able to engineer a coalition with the white students was due to the activity of the Black Panther Party in defense of Huey P. Newton. The Panther Party attempted to unite anybody and everybody around the case of Huey. This support was manifested in the nation-wide attention given by the



news media to Huey's trial in the summer of 1968.

At San Francisco State the alliance accomplished by the S.F. State students with a striking oil workers union in nearby Richmond was an example of how the national struggle can be merged with the class struggle, bringing both to a higher level. This was not the first time that that had happened. It was expressed when revolutionary nationalist students at Wayne State University took over the campus newspaper, the South End, and used it to build the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement among the Black workers in the auto plants. But in the Bay Area instance, it was one of the most backward strata of the working class, white production workers, who were struggling alongside Third World students. The fact that the oil workers were involved in a vicious struggle of their own was the decisive factor. However, the unity in this case gives us a glimpse of the type of processes at work that will one day rise to the surface and rip apart North American capitalism.

For the immediate period, the most important thread of the struggle is the link-up of Third World students with the Third World community on the basis of the explosive terms posed by the campus struggle.

#### The Current Stage of the Struggle

In the North, West, and East, where Black and other Third World students are a minority on white campuses, the fundamental demands in this respect are (1) studies programs, be it a department or a school centered in the experience of Black and other Third World people, and (2) the open admission, however formulated, of Black and other Third World students into the University. From these fundamental demands other struggles will arise.

At predominantly Black colleges and universities in the South, the thrust of struggle will be toward Blackification of these schools in every respect. This embraces all types of issues, from the struggle for Black Studies to the fight against all of the medieval and rotten conditions existing at these schools. In the spring of 1969, students at Southern University in Baton Rouge - the largest Black educational institution in the South - apprehended the governor of the state in order for him to check out the deteriorating conditions at the school. After his "forced" visit, the governor responded by sending the National Guard onto the campus.

And in Greensboro at North Carolina A & T, where it all started, Black students responded to the killing of a student by the police with armed self-defense. The

governor subsequently sent the National Guard onto the campus in armored vehicles.

The South will continue to reverberate with struggles similar to these. The fact that most Black campuses are near the Black community will facilitate community support to the campus struggles and vice versa.

Many predominantly white campuses in the North are near or in the Black community. At City College of New York, which is right in Harlem, Black and Puerto Rican students conducted a struggle last spring that revolved around the demand that the racial composition of New York high schools (which are close to 50% Black and Puerto Rican) be reflected in the freshman class. In fighting for their demands, the Black and Puerto Rican students seized not just a building, but half of the campus, which was strategically surrounded by a fence. This seizure propelled their demands into the consciousness of the entire city by way of the news media. The Black and Puerto Rican community responded to the seizure by providing food and other materials to the students in occupation.

The open admissions demand caused all types of reverberations in city and state politics. Some Black and Puerto Rican politicians were forced to come out in support of the students, while others stood exposed.

The thrust of all these struggles over the last few years can be summed up as the struggle for the Black University, or the Brown University, as exemplified by the successful struggle for a Chicano Studies Program at Merritt College in Oakland, California. It is upon this note that the Black student movement enters the 1970's. And it can be said that out of the motion toward the Black University, the campus will furnish a large portion of the leaders and organizers of the deep-going mobilizations slated for the Black community and the society at-large in the next decade. These militants shaped and formed in the heat of campus struggles will be in the forefront of the building of Black and revolutionary organizations which the masses will seek out as the old order continues to decay and crumble.

#### The High Schools

Along with the college campus, the high schools are also destined to play a greater role as the decade unfolds. As on the campus, the struggle of Black and other Third World high school students has gone from demands for the recognition of Black history to an attack upon the whole rotten system of public education. Inadequate implementation of demands for courses in the Black experience have just added fuel to the fire of student discon-

tent.

The mass mobilization of Chicago Black high school students that occurred in the fall of 1968 was sparked by the inadequacy of the token Black history courses handed down by the Board of Education. Between twenty and forty thousand high school students were mobilized for a series of one-day strikes over demands for a full curriculum of Black Studies, an end to over-crowded classrooms and pest-ridden food, community control of the schools, and either an end to ROTC or making it relevant to training for the defense of the Black community.

Throughout the whole school year, Black students from one end of the country to the other carried out protests against the prison-like conditions in the high schools. In the spring of 1969, for example, a group of Black and Puerto Rican students at a New York high school initiated a struggle against the drug pushers in school. Black students in Berkeley forced the school board to recognize Malcolm X's birthday as a school holiday. In the Mission District of San Francisco, Black and Chicano high school students went on strike over rotten conditions. Chicano students conducted blow-outs (strikes) in Los Angeles and Denver over their right to be treated as human beings. And Black students attending integrated schools in the South have sparked controversy over the slave-master heritage being kept alive in the classrooms.

The growth of Black student organizations in the high schools quickens the pace of the mounting struggle for community control of education.

A lot of opposition to the imperialist war in Vietnam will be drawn from the ranks of Black and other Third World high school students. With only a small minority of Black students achieving the immunity of the campus to the draft, the great majority face the prospect of Vietnam or some other area wracked by imperialist war.

### The GIs

The Armed Forces have begun to feel some of the impact of the Black and other Third World youth who embody the rebellious mood of the Third World communities. Faced with the prospect of going to Vietnam, Black and other Third World GIs have become active in opposing the war to a greater degree than the general Third World community. The development of GIs United Against the War in Vietnam at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina, has been the highest expression of this sentiment so far, and one in which Black YSAers played an important role.

Coupled with this opposition to the war, Black GIs have to contend with the rampant racism in the Armed Forces. Such an atmosphere has led to the outright lynching of Black GIs in the service. In a recent Time magazine survey in Vietnam, 64% of the 500 Black GIs interviewed indicated that racial conflict was on the rise; 60% said that Black people should not fight in Vietnam because of the race problem back home; and 45% said that they would fight with arms in hand to gain their rights back in the States. With the deepening of the struggle for self-determination in the U.S., it will become increasingly difficult for the government to wage the struggle against self-determination elsewhere.

### The Workers

Along with the students and GIs, Black workers are also beginning to organize independently to fight for Black demands. The growth of Black caucuses in the trade union movement provides ample proof of this.

In last year's pre-convention discussion bulletin entitled "On the Revolutionary Struggle of Black America for Self-Determination," it was stated, "The relative and absolute strength of black workers in the trade union movement is constantly on the upswing. In the United Auto Workers (UAW) black workers constitute over 33% of the 1.6 million member union. Of the 1.1 million members of the United Steelworkers of America, black workers are 25%. In the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), 30% of the 400,000 members are black. About 70% of AFSCME consists of blue-collar workers...AFSCME embraces city sanitation workers, janitors, service employees, and hospital workers."

Struggles for union recognition by Black sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, and by Black hospital workers in Charleston, South Carolina, set off mass mobilizations on those two cities. And in Chicago and Pittsburgh and other cities, the Black community has rallied in mass demonstrations to close down construction sites operated by companies hiring mainly white workers. Such actions as these have put Black workers in the forefront of the class struggle.

The struggle for jobs on construction sites points up the fact that Black people occupy a position in the capitalist economy as an industrial reserve army of labor, that is, a labor force activated during a period of economic boom and let loose in an economic downturn, giving rise to the maxim, "last hired and first fired." The actions of the hospital and sanitation workers point up the tendency whereby Black people are becoming a sizable part of the

industrial labor force. The statistics given for the weight of Black workers in the industrial unions illustrate this tendency. At the same time, the high unemployment rate in the ghettos, which varies anywhere from 10% to 30% gives an indication of the continued position as an industrial reserve army.

It was during the two world wars that the greatest migrations occurred of this reserve army of Blacks from the agricultural South to the industrial North. Partly stimulated by the mechanization of agriculture, the primary cause lay in the tremendous expansion of the war industries, when part of the white labor force was off in uniform. When the war ended and the market contracted, Blacks were thrown into ghettos to stagnate until needed again.

The fact that Black labor was cheapened made it possible for the capitalists to use Blacks as scab labor when white workers got "uppity." The creation and use of this reserve army of labor tended to force wages as a whole down. This tendency was allowed to operate on account of the thoroughly racist attitude of the unions. It was this attitude that was manifested from the time of the National Labor Union in 1867, through the Knights of Labor in the 1880s to a lesser extent, and to the American Federation of Labor, founded in 1886 to the greatest extent.

It was only with the inauguration of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) that some headway was made in combatting the racist prejudices of white workers. For the CIO, unlike the exclusive craft or skilled worker organization of the AFL, was founded on the basis of industrial unionism, i.e., organizing the great mass of unskilled labor. The CIO found out, in practice, that to organize the unskilled, one had to include Blacks on the basis of equality in order to nullify their role as scabs.

Having been shown enough consistency between the word and the deed, Blacks joined the CIO and played leading roles in it. In addition, for the Black community, the CIO became not just a labor organization, but a tool to fight racial oppression. Many Black workers who became CIO leaders also became leaders of the NAACP, then the leading organization in the fight against race discrimination. In this respect, a lot of "up-South" discrimination in restaurants, hotels, and other public places was abolished in northern cities during the period of the labor upsurge in the 1930s and 1940s.

The rooting of Black workers in the CIO became a counteracting force to their use as a cheap supply of labor. This is the reason why Black workers are heavily concentrated in the industrial unions today.

The tying of the CIO by the labor bureaucrats to the Democratic Party necessarily brought it into complicity with maintenance of the status quo and all that it stands for, including racial oppression. When the CIO launched a campaign in 1946 to organize workers in the South, it failed miserably because the organization of the South required a head-on confrontation with the Democratic Party, the bastion of racial oppression and class exploitation. Since the CIO was not about to break from the Democratic Party and form an independent working-class party, a labor party, it could not have succeeded. Thus, the task of the movement today essentially begins where the CIO left off, i.e., breaking out of the stranglehold of the Democratic Party. It is the motion being generated within the Black caucuses that is leading to such a break. The action of Black workers becomes very important in this respect. Organizing and fighting racist treatment at the hands of the employers and the labor bureaucrats lays the basis for escaping this entrapment.

To comprehend this dynamic, we must go back to the '30s. The working class radicalization in the 1930s provided an atmosphere in which the struggle against racial oppression could be pursued more easily. In a similar vein, the radicalization of the working masses in Europe after World War II, along with the effects of the war itself, accelerated and heightened the movement for national liberation in the Third World.

But today the dynamic is different. The tidal wave of revolution is flowing from the colonized countries into the countries of the colonizer. Vietnam is accelerating and heightening the social tensions in the United States. In respect to the trade unions, the struggle of Black workers against the racist policies of the labor bureaucrats has the effect of shaking up the unions and piercing the carefully cultivated atmosphere of peaceful coexistence between the bureaucrats and Big Business. In this manner, the catalysis of class struggle by the Black workers will lead to the questioning of everything, including labor's ties to the Democratic Party.

The fulfillment of this overall outline involves a very long and arduous process which is now only in an infant stage. Given the conditions in the United States, the breaking away of labor from the two-party shell game practically signals the death knell for the whole system.

#### Perspectives for A Black Political Party

It is the deepening of independent struggle among the students, soldiers, workers, and general community that is paving the way for the building of a

Black political party. Struggles that are mounted independently of the capitalist government and all of its agencies help get across to people the idea that only they can shape and decide their own destinies, nobody else. The vehicle necessary for a consistent effort in this quest for self-determination is a mass Black political party. A Black political party can tie together and give a powerful impetus to the campaigns of the aforementioned sectors of the community. The efforts exerted around issues such as education, welfare, hospital care, housing, jobs, redevelopment of the community, commodity prices, imperialist wars, etc., are all struggles against the various agencies of the government. It will be out of mass mobilizations around these issues that the Black community will come to understand the need for an independent mass Black political party.

Since the capitalist class understands the logic of these actions, it is trying to capture and control them by channeling them back into its two political parties, with the Democratic Party serving as the principal channel. The creation of Black mayors like Carl Stokes of Cleveland, Richard Hatcher of Gary, and attempts like Tom Bradley of Los Angeles and Richard Austin of Detroit, testify to the effort of the capitalists to move from direct to indirect rule of the ghettos. The Black candidates are put forward in order to shore up the image of the Democratic Party among Black people.

But this facelifting operation is showing signs of sagging and wrinkling up. The abysmal conditions of life in the ghetto haven't changed in the least. These Black faces are going to protect and defend private property just like any other capitalist politician. Ahmed Evans is on death row on account of Stokes' staunch defense of capitalist property relations. Because these Black faces are bought, paid for, and stamped with the approval of Big Business, it is impossible for them to speak, respond, or in any way relate to the interests of Black people. As Malcolm so aptly characterized these types, "And because his immediate personal problems will have been solved, he will be the one to tell our people, 'Look how much progress we're making. I'm in Washington, D.C. I can have tea in the White House. I'm your spokesman, I'm your, you know, your leader'...But will it work? Can that one, whom they are going to put down there, step into the fire and put it out when the flames begin to leap up? When people take to the streets in the explosive mood, will that one, that they're going to put in the cabinet, be able to go among those people? Why they'll burn him faster than they burn the ones who sent him."

So much for that.

Out of the struggles in all sectors of the Black community has come a growing awareness of the necessity for a Black party. A contribution to this growing awareness was made by the Socialist Workers Party in its pioneering pamphlets and articles in The Militant concerning the Black party question. It was the orientation of the SWP that aided the formation of the Freedom Now Party in Detroit in 1963.

During 1968, the attraction and recruitment to the Black Panther Party brought the Black party sentiment into sharp focus. The circulation of the pamphlet entitled, "Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party" by James Boggs is another sign of this growing sentiment.

Just the existence of the Black Panther Party as a political party gave tremendous weight to this idea, given the difficulty of people in this country understanding politics outside of the framework of the Democratic and Republican parties. The growth of the Black Panther Party even helped to win SNCC away from its reliance upon spontaneous rebellions to that of a political party. This was reflected in an interview that Phil Hutchings, then national chairman of SNCC, gave to The Militant in October of 1968.

But it was the inability of these two tendencies to couple the Black party perspective with the burgeoning mass mobilizations around self-determination, i.e., Black control of the Black community, that has blocked any serious attempts on their parts to begin to build a Black party.

Some members of SNCC, having been left behind by the mushrooming Black student movement, expressed its frustrations by supporting James Forman's quixotic "Black Manifesto."

While the manifesto's demands may be laudable (e.g., a Black labor strike and defense fund of \$20,000,000; the establishment of a university in the South to be funded with \$130,000,000; the establishment of four Black publishing and printing industries which will each be funded with \$10,000,000, and so on) their implementation revolves around small bands of people running around giving rhetorical shock treatment to the churches. The manifesto does not speak to the problem of consolidating cadres around the Black party perspective and moving on a program of community control.

In revolutionary Marxist terminology, mass actions dealing with Black community control can be codified in what is known as a transitional program, a transitional

set of demands, that bridges the gap between the present consciousness of the masses and the need for such a party.

The Black Panther Party, after reaching its apex during the summer of 1968 in the defense campaign for Huey P. Newton, has had deep political difficulties ever since. Continuation of the formation of short-lived and unfruitful alliances - Peace and Freedom, Yippies, SDS, etc. - in addition to its abstention from the Black student movement, its ultra-left rhetoric, and later, the denunciation of the Black student struggles as "cultural nationalist" and reactionary, the Black Panther Party has cut itself off from its original potential of rapid growth. Instead of moving into the various sectors of Afro-America with their ten point transitional program on Black community control, the Panthers have been in constant retreat from that program, falling into a position of concentrating on social work-type projects. The program reflecting this position is the free breakfast for children program and others of this type.

The present posture of the Panthers results somewhat from their use of ultra-left rhetoric, which puts them onto the outer limits of political reality. In an attempt to move out of the resulting isolation from the Black community, the Panthers have thrown all of their efforts into the free breakfast program. There is nothing wrong with free breakfast for children, in and of itself, but it will not be the major medium through which a Black political party will be built.

The Panther Party was built in efforts to mobilize the community over the issue of self-defense. It achieved some influence in the organized Black student movement, on the campus and especially in the high schools. This influence was achieved through its attitude of militant struggle over the issue of education in the Black community. But because the Panthers didn't attempt to take action in a united effort with other organizations in the community over these and other issues, thinking that the Panther Party, which wasn't a mass party, was all that was needed, they ended up by cutting themselves off from the community. Their United Front Against Fascism Conference which drew little representation from the Black community was a graphic display of this.

The situation of the Panthers was only compounded by the reliance on Maoist rhetoric. Under the cover of this rhetoric, members and Panther chapters that disagreed with the zig-zags of the political lines were expelled. They also used the cover of this rhetoric to take, in effect, an anti-nationalist position by denouncing

the Black student movement in the spring of 1969.

Just as SDS used its discovery of "Marxism" to abstain from the movement against U.S. aggression in Vietnam, thus assuming a right-wing position, the Panthers took a right-wing position in relation to nationalism as it is embodied in the Black student movement. In their attempt to build a "Marxist-Leninist" vanguard and a mass Black political party in the same organizational framework, the Panthers ended up doing neither.

In a way, the political evolution of the Panthers parallels the political evolution of the now-splintered and shattered SDS. SDS, after its arrival into "Marxist" politics, assumed that it was the center of the political universe. It didn't have to participate in a united effort over issues such as the war in Vietnam and campus complicity with other political organizations because SDS was the beginning and the end. The struggle for socialism, the movement against the Vietnam war, campus complicity with the war, ROTC, etc., could all be subsumed under the enlightened wings of SDS. In revolutionary politics, such a go-it-alone attitude is defined as sectarianism. After SDS was shattered upon the rocks of factional warfare, some of the survivors began to see that SDS was not the student movement, just a mere part.

The sectarianism and ultraleft rhetoric of the Panthers has helped open the door for the government in its jailing and destruction, physically and politically, of hundreds of politically valuable cadres, leaders, and organizers. Out on a limb, too far away from the trunk of mass support and having no means to back up its bombastic language about "offing the pig," the Black Panther Party was and is being subjected to tremendous attacks by the local, state and federal authorities. Neither breakfast for children nor petition campaigns to establish community control of the police are the appropriate answers to such attacks. Only with the recognition that the Black Panther Party is a part of the movement and has to engage in united efforts with diverse organizations, for its own defense as well as for issues involving community control, can a way be found out of this situation. This recognition can arise only out of practice and out of democratic discussion within the party. The Panthers at this time have very little of either, and continue to operate by way of ultimatums, fiats, commands, and decrees.

#### Tasks for Revolutionary Nationalists

This brief estimation of the Panthers is a necessary step in the effort to

achieve clarity on what is to be done and to determine what course revolutionary nationalists must chart in order to get from where we are now to the goal of a mass Black party.

It is obviously not enough simply to propagandize about a Black party. Such a tactic would be sectarian and ineffectual in and of itself. The chief way to actualize such a party will be through action around a political program for community control. By doing so a political base will be created and the need for such a party will be made more concrete.

It is through involvement in actions that people will recognize the need for such a party. The fact that the Democratic and Republican parties are tied to the oppression of the community becomes abundantly clear as the two parties are faced with concrete explosions in the community. The lack of an on going mass organization to coordinate and continue the struggle and to organize those who have been newly radicalized becomes more apparent as people are mobilized in action. Mass actions provide the clearest example of the kind of reliance on independent Black power that would be the base for a Black party.

Many revolutionary nationalists feel that participants in such struggles whose demands are not consciously revolutionary but are for partial reforms such as more jobs in the construction trades, for an end to the war in Vietnam is wrong. Others reject the importance of such participation because they feel that only massive repression will revolutionize the Black community. Still others reject the need to organize the masses around partial demands because they feel that we are already in a revolutionary period, and that the central task is organizing for armed struggle.

It is incorrect for revolutionists not to struggle for partial demands or reforms because such a refusal sentences the revolutionists to isolation from those who have not yet become revolutionists. This abdication by revolutionists only insures reformist dominance and defeat for the struggle. All struggles in a pre-revolutionary period start on a non-revolutionary stage of consciousness. It is by participating in partial struggles for reforms and struggling for them in a revolutionary fashion - demanding mass actions, no reliance on white liberal or Tom politicians, calling for permanent organizations of the community to fight until Black control has been won - that the masses of the community will be won to revolutionary nationalism.

To rely on capitalist repression to revolutionize the community and to abstain from struggles over concrete issues leaves the community prey to the reformists. To deny the possibility of leading the

community to revolutionary consciousness through struggles against its existing oppression is to deny the reality of that oppression. If this is denied in a period such as this when the movement is growing and open, it will be doubly true during a repression. In time of repression it is harder, not easier, to be a revolutionary. Those who are initially radicalized by such a repression will not feel ready to take action unless there is a strong movement to back them up.

The task of revolutionary Blacks is to enter the mass struggles of the community to gain a firm base to counter the repressive assaults of the imperialists. Revolutionary nationalists cannot afford to be isolated from the community, since it will be the revolutionists, not the non-politicized, who will be the targets of repression.

The revolutionary nationalists should be striving for leadership of the mass mobilizations taking place over the issue of redevelopment of the community, jobs at construction sites, unionization of hospital, sanitation, and other lower income employees, the Black University, the public educational system, etc.

For example, in New York, revolutionary nationalists organized in the Harlem Committee for Self-Defense, led the occupation of Governor Rockefeller's site for a State Office Building in Harlem. This occupation lasted throughout the summer, sparking the participation and bringing together of the revolutionary-minded nationalists from the campus, high schools and the community. In addition, the whole Black community was galvanized into an awareness of the necessity for the community to decide how it is going to be developed, not Rockefeller. A few polls were conducted by the Harlem Committee, showing clearly that the sentiment was for schools and housing on the site, not a State Office Building.

In Seattle, during the same summer, Black students ran for several seats on a community governing board established for schools in the Black community. Their representatives were elected, giving a radical bent to the Board.

During the past year and a half in Detroit, revolutionary nationalists have attempted to mobilize Black auto workers over blatant discrimination in the auto plants.

However, aside from such scattered efforts, it is the reformists and liberals like SCLC, Urban League, and, to a certain extent, the NAACP, that have gone seemingly unchallenged into mobilizations at construction sites, over unionization, and

in the public educational system. It is through involvement in efforts such as these that the revolutionary wing of the nationalist movement will make itself less prone to government attack and build confidence in the Black party perspective.

#### Black Marxists and the United Front

The perspective for building a Black party is based on the convergence of activity among students, workers, and those that go through the imperialist army. In other words, it is out of these three sectors of the community that the cadres will be found that can be won over to the Black party perspective. It is the activity in these three sectors that prepares the way for the realization of such a perspective.

Since this realization requires a long-range vision, with a corresponding set of tactics and strategy, it will be the Black revolutionary Marxists in the YSA who best pioneer this effort. Those who have been and are the best pioneers in the efforts of national liberation in the Third World are those who have outfitted themselves with the science of Marxism.

The strategy of the Black Marxists should be concentrated on (1) engaging in united efforts over the issues posed by the struggle to achieve Black control of all aspects of life in the community, and (2) recruiting those who opt for the long-term challenge into the multi-national revolutionary socialist organization, the YSA. The first part of this strategy is best summarized in the document called A Transitional Program for Black Liberation.

The pursuance of the Black University is at the forefront of this at this time because it is students on the campuses and in the high schools who are in the vanguard of the struggle for self-determination. Building support to the election campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party, which allow for the discussion of a Black party in relation to the struggle for Black control to be taken to larger audiences, also occupies a portion of this strategy. Another crucial area of work in the coming period will be the building of united efforts in the Black and Third World communities against the imperialist war in Vietnam.

We move from the understanding that the organizational vehicle used to solidify and consolidate the revolutionary cadre in the YSA will not be the same organizational vehicle for the united efforts over various issues.

The organizational vehicle designed for such tasks is what is known as the

united front, a term that has been very much abused by the radical and nationalist movements. The united front was a tactic worked out by Lenin and Trotsky, based on the experience of the Bolshevik party, that was designed to help get the early Communist parties from a position of a small vanguard to that of mass parties wielding a mass influence. The tactic was to be executed by engaging in united efforts with other working-class organizations over issues of common concern to the total working class.

United action with other organizations and individuals over the various issues of Black control, whether it be on the campus, in the barracks, on the job, or in the general community, will help to close the gap between the revolutionary organization and the masses. The form of the united front will vary from issue to issue, but its intent is to spark the masses into action - action in which they take their own interests into their own hands. This general strategy is not only applicable to the Black community, but to the Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian, and American Indian communities with an appreciation of the differences between each.

"I believe that by the unheard-of political and theoretical backwardness and the unheard-of economic advance the awakening of the working class will proceed quite rapidly. The old ideological covering will burst, all questions will emerge at once, and since the country is so economically mature the adaptation of the political and theoretical to the economic level will be achieved very rapidly. It is then possible that the Negroes will become the most advanced section. We have already a similar example in Russia. The Russians were the European Negroes. It is very possible that the Negroes also through self-determination will proceed to the proletarian dictatorship in a couple of gigantic strides, ahead of the great bloc of white workers. They will then furnish the vanguard. I am absolutely sure that they will in any case fight better than the white workers."

L.D. Trotsky  
Black Nationalism  
and Self-Determination  
1933