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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLES FROM MADISON

By Bones Levitt, Madison Local

The following three contributions, by Comrades Judy Lansky, Bruce Lesnick, and Bones Levitt, were not originally going to be submitted to the discussion bulletin. All three articles were read during the last night of pre-convention discussion in Madison. The comrades in Madison who support the Internationalist Tendency boycotted that evening, December 8.

The local had voted to have a tape recorder at all the discussion sessions. Because the local could no longer afford to purchase any more recording tape, and because we had no manner of transportation to get the tape recorder to the student union (where we held our discussions) that night, other than by paying for a taxi, three out of five executive committee members informally decided to not tape the last session. As organizer I accept responsibility for this decision, which in retrospect was a mistake.

No comrades had requested to listen to previous tapes for three weeks prior to this decision, and since we would be voting on documents the very next day, it appeared rather unlikely that anyone would need to hear the tape. In fact no one did. Why then was the decision, a mistake, even worth mentioning here? Well, the December 8 session just happened to be boycotted by the half of the local supporting the Internationalist Tendency. The fact that no tape had been made gave these comrades a convenient gripe, so they could divert attention from their boycott of discussion. Not wanting to deprive these comrades from hearing our views, three of the four contributions read that night appear here. Comrade Ted S. will try to send his in later. Other comrades were prepared to speak on such topics as our attitude toward Black and Chicano nationalism and the importance of the suit brought by the Political Rights Defense Fund. These comrades chose to return to studying for final exams rather than prolong an unfortunately one-sided discussion. They may submit these for publication later as well.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency chose to boycott the discussion on the YSA political resolution because their counter-resolution to the NEC draft had not yet

appeared in print when we were scheduled to discuss the issues. This was on December 6. We have since been told that the IT draft was first mailed to the National Office on December 8! The local had previously voted to hold its last meeting of the work period on December 9, as final exams began on the 10th, and comrades had a responsibility toward their schoolwork as well as toward the YSA. The Madison local, at its business meeting of December 2, took up a motion made by the supporter of the IT to postpone discussion until the IT document came out. The motion was defeated. The comrades of the IT had ample time to prepare a report and contributions to the discussion. They have no grounds upon which to base a claim that their democratic rights were violated. With the publication of the following three articles they can no longer complain about the lack of a tape recording of a discussion they had no intention of listening to anyway. The record of the supporters of the YSA majority on the question of organizing a full, democratic discussion is clean.

For comrades' information, the Madison local organized two discussion sessions for each of the following five areas: Bolivia, Argentina, Europe, world political resolution, and YSA political resolution. Each session, except for the first two, were 2 1/2 hours in length, with initial reports of 45 minutes for each side, first rounds of 7 minutes per comrade, second rounds of 3 minutes per comrade, and summaries of 30 minutes per reporter. We thus set aside 24 hours worth of discussion time, not all of which was used. We also were privileged to have Comrades Charles and Clark, representing the IEC Majority Tendency and the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction respectively, debate in Madison. Madison comrades also participated in that discussion session, which ran somewhat over five hours. Our total discussion time was thus almost 30 hours in total, in a local with a membership of 16.

The local organized a full discussion. That it did not turn out that way is no fault of the supporters of the YSA majority.

II. The Role of the Detente

By Judy Lansky, Madison Local

(The majority of this contribution is taken from the Intercontinental Press of December 25, 1972, hence no quotations are cited.)

As was noted during the YSA resolution, the Internationalist Tendency has paid too little attention to the detente. In

fact, the document, "The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America", a document which the IT supports, gives no political analysis of this sell-out of the Stalinists to imperialism.

Clearly, the class struggle continues but what the IT re-

fuses to see is that the detente imposes new conditions on the rise of world revolution--something which cannot be glossed over simply as a "diplomatic arrangement."

In seven minutes I cannot even begin to fully develop an analysis of the detente. I suggest comrades read "The Unfolding New World Situation" (SWP Discussion Bulletin, No. 12), the Intercontinental Press of December 25, 1972, as well as the several ISR articles. I would like to spend my time discussing the impact of the detente on the Vietnamese revolution and the anti-war movement.

Moscow and Peking's great betrayal of the Vietnamese in 1972 and the further unfolding of the detente, especially seen in the recent Israeli aggression, confirm to the hilt what Trotsky warned of the consequences that would flow from the Stalinist theory of building socialism in one country--consequences which inevitably lead to the betrayal of the world revolution.

From the time of Washington's full scale intervention in Vietnam in 1965, a prime concern of Pentagon policy makers has been the potential response of the Soviet Union and China. These two giant workers states are formally allies of North Vietnam and their decisive intervention in defense of the Vietnamese independence struggle would have proved a serious deterrent to imperialism's war plans in Indochina. The Pentagon Papers revealed this concern of the United States with the possible response of the Soviet Union and China.

Moscow and Peking did give aid to the Vietnamese struggle, albeit grudgingly, and unfortunately not a sufficient amount to deter the Washington warmakers at any stage. They left unchallenged the American monopoly of the air, permitting the slaughter of countless Vietnamese civilians and resistance fighters. The aid to Hanoi and the NLF was never more than a tiny fraction of what American imperialism poured into its defense of the Saigon puppet regime.

Then, in February, 1972, the great king of imperialism, Richard Nixon, visited China. The visit to Peking was accompanied by renewed bombing of North Vietnam. The Maoist bureaucrats passed the test with flying colors, soft-pedaling their opposition to the war and boosting Nixon's political fortunes with a gaudy welcome in the Forbidden City. Mao's action was a boon to the Kremlin. The Soviet bureaucracy was assured that it could proceed with the Moscow summit--regardless of events in Indochina--without having to defend itself against Chinese criticism. Peking's betrayal thus paved the way for Moscow's even more brazen sell-out.

Even before April of 1972, Moscow and Peking bureaucracies had gone a long way toward isolating the Vietnamese liberation forces. Militarily, Nixon was given a free hand, politically, the Kremlin's desire to press ahead with the summit no matter what the cost not only represented an

encouragement to Nixon, but dealt a serious blow to the anti-war movement, which after a brief upswing, began to show signs of demobilization as the Kremlin did its best to assure the world that Nixon's escalation entailed no danger to world peace.

On May 8, 1972, Nixon pulled his infamous move of mining the harbor and increasing the bombing over North Vietnam. The Maoist bureaucracy had demonstrated that its nationalist self-interest took precedence over the Vietnamese revolution. The failure of the Moscow bureaucrats to respond to earlier escalations convinced Nixon that he had nothing to fear from the Kremlin.

In retrospect, it can be seen that May 8 and the few days after it represented the decisive turning point in the current stage of the Vietnamese revolution. All the factors that could have precipitated a major social crisis in the U.S. were operative. The capitalist class--not only in the U.S. but on a world scale--seemed on the verge of a serious split over the Indochina war. Public support for Nixon's policies was at a low point, and the anti-war movement seemed poised for a new upsurge. A meaningful response from the Kremlin, even a simple call for international solidarity actions with the Vietnamese, could have stymied the imperialist attack. On May 11, the Moscow bureaucracy came out with its answer to Nixon. In fairness, it must be said that the Soviet statement did not assert support for the U.S. blockade, nor did it declare its solidarity with Washington's attempt to contain communist aggression. Short of that it must have fulfilled Nixon's highest hopes. It failed to reassert the Soviet Union's right to continue supplying material aid to the Vietnamese revolution. It failed to encourage--or even mention--international anti-war actions in solidarity with the Vietnamese. It did not even cancel the scheduled Moscow summit. In short, it betrayed the Vietnamese people as imperialism continued its ruthless murder of the Vietnamese.

And what of the anti-war movement. The Kremlin's capitulation to Nixon weakened the Vietnamese and helped sabotage the anti-war movement. Demonstrations held in the U.S. on May 21, 1972, were noticeably reduced in size, the Kremlin passively having removed all sense of urgency. The U.S. bourgeoisie with the assistance of U.S. Stalinism intensified its efforts to draw the anti-war movement off the streets and into the presidential elections.

The detente and the subsequent miseducation by the Stalinists continued with the "peace plan." On January 20, a national anti-war action was called. We were there organizing the "Out Now" contingent while the Stalinists were there miseducating the anti-war movement with the slogan of "Sign Now."

One final point, the idea that changing the slogan to "Victory to the NLF" would have changed the relationship of forces does not hold water. First, the NLF was in favor of signing

the treaty and secondly, the people supporting "Victory to the NLF" were also marching under the banner of "Sign Now." The slogan "Victory to the NLF" would only have served to miseducate the masses and not further the Vietnamese struggle because the NLF was saying that the treaty was a victory. The slogan "Out Now" was not only the most correct, but, yes, comrades, the most radical--it was a demand on U.S.

imperialism, thus laying the blame on the war where it belonged.

Unfortunately, the IT has not viewed the world situation by taking into account all the forces. A glossing over of the importance of the detente will lead to a serious mistake in their analysis of the world political situation.

III. Democratic Demands; When and Why?

By Bruce Lesnick, Madison Local

One of the most fundamental documents of our movement is the Transitional Program, and its resultant applications. Being that disagreements between supporters of the LTF and the IT are so widespread and touch upon so many basic principles it is no wonder that the meaning of this document is obscured. In particular is the problem that members of the IT have recognizing the proper importance and usage of democratic demands.

In the Transitional Program it states, "Democratic slogans, transitional demands and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in this struggle, but stem from one another." Along the same vein, the seventh of the fundamental principles of the Left Opposition, adopted in 1933, reads as follows:

"Recognition of the necessity to mobilize the masses under the transitional slogans corresponding to the concrete situation in each country, and particularly under democratic slogans insofar as it is a question of struggle against feudal relations, national oppression, or different varieties of openly imperialistic dictatorship (fascism, Bonapartism etc.)" (Documents of the Fourth International, p. 24)

How do comrades of the IT relate to this? To them, struggles for democratic rights in the era of imperialism are strictly limited in character and consequences. We're told, for example, that Black control of the Black community "represents a very limited democratic reform, with little impact on the relationship of forces between classes." Comrades, it is to say the least unrealistic to assert that millions of Blacks undertaking a militant struggle for control of their community would have "little impact on the relationship of forces." A more accurate label for this type of underestimation of a demand calling in essence for a social upheaval and reordering of the class relationship of forces, would be to say that it is inconsistent and in contradiction with the Transitional Program. Why? Because in it Trotsky wrote: "Every serious demand of the proletariat and even every serious demand of the petty bourgeoisie inevitably reaches beyond the limits of capitalist property relations and the bourgeois state." This is noted in conjunction with the fact, as Comrade George Novack put it in SWP Discussion Bulletin 22, Vol. 31, that:

"Intrinsic to our line of supporting struggles for democratic rights is that we carry out such struggles with proletarian methods. We look to extraparliamentary mass action as the central method of struggle and place no confidence in the bourgeois liberals."

Another way of discussing this point on a concrete level would be to discuss our orientation to the women's liberation movement. Comrades of the IT always bring up the charge that the SWP and the YSA after 1971 took a reformist turn in their analysis and practice in this movement. But for those whose ears are still open, I will quote what actually was the reason for the change from Comrade Novack's introduction to the Transitional Program, p. 68-9:

"The purpose of transitional demands, it has been emphasized is to further the mobilization of the masses. This is pertinent to the controversy within the feminist movement over the merits of the slogans for free abortion on demand versus repeal of all abortion laws. Both of these demands are good ones and are incorporated in our tool kit.

"However, that doesn't solve the tactical question: which one is better suited to bringing the largest number of women together in the first national mass action of the feminist movement? This was the decisive consideration in the judgment of our comrades who selected repeal of all abortion laws. They decided on the less radical slogan at this stage of the development of the movement. They didn't discard the other one. They simply put it on a different level, for propaganda rather than immediate mass action. At the same time that one slogan is advanced to mobilize the largest number of women for action in the streets, the other remains as part of our broader program.

"The choice of one rather than the other conforms to the assertion in the Transitional Program: '...the achievement of this strategic task /that is, the conquest of power/ is unthinkable without the most considered attention to all, even small and partial questions of tactics.' The more far-reaching demand may be the incorrect one if conditions don't warrant its broad acceptance and it has less capacity to mobilize masses. The slogan for the

formation of soviets is in the program but if we called for it tomorrow, what response would it get?"

Comrades, we can't afford to take abstentionist views when issues of democracy are before the people. We are revolutionists and activists. It is essential that we take hold of these demands and give them direction, as only a revolutionary organization can, so as to facilitate the winning of

sympathy and the greater number of masses of people. Watergate is essentially an attack on democratic demands. Yet millions of people are beginning to question and challenge the bourgeois two party system. How would comrades of the IT have us relate to this? The same way they proposed for the Black and women's struggle? Once again, comrades, you must choose between the Transitional Program and the ideas of Trotsky, and your own concoctions and analyses.

IV. The Internationalist Tendency and the Responsibilities of Membership in the Young Socialist Alliance

By Bones Levitt, Madison Local

(For the first half of this contribution I have relied very heavily upon the article by Mary-Alice Waters in Organizing the YSA, part one, and the Education for Socialists Bulletin entitled "The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party." Because this article was not originally intended for publication, I have not used quotes.)

Comrades, this contribution will deal with the organizational side of the political dispute we are faced with in the YSA today. What I will focus on in particular are the rights and obligations of members of the YSA, and how these rights and obligations have been flaunted by the comrades of the minority Internationalist Tendency here in Madison.

To start off on the most basic level, membership in the YSA is a free individual decision on the part of each person who wants to join. Thus, the YSA, as a voluntary organization, has the right and responsibility to define the conditions for membership in the organization. The provisions for membership are outlined in Article III of our constitution, and set forth very clearly. In case you haven't re-read the YSA constitution lately, let me read you the relevant section: "Membership shall be open to anyone under the age of twenty-nine who accepts the program and agrees to follow the policies of the YSA and engage actively in its work."

First and foremost, membership is based on acceptance of the program and agreement to follow the policies of the YSA and engage actively in its work. Fundamental agreement does not mean that every individual must agree 100% with everything the YSA has ever done or said. But if an individual disagrees basically with many aspects of the YSA program, he or she will find it very difficult, over the long run, to loyally build the organization and participate in the activities which derive from our basic program.

Membership also supposes a level of significant activity and financial support to the organization. Those not actually engaged in the work of the organization are not really qualified to make decisions on political perspectives or the implementation of these decisions. We are not arm-chair socialists, and we discuss in order to decide and then act. Nor are we an organization with two classes of citizen-

ship--thinkers who decide and activists who implement the decisions.

Financial support is considered a basic condition of membership because the organization cannot function without funds. A revolutionary organization cannot basically rely for money on any source outside the membership since it risks being cut off at any critical juncture. Support coming from non-members is a bonus to be used but the financial base of the organization cannot be built on such bonuses. The degree of financial commitment to the organization is always a measure of political seriousness.

One thing we expect of every comrade is loyalty to the YSA. Loyalty is far more than an abstract idea; it is a standard of political conduct. The YSA's whole democratic centralist structure is founded on the rock of organizational loyalty. Without loyal members the YSA, as a voluntary organization, would have no basis upon which to maintain the necessary discipline in carrying out its revolutionary tasks. Disloyal people don't believe in the YSA, they won't pitch in selflessly to help build it, and they will resist and evade discipline.

As a voluntary and revolutionary organization the YSA has the right, as was stated earlier, to define the basis for its existence. The YSA exercises the prerogative by putting distinct limits on the right of advocacy within its ranks, as determined by majority decision through the official bodies, acting in compliance with the YSA's program, principles and convention decisions. Disloyal people not only cannot advocate anything they please within the YSA; they cannot be allowed to carry on their advocacy behind the back of the YSA. Those who don't want to comply with the YSA's democratically decided definition of the basis for its existence have the right to withdraw from the organization and form one of their own.

We are guided by the Leninist concept of relative internal homogeneity based on loyal adherence to the YSA's program and principles and voluntary acceptance of its discipline. These qualities enable the YSA to maintain internal stability and to function dynamically in its public activity, even

though conjunctural political differences arise. Ample room is provided for the expression of dissident views, even major ones of serious import. The right to organize tendencies and factions is safeguarded. All the leadership demands is that every member be loyal to the YSA's program and principles and be disciplined.

A properly conducted discussion of internal political differences contributes to the good and welfare of the YSA. It facilitates the hammering out of a correct political line and it helps to educate the membership. These benefits derive from the discussion provided that every comrade hears all points of view and the whole YSA is drawn into the thinking about the questions in dispute. In that way the membership as a whole can intervene in disputes, settle them in an orderly way by majority decision and get on with the YSA work. This method has been followed by American Trotskyism throughout its history and has resulted in an effective clarification of all controversial issues.

Concentration on private discussions of disputed issues, on the other hand, tends to give the comrades involved a one-sided view and warps their capacity for objective political judgment. Inexperienced comrades especially are made the target of such lopsided discussion methods. The aim is to line them up quickly in a closed caucus, and prejudice their thinking before they have heard an open debate. That the minority has done this with two new comrades is obvious even to the blind. When dissident views are introduced into the YSA in that manner groupings tend to form and harden, and the dissenting views tend to assert themselves in disruptive fashion, before the YSA as a whole has had a chance to face and act on the issues in dispute.

A relatively homogeneous organization should be able to resolve episodic differences without resort to factionalism. Even when comrades have differences of a serious nature over one or another particular aspect of YSA policy it does not follow that they should rush to form a faction. Objectivity requires that they do no more than form an ideological tendency which confines its activities to a principled collective effort to argue for a change in the given policy; and the tendency should present its views openly before the whole YSA in a responsible and disciplined manner.

A tight-knit faction, however, is qualitatively different from an ideological tendency. It tends to become in effect a party within a party, with its own program and its own discipline. Such a formation cannot be justified politically unless its organizers consider their differences so fundamental that they must conduct a showdown fight for control of the organization. Factionalism means war inside the YSA, and it entails the possibility and danger of a split.

For these reasons internal disputes should be conducted in an objective way, both to safeguard YSA unity and to educate the membership in principled politics. Comrades should not be hasty to organize internal groupings. When the YSA has

made its decisions on the issues in dispute, groupings formed during the polemical struggle should dissolve into the YSA as a whole.

Temporary groupings that arise out of conjunctural political differences should not be perpetuated regardless of principled considerations indicating the need for their dissolution. If they are, it indicates that narrow group interests have been put ahead of basic YSA interests. A danger arises that such permanent formations may degenerate into unprincipled cliques bound together by personal associations; and their existence may drive others into counter-formations. An atmosphere of aimless, endless internal conflict is generated that could tear the YSA to pieces.

It is precisely to safeguard itself from such harmful consequences of factional anarchy that the YSA exercises the right to regulate its internal affairs. While a decision is being reached, comrades holding dissenting views receive all normal minority rights, including the right of organized dissent. After a YSA decision has been made the democratic rights of the majority take precedence. All members are required to accept the majority decision and help to carry it out. Comrades holding minority opinions are not disqualified from serving the YSA in any capacity; nor are they asked to give up their dissident views. They must simply await a new opportunity to present their views when internal discussion is again formally authorized.

The Madison Experience

Madison, as many comrades are aware, has had sizable minority groupings for the past several years. Many of the present supporters here of the Internationalist Tendency were also supporters of the "For a Proletarian Orientation Tendency" within the SWP in 1971. As elsewhere, the politics of the IT represent on many issues 180 degree reversals of FAPO politics, but the personal grouping remains nevertheless. The political atmosphere within the Madison local has been marked by the stench of clique politics for some time now.

Let's take a look at how the comrades of the IT have functioned over the past work period. Out of the 16 comrades who will probably be qualified to vote, it is likely that 8, that is exactly half the local, will support the Internationalist Tendency. We could expect then, all other things being equal, that these eight comrades should have carried the burden of about half of the Madison local's work. But all other things are obviously not equal.

Have the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency maintained a significant level of activity? Look at their sales record. Remember, the YSA voted at our last national convention to make sales of the Militant and the YS a priority. The Madison local, in a significant improvement over past work periods, sold a total of 605 copies of the Militant and the YS. The eight comrades of the IT sold the grand total of 56 of these. 56 papers over a 13 week work period!

That averages out to 7 papers per ITer for the whole period. Exemplary, I would suppose. It should be noted that three of these comrades, including the one-time "national coordinator" of the tendency, did not sell a single copy. These comrades, representing 50% of the local, sold about 9% of the local's total sales.

How about finances? Perhaps the minority did better here? The local had a sustainer base of \$29.25 per week. The minority provided a fat \$6.50; their average sustainer was thus about 81¢ per week, and several of them are over a month in arrears even on this paltry sum. Again, two out of the eight had no sustainer at all. This compares to the average sustainer of the YSA majority supporters of about \$2.85. The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency maintained a total boycott of the fund drive until around Thanksgiving time. This is particularly interesting, because two of the IT supporters were refusing to support the fund drive within a month after they joined the YSA, before they had read the documents under discussion, and before the local had begun its organized discussion. Their support to the IT should have had nothing to do with support to the fund drive in any case, but it was obvious that they had been lined up to support the IT, even on a fund drive boycott, before they had participated in an organized discussion of the politics involved. Exemplary.

When the ITers finally broke the boycott (for which I assume we should celebrate Thanksgiving), the local received pledges from only five of the eight comrades, totalling \$36.00, an average of \$4.50 per IT supporter. The comrades of the majority pledged and paid an average of \$25.00 each. The half of the IT pledged a fat 15% of our total pledges.

The Madison local built five public forums this work period. IT supporters, who did very little in the way of postering or leafletting for these, failed to appear at two of them at all, and only one of them appeared at another forum. It was obvious to us in Madison that the IT grouping here was interested only in the pre-convention discussion, and was not serious about building the YSA.

As it turned out, however, the ITers weren't even serious about the discussion. We, as a local, voted to hold discussions on five topics: Bolivia, Argentina, Europe, world political resolution, and the YSA political resolution. The ITers, after sternly warning us that our path "leads out of the International", walked out of discussion before giving their summary on Bolivia. They walked out again when their reporter was voted down a request for a 20 minute extension to a 30 minute summary on the world political resolution. And to cap it all, the minority refused to give a report on its differences with the draft political resolution submitted by the YSA National Executive Committee. This was on December 6. They claimed that it would not be in the interests of a full and fair discussion if they had to present a report before their counter-resolution was printed. Unfortunately, they could not tell us whether or not their

counter-resolution had even been mailed to the National Office yet! The last meeting of the local, by a previous local vote, was on December 9, and comrades would be leaving Madison soon after that, so there was no way we could wait for the IT document, even assuming that it would reach us before the convention. The IT grouping in Madison is probably the largest in the country; their first "national coordinator" is a member of this local. Their totally unserious nature was fully evident when they refused to provide the Madison local with a presentation of their views.

The YSA is not required to tolerate such unserious and disloyal groupings. The YSA convention will overwhelmingly repudiate the political line of the Internationalist Tendency, and will authorize the newly elected leadership to take whatever measures as may be necessary to see that the line of the YSA, as democratically decided upon by the convention, is implemented. The supporters of the NEC draft resolution and of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction of the Fourth International, pledge to loyally carry out the tasks decided upon by our convention to the best of our ability. We urge the comrades presently supporting the Internationalist Tendency to reconsider their present course, and to once again share in the responsibilities of being a loyal member of the Young Socialist Alliance.

(What follows was not part of the contribution as read during the December 8, 1973 pre-convention discussion session in Madison.)

When a comrade of the IT told us on December 6 that there would be no report by the IT supporters during the discussion on the YSA political resolution, he gave us no indication that the IT comrades would refuse to discuss the issues completely...but that is exactly what they did. The Madison local had set aside 2 1/2 hours on December 8 to continue discussion on the YSA political resolution. It was to be the final night of discussion in Madison before the convention. The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency boycotted this discussion session. The record is clear: a walkout during the summaries on Bolivia; a walkout during the summaries on the world political resolution; a refusal to present their views in coherent fashion before the comrades of the Madison local on the YSA political resolution; and finally, a boycott of discussion completely. All this from the comrades who have sniped at the leadership from the corridors and hallways, just so long as it is off the record.

The ITers have made no attempt to deny that the boycott was organized. To the contrary, one of them (Comrade Judy H.) has asserted that it was a "principled boycott." This from a comrade of less than three months, who has yet to hear the real positions of the YSA discussed and debated out fully. She denied herself the opportunity this time by supporting the boycott. We can only conclude from this experience that the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency are afraid to present their real positions, preferring

instead to remain safely ensconced within clouds of "horror stories."

The Madison local voted on documents and elected delegates on December 9. Several events of interest transpired here as well. First, the IT took as its basis the following documents: "In Defense of Leninism; In Defence of the Fourth International," by Ernest Germain; "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe;" "The Draft Political Resolution," submitted by the IEC Majority Tendency; and the "Statement of the 19," the IEC Majority Tendency declaration. Comrades will notice that the Madison IT did not include as a basis for their tendency support to the general line of the SWP IT, which they cited as part of their basis in their earlier declaration of tendency (see YSA Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XVII, No. 1). What they did vote for was Germain's document, which includes a section supporting the present YSA positions on Black and Chicano nationalism. We know from previous off-the-record arguments with these comrades that they do not support the positions favored by Germain. The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency owe us an explanation of this contradiction.

Second, one of the votes for the Internationalist Tendency came from Comrade Greg S., a long-time supporter of the various minorities that have come and gone in the Madison

local. Comrade Greg is notable for the fact that he voted by proxy, thus maintaining his clean record of attending no meetings of the local since the Tasks & Perspectives vote in early September. He hadn't read any of the documents under discussion, but clique ties come before principled politics, as Greg has made clear. When I asked him how he could vote for the IT without having read any of the documents, he stated, "Well, I understand that they pretty much follow the line of previous minorities." To that I replied, "That's mostly true, except on international issues where there's been a 180 degree reversal." Greg didn't bat an eyelash. It was easy for him to understand: "Well, that looks like a purely political move to me." (!) Political only in the sense of opportunistic politics, if you ask me.

One final note: This contribution was not meant to be some sort of horror story. It was the sole presentation on "organizational matters" given by the supporters of the YSA majority in Madison over the course of six weeks of organized discussion, and it was presented on the very last night of discussion, after we had presented our political line on Argentina, Bolivia, Europe, the world political resolution, and the YSA political resolution in fairly great detail. We set out to discuss politics, and we did. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency.

December 14, 1973

OPEN LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE ISR

By Bill Yaffe, Bloomington Local

Dec. 12, 1973

To the editor:

Tbday we received the December issue of the ISR. We were astonished not to find the reply written by Pierre Rousset to the article of Johnson and Feldman (July-August 1973). Rousset's article, "The Vietnamese Revolution and the Role of the Party," was submitted to you quite some time ago. In view of the fact that the Johnson and Feldman article was subtitled a "contribution to the discussion," it seems unusual to us that there has been no discussion! Your failure to print Rousset's article is especially shocking in light of the fact that Johnson and Feldman's contribution is a critique of Rousset's book--Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien--this book is not even available to the readers of your magazine! We demand the publication of Rousset's writings on Vietnam. We hope that these writings will be appearing

soon in your magazine; maybe you'll show us how fair you are by printing the article next month AFTER the December YSA convention. You are using the ISR as a factional tool with which to intervene in the international debate. If you were an internationalist Marxist editor you would have printed Rousset's important contributions long ago. One final point--Rousset's article was written from a prison cell, he was thrown into prison, in fact, because of the considerable work he has done for the victory of the Indochinese socialist revolution. Once again this shows that the "internationalism" of the YSA and the ISR is only an empty word!

Revolutionary greetings,
Bill Yaffe--Bloomington local

cc: Les Evans

December 15, 1973

LETTER TO LES EVANS FROM ANDREW PULLEY

P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003

December 16, 1973

Les Evans
International Socialist Review
14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

I am enclosing a copy of an "Open Letter" addressed to you and submitted for publication in the internal discussion bulletin of the YSA. We invite your comments on the charges raised by Comrade Yaffe.

Comradely,

s/Andrew Pulley
National Secretary

Dear Comrade Evans:

LETTER TO ANDREW PULLEY FROM LES EVANS

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

December 17, 1973

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

Dear Comrade Pulley:

I have read Bill Yaffe's "Open Letter" and can only suggest that the comrade check his facts more carefully

before rushing into print. He professes to have been "astonished" that Comrade Rousset's letter did not appear in the December ISR. I must confess that as a materialist I should have been even more astonished if it had appeared, inasmuch as we received Rousset's manuscript after the December ISR had been printed. As a monthly magazine the ISR has its copy set and laid out a number of weeks in advance of the cover date. The deadline for manuscripts, if they are in English, is six weeks before the first of the month in which the magazine is issued. Thus the deadline for the December issue was October 20. The magazine was scheduled to go to paste-up on November 23. Rousset's manuscript -- in French -- arrived on the morning of November 30 (it is dated "November 1973")

by the author so we assume there were no inordinate delays in its arrival).

There is no need for Comrade Yaffe to "demand" anything of the ISR in regard to Pierre Rousset. It was my impression that I had been dealing with Comrade Rousset directly and I was unaware that he had retained an attorney in the United States. The arrangement with Comrade Rousset, made before the Johnson-Feldman article was written, was that he would reply to the Johnson-Feldman review and his reply, accompanied by a rebuttal by Johnson and Feldman, would appear in the magazine. Our proposal to him in a letter of July 10 was that the exchange be approximately 500 lines on each side. The manuscript when we received it proved to be closer to 2,300 lines, almost 5 times the space we had allotted. Such an article would take up about 24 pages of the magazine or more than 50 book pages. We raise no objection to publishing such a lengthy article but even Bill Yaffe, who insists that we should have published this piece "long ago," should recognize that the translation will take some time. In my estimate a full-

time translator would require a week to do the job; as the ISR has no full-time translator it will take somewhat longer. After a translation is made it must be checked by Comrade Rousset, an elementary courtesy but one that will further delay publication. The article arrived untranslated 10 days after the deadline for copy in English for our January issue. We, who proposed this exchange in the first place, are as anxious as anyone else to see it appear in print at the earliest possible date. There are people who claim that they can turn wine and wafers into the blood and body of Christ and other such things. We make no such claims. For anyone who "demands" such feats from us I must say that there are organizations that would promise to oblige, but the Trotskyist movement is not one of them.

Comradely,

s/Les Evans
Editor

DID THE YSA SCRAP THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT?

By Carole Lesnick, Madison Local

During the pre-convention discussion in the Madison local, a comrade told us that the YSA scrapped the antiwar movement. If he had attended the convention rather than just listening to the inaccurate gossip passed through his faulty grapevine, he would realize that he has been duped again. What actually happened at the last YSA convention? We said in the YSA resolution passed at that convention:

"Although the size of the antiwar demonstrations in the coming period depends on objective developments in the war as well as the energy and dedication of antiwar activists and for that reason cannot be predicted, the persistent work of NPAC and the SMC, especially their leading role in the spring antiwar upsurge, will facilitate the growth of the movement after the elections." (p. 24)

The same comrade claims that this left us unprepared for the upsurge on January 20, 1973. This is absurd and false. On January 20 there were 100,000 people in Washington, a demonstration which the YSA helped to build every step of the way. We responded in a similar fashion around the country. In Chicago, where the Madison comrades were lending a hand, thousands demonstrated and the OUT NOW forces clearly out-organized and perhaps outnumbered the sign now forces. In addition, comrades around the country were selling an issue of The Militant which was composed of articles directed at the January 20 demonstrations. We sold thousands of Militants which included articles expressing a socialist analysis of the situation in Indochina.

The fact that a lull has occurred in the antiwar movement is not the result of the YSA's participation in the anti-

war movement or the slogan of OUT NOW which we raised. One of the major reasons for this lull is the detente. The motivating factor in detente negotiations was the betrayal of the Vietnamese by the workers states. The bureaucracies in China and the Soviet Union pushed for the signing of the peace plan, claiming that it represented a victory for the North Vietnamese. And when it was signed they miseducated antiwar activists by claiming that the war was over. The lull is not due to any errors on the part of the YSA. It is a direct result of the detente, a phenomena which you greatly underestimate.

Our comrades in Milwaukee are working with the Vietnam Veterans Against the War--Winter Soldier Organization. Some of the VVAW--WSO members who have just recently returned from Vietnam have said that the arms build-up in Thailand is the largest that they have ever witnessed. They expect the US to resume bombing this December. As always, the YSA must be prepared for such possibilities.

The charge that the YSA abandoned antiwar work after our last convention has no basis in fact. Our leading role in many, if not most, of our demonstrations on January 20 is sufficient to disprove the accusation. Comrades merely have to go through back issues of The Militant to find countless other examples of our pressing to do whatever was possible, given objective circumstances, to build protest actions against the US role in Vietnam, and to provide as broad an audience as we could reach with the socialist analysis of developments in the Vietnamese Revolution.

December 14, 1973

By Heinz (Internationalist Tendency), San Jose Local

As a supporter of the Internationalist Tendency in the YSA, I offer this contribution in defense of the views of the International Executive Committee Majority Tendency (IMT). The focus of this discussion article on the building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe is the concrete application of the Marxist method to the objective and subjective conditions as confronted by our European comrades in the present period. We aspire to prove that the Leninist theory of organization, in the context of the uneven development of the class struggle and the concept of the workers vanguard, is being applied in the actuality of the unfolding European revolution. Furthermore, we shall demonstrate that the program outlined in the draft thesis draws its power from a correct characterization of the period, a concrete assessment of the revolutionary tasks and perspectives, and most importantly from the fact that it vivifies the Transitional Program in the concrete context of explosive class confrontations.

Recently, I returned from a visit to several European countries where I was able to evaluate first-hand the results of the application of the guidelines contained in the European perspectives document. Since most of the comrades have not had the chance to examine the favorable impact that the IMT's orientation has had in building the European sections of the Fourth International, I hope that all comrades will begin to study how the fundamental theoretical works of the revolutionary socialist movement have found their expression in the European perspectives document.

It is my opinion that revolutionary Marxists with a critical mind, not blinded by factional warfare, cannot but support it.

The Importance of a Marxist Analysis on a European Scale

The ways that revolutionary Marxists carry out their central strategic task--the building of a Leninist party capable of leading the proletariat to victory in the socialist revolution--are determined by two sets of conditions. First, there are the objective conditions. These are described by the contradictions of bourgeois society, a class system based on the relationship of social groups to the means of production and capital. The rulers of bourgeois society derive their power from the capitalist mode of production. Marx proved that the capitalist mode of production inevitably inhibits the productive capacity of the society, in order to maintain the bourgeois ruling class in power. Only by the continuous expansion of the productive capacity can capitalism survive, but this is limited by the fact that capitalism cannot allow the emancipation of humankind from wage labor, for such emancipation would make the bourgeoisie superfluous.

Hence, there is a contradiction between the vast potential of productive capacity which could free the workers from wage slavery, and the maintenance of the bourgeoisie which keeps the proletariat subdued and within the confines of capitalism. This contradiction has led to countless economic and social crises in the epoch that Trotsky characterized as the "death agony of capitalism."

The second set of conditions that determines the work of socialists concerns the level of consciousness among the working class, the degree of awareness that the producers under capitalism have been able to develop, which is expressed in their ability to recognize the contradictions of which they are the victims. This consciousness includes the workers recognition of their power and potential as the only force able to break out of the contradiction that capitalism imposes on them. In concrete terms, the subjective conditions describe the relationship of forces within the proletariat; i. e., the relative strength of the various pro-bourgeois, reformist, Stalinist and revolutionary currents within the working class.

Marxism offers the theoretical tools with which to analyze both the objective and subjective conditions in a given context in order to arrive at the correct assessment of the revolutionary tasks. Marxists have the historic obligation to base all activities firmly on a correct analysis and characterization of the period.

How shall we be able to assess the perspectives for our intervention in the class struggle if we do not understand the character of the period and the context for our intervention? The revolutionary vanguard has the responsibility to lead the working masses to the victorious socialist revolution. Mistakes in analysis, or no analysis at all, inevitably lead to a mis-assessment of the tasks, which in turn will produce setbacks or defeats for the proletariat.

Revolutionaries are first and foremost internationalists. The revolutionary internationalist movement, from Marx, Engels, Luxemburg and Lenin, to Trotsky and the Fourth International, bears witness to the international character of the socialist revolution and reflects the objective need of the proletariat to unite globally to confront capitalism. In the best traditions of the socialist movement, the International as a whole must assume priority over the national or local concerns in order to transcend the unevenness of the subjective conditions in different countries, as well as to anticipate developments in the crisis of capitalism in politically backward countries. In order to prepare comrades in less politically developed countries or areas with future developments which may well be similar to those occurring in the more politically advanced countries, the character

of the period for historic, economic and political regional entities like Europe (or North America for that matter) must be thoroughly analyzed and a framework of tasks and perspectives for the region, or continent, must be developed. Of course, this framework must be augmented by the specific projections of the national sections.

The Crisis of the Bourgeoisie in Europe

The objective conditions for revolutionary work in Europe are best designated as the economic, political and social crisis of capitalism in Europe.

The long period of economic expansion following the revolutionary crises immediately during and after World War II, continued with the impact of the Korean War boom, ended in recessions in all capitalist countries by 1966. These recessions marked a structural crisis of European capitalism as well, which tended to exacerbate the recessions even more. While the traditional industrial sectors such as heavy industry and textile manufacturing declined, the modern pace-setting industries created by the "technological revolution" stagnated due to over-production. The incentive for frantic investments by world capital in petrochemical, automobile, electrical and electronics industries was the high rate of profit. These also were now in decline. For the first time since World War II, not even stepped-up inflation could solve the economic stagnation. We call stag-flation the combined occurrence of stagnation in economic growth and increased inflation which is employed by the neo-capitalist crisis management to re-activate economic expansion. Over-production results in a declining rate of profit which chokes off further growth and inevitably accentuates inter-imperialist competition.

Inter-Imperialist Competition

In a longer term perspective, inter-imperialist competition has precipitated and accelerated the economic integration of European capital in the "European Economic Community" (the Common Market), the formation and growth of ever new European multi-national corporations in order to combine the efforts of European capitalism to break US economic domination and to meet the appearance of Japanese capitalism on the world markets. As a result of progressively losing the absolute superiority in world capital and commodity markets, the United States has not only erected protectionist trade barriers against European and Japanese imports, but by means of the new detente politics, it is feverishly trying to penetrate the markets of the workers states.

Comrades should understand that these overtures not only by the USA but by all capitalist powers, in particular the Common Market's moves toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (and Japan toward China, North Korea and Vietnam), do not provide important long-term market opportunities which would absorb the excess capacities of the im-

perialist economies. Occasional economic cooperation must not lead us to believe that peaceful coexistence will have permanent economic ramifications for world imperialism. Workers state deals with the capitalists are prompted by specific, temporary scarcities or tentative technological shortcomings. To believe otherwise would essentially mean to accept the long-term superiority of the capitalist mode of production over the planned economies of the workers states.

This analysis shows that the detente politics of the present US administration reflect a desperate effort on the part of the ruling class to cover up for the developing economic crisis in the USA. The economic benefits that are objectively to be expected from the detente hardly justify the reversal of 25 years of cold war politics.

The Rise of the European Proletariat

The deepening of the economic crisis since the pre-revolutionary upsurge in France in May and June of 1968 resulted in a sharpening of the social contradictions. The working class has made it known that it will not pay the cost of stag-flation. Economic stagnation results in rising unemployment as well as pressure on the absolute level of wages, while inflation reduces the buying power of the workers wages.

The explosion of the working class uprising in May 1968 in France marked an upturn in class struggles all over Europe, most spectacularly in France, Italy, Britain and Spain. It also produced molecular confrontations on an increasing scale in virtually every other European country. Comrades have read about the most recent wildcat strikes in the West German automobile and steel industry, the Belgian and Austrian steelworkers strikes, and the developments in the Swiss watch industry months before the mobilization at Lip took place.

All mass working class upsurges, including the local strikes, have taken qualitative leaps forward from the kind of strikes that in the past were confined to economic demands. The clearly political demands that arose from the confrontations, beginning with May 1968, correspond to higher forms of workers self-organization which emerged during the course of these mobilizations. Each successive wave of upsurges or strikes showed graphically that the lessons of previous confrontations in other parts of the continent had been absorbed by the vanguard of the working class. It started with factory and regional strike committees in France, continued with factory occupations in Italy in 1969, and developed into prolonged occupations of shipyards by the British dockworkers in Upper Clyde. The culmination of this process to date was the prolonged occupation of the Lip factory in Besancon where the mobilization took the form of workers control for over four months. At Lip, the workers organized workers self-defense guards to protect their factory against the former capitalist owner and-bour-

geois repression; they called for international solidarity, which was initiated at a workers assembly of the rank and file.

What the French workers in 1968 were as yet unable to practice due to the lack of leadership and experience, was established by the French high school and technical college students and apprentices in the course of the mobilizations against the Debre Law. They applied the experiences of the European proletariat and coordinated their local and regional strike and action committees on a national scale.

The developments show that international experiences are generalized and adopted rapidly, due to the high level of political class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard in Europe. From this context, the European perspectives document projects that:

"... any spectacular new upbound of this crisis (i. e., further sharpening of the social contradictions) could drag in all the rest of capitalist Europe."

The developments examined above also reveal that the combativity of the European working class is high enough to be constantly evolving more advanced forms of struggle. It was only due to the lack of a revolutionary leadership that the French proletariat did not establish organs of dual power in the pre-revolutionary upsurge of May-June 1968.

The comrades of the IMT understand this correctly and express it in the European perspectives document:

"... The socialist revolution is once again on the agenda in Europe, not just in a broad historical perspective (in this sense it has been on the agenda since 1914), but even from a conjunctural point of view." (my emphasis)

The Crisis of Productive Relations Creates the Crisis of Bourgeois Relations as a Whole

In the mid 1960s, the developing crisis of society was expressed in the radicalization of students and intellectuals. Solidarity campaigns with the colonial revolution turned the focus to the crisis in education at home. The college and high school revolt became generalized as the crisis widened to the family, the mass media and cultural institutions. Through young workers and apprentices, this radicalization penetrated into the working class and in turn exacerbated the crisis of capitalist relations of production.

The crisis in bourgeois relations flowing from the economic contradictions of European capitalism is also reflected in the crisis of bourgeois leadership.

In most European countries the bourgeoisie has tried to present its "human face" in order to lure the social democratic parties' leadership into running the state on the basis of integrationist reformism. They try to meet the impa-

tiency of the proletariat with concessions--with the aim of labor peace through class collaboration. As the declining rate of profit limits the room for maneuver on the part of the capitalist, the advanced workers begin to recognize the schemes of the trade union and social democratic bureaucrats, such as profit-sharing and workers co-management. The decade of center-left governments in Italy ended in the "creeping May" of 1969, i. e., continuous mass strikes and struggles. The West German Socialist Party government and the former Wilson administration in Britain are further examples of the developing gap between the reformist labor leadership and its electoral base of support.

The failure of these reformist governments leads bourgeois leadership teams to try to ensure labor peace by an intensification of repression.

As the bourgeoisie, under the reign of monopoly capitalism, tends toward setting up a "strong state," the so-called National Emergency Law in Germany, the Industrial Relations Act in Britain and the Anti-Wrecker Law in France are designed to limit or eliminate basic rights of the working class, such as the right to strike and the ability to organize and conduct collective bargaining.

Despite the class collaborationist nature of the leaderships of the social democratic and communist parties, these parties remain dependent on their working class base. As we understand from the current degree of radicalization and combativity, the European working class expresses an elementary class reflex through its vote. Therefore, even the most degenerated social democratic party in Europe should not be compared to a bourgeois party in the style of the Democratic Party in the USA. The crisis of the traditional working class organizations thus arises from the contradiction between their bureaucratic leaders who aspire to share government responsibility for the bourgeois state, and the radicalized electoral base.

The absence of mass revolutionary parties on the one hand, and the reformism of the traditional working class parties on the other, have resulted in a political vacuum to the left of the social democratic and communist parties in Europe.

The Development of the Vanguard

On the basis of solidarity with the colonial revolution and under the impact of the worldwide crisis of Stalinism and reformism (from the political vacuum to the left of the traditional mass working class parties) arose a new vanguard of mass proportions. Initially it was composed almost exclusively of student activists, but a growing current of radicalized workers--predominantly young trade union activists and apprentices--joined the students during or in the wake of the pre-revolutionary crisis in France in 1968, and is re-orienting the youth vanguard toward working class struggles. This re-orientation of the youth vanguard

was the main result of May 1968. The students today are no longer mobilized mainly by the crisis in the educational institutions, but have come to an understanding that their revolt is but one of the many manifestations of the class struggle as a whole. The events of May 1968 demonstrated to the European students not their power to detonate mass workers struggles but impelled them to join ranks with the radicalized working class.

Only the workers could pose--AND DID POSE--the question of power during the general strike.

If we can accept this as the central lesson as regards the student movement, we are an important step closer toward understanding the nature of the new vanguard in Europe and its emergence.

The increasing independence of the trade union movement from the social democratic and communist parties, and in particular the rise of trade union left wings throughout Europe that goes hand in hand with the rise of working class struggles with clearly anti-capitalist demands, have affected the orientation of the new vanguard from the beginning. From this fundamental orientation it developed the ability and readiness to intervene in class confrontations in its own right, to take political initiatives on a wide range of social issues and, to take the leadership of mass workers struggles, independently of and often in opposition to the SP and CP leadership, wherever the relationship of forces allows that.

The initiatives and actions of the new vanguard have drawn the support of tens and even hundreds of thousands of youth and workers. The most recent Vietnam solidarity demonstration in Milan (Italy) on May 12, 1973, i. e., more than four months after the signing of the cease-fire agreement brought out 30,000 supporters of the Vietnamese revolution from all over Europe. None of the traditional workers parties helped to build nor did they support the demonstration. The comrades here who have been involved in antiwar work will confirm that such a mobilization requires quite a high level of political class consciousness. The strikes and demonstrations against the Debre Law, the protest actions against the ban of the Ligue Communiste, and the solidarity campaign with the Lip workers in Besancon were even more lucid manifestations of the political strength of the new vanguard. The mass support that these actions won forced the SP and CP to lend their back-handed support in order not to lose even more credibility with their electoral base.

These recent examples show that the new mass vanguard is changing the relationship of forces in the mass movement through its ability to impel masses into actions that overflow the channels of bureaucratic control. These actions also show that it is quite appropriate to refer to the total of these currents to the left of the SPs and CPs as a vanguard in the political sense; these militants embody the

highest relative level of class consciousness since the post World War I period of 1918-1923. In this sense, these advanced students and workers become contact points from where their level of consciousness spreads out to broad layers of the population.

The Leninist Theory of Organization at Work in Europe

In his discussion with American revolutionaries, Trotsky described the relationship between the program of the revolutionary party and the vanguard of the working class:

"... the task is to develop the mentality of the worker, that is what the program should formulate and present before the advanced workers." (my emphasis)

Lenin asserted that the masses develop political class consciousness only during the revolutionary situation itself. Class consciousness does not develop spontaneously, however, and not all workers are able to develop it at the same time; it develops unevenly.

In periods of intense class struggle the masses of workers develop elementary class consciousness from day-to-day practical experiences--empirically.

Only a relatively small layer of workers will be impelled to generalize these experiences. These advanced workers, in fact, develop political class consciousness and engage in long-term systematic organizing among the mass of workers, whose confidence they have won in actual class confrontations. These advanced workers constitute the vanguard of the working class; they possess the potential of functioning as the transmission belt between the revolutionary party and the masses of workers. To take full advantage of this potential the party must develop its revolutionary program in the actuality of the class struggle, organize the vanguard so that its militants can best educate and win the workers to the revolutionary party's program.

The importance of winning the workers vanguard to the party derives not only from the size of the vanguard which is much larger than the party itself, but from the fact that this vanguard will be instrumental in periods of intense working class upsurges in transmitting the revolutionary task to the proletariat as a whole.

The classic example that describes the key role of the vanguard is the part played by the workers deputies in the Soviets of 1917. Here, the vanguard workers, soldiers and peasants, the authoritative representatives of the masses, were won to the revolutionary perspectives of the Bolsheviks, and it was these Soviet deputies who led the masses to victory in October.

The objective of Lenin's strategic plan is to create a vanguard party through an organic union of individual revolutionary nuclei (the core of the revolutionary party) with

the workers vanguard. Such a fusion is impossible without comprehensive political activity that takes the advanced workers beyond the confines of the factory or the trade unions.

The central revolutionary task for the period that opened in 1967/68 in Europe must be to win hegemony within the new mass vanguard, as the carrier of the highest relative class consciousness among the working masses. This orientation flows directly from the Leninist theory of organization; in the European context it is the concrete application of the Leninist concept of the vanguard party, that is to be formed as a fusion of the revolutionary nuclei with the workers vanguard in the actuality of unfolding class struggles. In Europe this vanguard is a new phenomenon of mass proportions: its numbers range from several thousand in most European countries to tens of thousands in Italy, France, Great Britain and Spain; hence, it is called the new mass vanguard.

The emergence of this new mass vanguard in all European countries presents the European comrades with the opportunity to transform their sections from revolutionary propaganda groups (or revolutionary nuclei) to revolutionary vanguard parties that begin to sink roots into the proletariat. The activities of the new vanguard permit the European comrades to build revolutionary parties in the concrete context of rising class struggles. Sections of the Fourth International that, at the outset of the present period qualified as revolutionary nuclei engaged in propaganda work, can now intervene in the class struggle initiatives which sections of the new mass vanguard are undertaking, with the correct use of the Transitional Program.

In the course of these interventions our sections will be able to demonstrate the superiority of the revolutionary program as well as educate the workers vanguard by its own experience with our program.

As our sections make strides in recruitment from the ranks of the vanguard, whole layers of working class militants will be confronted with our program, and the vanguard will apply that part of it in the day-to-day struggles that is relevant in the concrete situation allowing the revolutionary party to exert a broader impact on the masses of workers.

The understanding of the task to build Leninist parties in capitalist Europe is summarized in the European perspectives document:

"The masses do not take their orientation in the first instance from programs, platforms or ideas. Their orientation is determined by their immediate needs and the tools for waging effective struggles that are available to meet these needs. Only when the revolutionary organizations have demonstrated not only the lucidity and correctness of their program but also their effectiveness in action... will the defeats brought on by the opportunism of the traditional leaderships, and the anti-bureaucratic revolts inspired by these setbacks result in a mas-

sive influx into our organizations."

The overriding importance of this quote could best be understood if we put aside the United States reality for a moment and fully concentrate on the political landscape of a typical European country:

For many decades the trade unions have been politically dominated by the traditional workers parties. Despite the class collaborationist maneuvers of the bureaucratic leaders and the political deterioration, these parties as well as the trade unions are the main arena that creates elementary class consciousness among the masses of European workers. Although the advanced workers developed political class consciousness out of the experience of ongoing class struggles and their opposition to the bureaucrats, they still have been educated in the spirit of the traditional mass workers parties. They do no longer agree with the leadership of these parties, however, they are extremely reluctant to isolate themselves from their base in the shops and factories, which also happens to be the electoral base of the social democrats and Stalinist parties.

Their political orientation permits the militants to be sympathetic to our program as it is presented in our press, books, leaflets, etc., but in order to join the ranks of any one of the currents left of and outside the mass workers parties, they must see in practice how the program does in reality serve their immediate needs, as a tool for intervention in the class struggle. Therefore, our sections must take the initiative and intervene on the basis of our program at the side of the workers vanguard.

Through its intervention with the vanguard, through successful actions, the revolutionary party projects itself as a credible alternative to the sell-out leadership of the reformist workers parties. This is the full meaning of the term used in the European perspectives document: initiative in action.

Tasks and Perspectives of Revolutionary Work in Europe

The economic, social and political analysis of European capitalism for the present period defines the revolutionary perspective of the European sections of the Fourth International. The upsurge of mass struggles carried by the proletarian masses since 1967/68 exhibit a great number of common features: mass and general strikes in France 1968, Italy 1969, and Spain at present, completely paralyzed the economy and most of the activities of the bourgeois state.

Despite the fact that the masses of workers did not set out to overthrow the capitalist system, these mass struggles objectively posed the question of state power. It was for the lack of determination, hesitation and absence of clear goals on the part of the traditional leadership of the proletariat that these confrontations did not result in the establishment of organs of dual power and, finally, the actual

overthrow of the bourgeois state.

This course of events is neither the result of the inherent strength of the capitalist system nor of insufficient combativity on the part of the masses. It is essentially the consequence of an insufficient level of political class consciousness, caused by the absence of a revolutionary leadership that had developed firm roots inside the working class.

The revolutionary perspectives in capitalist Europe based on our analysis are then reduced to the problems of the revolutionary leadership of the proletarian masses.

The main task of revolutionary Marxists in capitalist Europe remains to overcome the deficiencies of the subjective factor, i. e., to create a revolutionary party that can provide leadership to the masses of workers in the major working class upsurges that the crisis in capitalist economy and bourgeois society will produce during the next few years.

In a relatively short time the revolutionary leadership should have won sufficient weight and credibility among the working masses to be able to prepare for and ensure the appearance of organs of dual power. In a pre-revolutionary situation like the one in France in 1968 when 10 million workers were out on strike and 2 million students and farmers supported them, the task of the revolutionary party would be to transform factory committees and regional strike councils into institutions of workers control that do no longer follow the control of the capitalist state.

The organs of dual power essentially consolidate the gains made by the working class. The general strike for example removes the entire economy from the control of the state; a factory occupation removes the plant from the control of its owner. In this sense, every strike, even one for just economic demands, contains the seed of dual power.

In a situation of dual power the workers can satisfy their need for solidifying their ranks in democratically centralized organizations and for political, economic and physical protection of the masses against bourgeois repression.

Dual power characterizes a revolutionary situation, which is only one step beyond the pre-revolutionary crisis situation that occurred in the example of France in May-June 1968. The preparation for organs of dual power in a pre-revolutionary situation is a concrete application of the Transitional Program; and our analysis has shown that pre-revolutionary crises are likely to occur in capitalist Europe in the next years.

In order to prepare for pre-revolutionary working class upsurges the European sections must be able to credibly project an alternative leadership to the proletariat, i. e., one from within the working class. We pointed out earlier, that the transformation of revolutionary nuclei confined to propaganda work, into revolutionary parties able to intervene in

the class struggle, can best be accomplished by winning hegemony in the new mass vanguard.

The revolutionary perspective necessitates the working class and its vanguard layer developing from the present level of elementary class consciousness a political one.

The Role of the Program

Probably the single most important factor that distinguishes the revolutionary vanguard, the Trotskyists, from reformists and class collaborationists of all stripes is the question of the program. Our program of transitional demands is designed for one central purpose: to lead the proletariat in a systematic manner toward the socialist revolution. No Stalinist or reformist party has the need for such a program.

The revolutionary, transitional program is the result of a compilation of the important lessons learned in the course of over a century of workers struggles, combined with a scientific evaluation of the tasks necessary for the overthrow of capitalism. Such concepts as the general strike, workers defense guards and workers councils or soviets, all were taken from previous struggles. Our understanding of the need for a revolutionary party and International is drawn from a Marxist analysis of the type of revolution that is required. Our program thus reflects the actual, objective needs of the class struggle. It is not a barometer of the current consciousness of the masses or the vanguard. Revolutionary Marxists formulate the tasks first, and then attempt to explain these tasks in understandable language. If we took the reverse procedure, first figuring out what the masses seem to be asking for now, and to advance these immediate needs as our program, it is obvious that the struggle would never progress. The vanguard would not be leading the struggle, but would merely be following it, and its program would become the common denominator of the lowest level of consciousness. During the revolutionary upsurge, the masses would be leaderless and disoriented; the advance toward a socialist revolution could never come about.

The Transitional Program provides revolutionary Marxists with the tool to help the masses to make this qualitative leap forward. The program of transitional demands forms the bridge between immediate demands, that correspond to the elementary class consciousness of the proletariat, and the socialist program for revolution, corresponding to revolutionary class consciousness.

The fact that in Europe the socialist revolution is on the agenda from a conjunctural point of view, obliges revolutionary Marxists to carry out the day-to-day work inseparably linked to the actual task of the socialist revolution.

The Central Political Tasks

The most central political tasks developed in the European perspectives document formulate an application of the

Transitional Program in the concrete reality of unfolding class struggles.

First, the document calls for systematic intervention in all strikes and campaigns around economic demands;

"... striving to link up these actions to the general approach outlined in the transitional program, that is to propagandize... essentially around the demand for workers control that objectively leads the workers to challenge the authority of the bosses and of the bourgeois state and to create organs of dual power."

The centrality of the demands around workers control derive from a very immediate factor. In the wake of intensified class struggles that assumed advanced forms contesting authority in the factories, a whole ideology of workers self-management, workers participation, co-management and profit-sharing became prevalent. Reformist governments in collaboration with the trade union bureaucracy even established in some countries one or another of these schemes to derail the tendency of workers struggles toward dual power. Hence, propaganda around workers control does not happen in the abstract. As a truly transitional demand, workers control assumes central importance for all European sections; however, it is up to each section as to how exactly this propaganda can be put forward most effectively in the actual, national context.

The Swiss Watch Industry and Lip

A rather popular example for the successful implementation of that campaign are the mobilizations around Lip. The Revolutionary Marxist League (RML), the Swiss section of the Fourth International, in cooperation with the ex-Ligue Communiste in France, has organized the major campaign around the factory occupation of Lip, Besancon, which is only few miles from the Swiss border, and part of an area that stretches into Switzerland, where two thirds of all watches sold on the world market are produced. Several months prior to the strike at Lip the RML had analyzed the structural crisis in the Swiss watch industry, and engaged in a propaganda campaign for workers control; around interventions in local strikes, with leaflets, and in their press. Who would have thought that the Swiss workers, among the least radicalized, in the country with the highest standard of living in Europe, would be interested in workers control?

The occupation of Lip proves the correctness of the RML's analysis and the precise timing of their intervention in the Swiss watch industry.

1300 Lip workers occupied their plant for longer than four months, they expropriated the former Swiss owners and organized production and sales of their products without the presence of owners or bosses. They had a commission for industrial relations to draw the support of the European

working class and publicize their struggle across all borders, and organized workers defense guards that saw to it, day and night, that the bosses or special police did not take back their factory. When the bosses sent in the special riot police to break the occupation, an international march on Lip took place on September 30, 1973, organized by the comrades of the former Ligue Communiste and the Swiss RML. The major trade unions, the SP and CP refused to participate in this mobilization, but were forced by the overwhelming response of their electoral base to issue a token call, when they saw the build-up becoming a success.

On September 29, the CGT and CFDT, the two biggest trade union confederations in France, withdrew from an afternoon and evening fair, because our comrades refused to remove all Trotskyist literature and banners. The next morning 100,000 poured through Besancon, a town of 40,000 and marched to the Lip factory in heavy rain.

L'Humanite, the official organ of the French Communist Party, estimated the combined contingents of CGT and CFDT to about two thirds of the crowd. The rest, approximately 35,000, "were those who pretended to be here in solidarity with the Lip workers," complained L'Humanite, and meant the new mass vanguard, of which 20,000 marched behind the banners of Rouge, the weekly paper of the banned Ligue Communiste:

"Down with the government that rules with the nightstick!"

"Solidarity with the Chilean workers!"

"Lip for all--all for Lip!"

From Rouge we read that:

"... the numbers of the far left contingent, the impact of its slogans and, above all, its social composition as largely non-student were surprising. This reflects a much more profound phenomenon! The maturation of a workers vanguard that has broken with Stalinism after May 1968." (my emphasis)

During my visit in Paris, October 6 to 8, Rouge recruited two of the most outstanding leaders of the Lip occupation, who were members of the CFDT left wing.

This happened in Besancon in Southeastern France this summer--could it happen in Paris or La Chaux-de-Fonds (the center of the Swiss watch industry, 40 miles from Besancon) this winter--or next summer?

Occupations took place in the docks of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, 1970, in Scotland, and in the Fiat assembly plants in Turin, Italy, in 1969.

Could further occupations, i. e., exercises of workers control, happen in the docks of London, Glasgow, Bremen,

Rotterdam or Marseille; and in the auto assembly plants of Cologne or Flins in 1974 or 1975?

Revolutionary Marxists must be able to answer to the working masses, what is to be done when such struggles grow together to a major battle!

The workers control campaign must be carried into the trade union movement and shall be taken up during interventions with the mass vanguard, whose political class consciousness permits it to grasp this concept and transmit it to the masses of workers at the appropriate stage of the struggle.

Solidarity With the Vietnamese Revolution

As second major political task the European perspectives document states that:

"... Systematic internationalist propaganda campaigns shall be organized around the axis of solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles, solidarity with workers struggles in other European countries, solidarity with immigrant workers, and solidarity with the anti-bureaucratic struggles of workers, students and intellectuals in the workers states."

It has been said, that the European sections had abandoned, among other things, their Vietnam solidarity work, which presumably meant a bend to the mood of the vanguard.

Only a superficial examination of their press reveals that all European sections of the Fourth International had ongoing campaigns in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution. The supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction cannot blame the orientation advanced in the European perspectives document for the lack of an objective basis for mass demonstrations in 1969 to 1971, which was a period of most intensive working class struggles, that not only assumed the major forces of European sections but, most importantly, tied up the interest and energy of the working class in Italy, Britain and France. Wherever and whenever the class confrontations were less pronounced, our sections actively engaged in mass action, specifically in defense of the Vietnamese revolution.

That the axis of the European solidarity campaign was correct is proved by the international demonstration on May 12, 1973 in Milan, Italy. Had our sections not engaged in support to the Vietnamese revolution on the highest possible political level, it would have been impossible to draw 30,000 in Milan, more than four months after the peace accords were signed. The European working class understands today that "Out Now" does not necessarily mean "Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution," whereas we, in the United States, were told that the signing of the peace accords does no longer allow for mass mobilizations,

The Fight Against Fascism and Armed Self-Defense

"... the sharpening of the proletariat's struggle means the sharpening of the methods of counter-attack on the part of capital."

This quote from the Transitional Program certainly characterizes the present period in Europe as defined in our analysis. The sole reason why the European perspectives document takes up the question of the fight against repression is to protect the workers, their vanguard and our comrades in the revolutionary party from becoming defenseless victims of government repression. As revolutionary Marxists cannot wait until the masses of workers "spontaneously" develop revolutionary class consciousness--they have to be taught by the revolutionary vanguard party in action so that they can acquire our program through their own experience--so do we have to lay down the foundations for successful defense against the bourgeois counter-attack.

Can anyone deny the sharpening of the class struggle in Europe in the current period?

Aren't fascist meetings in Paris, London, Rome and Frankfurt the first signs of a capitalist counter-attack?

In 1971 the far-left publisher Feltrinelli was murdered and his editorial offices and print shop fire-bombed by neo-fascist gangs in Milan; in 1971 the Maoist Overmay was shot by a reactionary factory guard while he was trying to pass out leaflets.

Trotsky's recommendations to the members of the Fourth International as regards the fight against fascism are not exhausted with the call for a formation of a united front with all workers parties. Certainly, it would have been better if the SP, CP and the French trade unions would have followed the call of the Ligue Communiste to mobilize against the meeting of the New Order on June 21, 1973. Since they did not, should the French comrades have stayed home?

The Transitional Program states unequivocally that it is the task of revolutionary Marxists:

"... to train detachments of heroic fighters capable of setting an example to all toilers; to inflict a series of tactical defeats upon the armed thugs of counter-revolution; to raise the self-confidence of the exploited and oppressed; to compromise fascism in the eyes of the petty-bourgeoisie and pave the road for the conquest of power by the proletariat." (my emphasis)

The supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction who condemn the June 21 demonstration of the Ligue Communiste

seem to think that this demonstration was a provocation in the eyes of the bourgeoisie; presumably the ex-Ligue Communiste provoked the fascists and the police. --What a scandal!

Every worker with the least bit of class consciousness, dignity for that matter, would tell these comrades here that it is the fascists openly organizing a meeting which is the grossest provocation to any working class organization. The fight against fascism is a fight for the basic working class rights and the guarantee for the existence of workers organizations. Every European worker comprehends this fundamental truism from a rather recent past.

The Ligue Communiste had 1500 members in Paris, but was able to assemble 5000 anti-fascist militants to protest an illegal meeting of 500 fascists, armed to the teeth, and protected by 1200 police.

The ex-Ligue Communiste protected the democratic rights of the French working class in deeds, since the cops were not about to enforce the law. That the traditional working class organizations did not co-sponsor the rally can certainly not be construed as isolation of the Ligue; on the contrary, it was another opportunity to demonstrate to the working class, where its reformist leadership stands when action is needed. The broadest solidarity campaign of the traditional workers parties and all trade unions with the ex-Ligue Communiste stands proof to the correctness of the anti-fascist demonstration.

Mitterand, the presidential candidate of the combined workers parties in the 1973 elections, personally prevented Alain Krivine's arrest for 24 hours by opening the headquarters of the Socialist Party for a press conference, and by escorting Comrade Krivine to and from the event. It takes some pretty sophisticated hair-splitting to belittle the solidarity campaign with the ex-Ligue after the ban on June 28, 1973, for which certainly not the leaders of the SP and CP, but the anti-fascist sentiment of the vast majority of French workers were responsible.

This action for the first time has united all workers parties and major trade unions as well as all far-left groups in defense of a section of the Fourth International.

Members of the SP and CP youth organizations went to sell Rouge with the comrades of the ex-Ligue after the ban to prevent an eventual crack-down on the paper.

The Ligue is banned--but Rouge doubled its circulation within one week!

The courageous anti-fascist demonstrated has earned the French comrades enormous credibility among the French working class; the turn-out for the Lip solidarity demonstration is but one manifestation.

Rather than to defend the IMT against the accusation of ultra-leftism and an alleged transplantation of a strategy of guerrilla warfare to Europe, I decided to intersect quotes from the Transitional Program (TP) with passages from paragraph 19, "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" (EPD), that deals with armed self-defense. Without proper reference, is it not difficult to discern breaks where the source of the quotation changes?

TP: "Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the revolutionary army. This is our point of departure. In connection with every strike and street demonstration, it is imperative to propagate the necessity of creating workers groups for self-defense."

"The danger of extra-legal repression at the hands of hired gangsters, private security forces of employers acting as supplementary police, and armed semi-fascists must not be under-estimated."

EPD: "The most effective response to this danger is to revive the reflexes of self-defense and to lay the basis for workers militias arising out of worker and student strike pickets."

TP: "It is imperative wherever possible, beginning with the youth groups, to organize groups for self-defense, to drill and acquaint them with the use of arms."

EPD: "The more effective these responses and preparations are, the more the bourgeoisie will hesitate to go further down the road of repression or of using semi-fascist bands."

TP: "The struggle against fascism does not start in the liberal editorial office but in the factory--and ends in the streets.

"It is necessary to give organized expression to the valid hatred of the workers toward scabs and bands of gangsters and fascists."

EPD: "The spirit in which our sections will have to educate the entire vanguard... is... to show the bourgeoisie in practice that the price it will have to pay for any attempt to establish an open dictatorship will be a civil war in which both camps will use arms. History has shown that from any point of view such an eventuality is preferable to an institutionalized civil war in the form of a blood-thirsty dictatorship where the bourgeois camp murders and tortures at will, while the proletariat and the worker militants, disarmed and disoriented, stand by helplessly and watch the massacre of their own."

TP: "The politicians of the Second and Third Internationals, as well as the bureaucrats of the trade unions, consciously close their eyes to the bourgeoisie's private army...."

"The reformists systematically implant in the minds of the workers the notion that the sacredness of democracy is best guaranteed when the bourgeoisie is armed to the teeth and the workers are unarmed," (my emphasis)

The Transitional Program thus affirms the importance of armed self-defense in the current European context of sharpening working class struggles, that mean the sharpening of the counter-attack by bourgeois repression.

The Building of the Revolutionary International

The objective needs of the class struggle in capitalist Europe must find their organized expression in the building of a strong International. The growing inter-penetration of the capitalist economies is reflected in the growing weight of multi-national corporations owning plants in many European countries, in the presence of millions of immigrant workers from Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, Spain and Portugal in the economically stronger countries, and in the trends to more advanced economic and monetary integration in capitalist Europe under the pressure of United States and Japanese competition.

This consolidation of capital on a continental scale brought international collective bargaining and labor contracts, international wage actions and Europe-wide strikes on the agenda.

Revolutionary Marxists must not only support these efforts of national trade union federations to coordinate the economic struggles on a European scale, but must press for the generalization of the political content in the mass working class upsurges since 1967/68 in a propaganda campaign for the Socialist United States of Europe.

The Fourth International provides the European sections with the organizational tools for solidarity campaigns with the political struggles of the Spanish, Portuguese, Greek and Irish proletariat, and on a world scale, with the anti-imperialist fighters in the workers states and the colonial revolution. All these campaigns will strengthen the Trotskyist current within the new mass vanguard, and every success in transforming one of our sections from a propaganda group into a revolutionary organization capable of taking the political initiative and winning a base in the working class, will further the growth of all other sections--if its success can be generalized by the revolutionary International.

The building of the Fourth International as the world party of the socialist revolution is inseparably linked to the building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe today, and in all countries of the world.

Work Among Students and in the Women's Liberation Movement

The five European sections of the Fourth International

that I visited in September and October 1973 have comrades on the political bureaus assigned to head socialist women's and student commissions, which are organized nationally.

It is no secret that the women's liberation movement, just as in the United States, hardly exists other than in small local groupings. Whenever there were mobilizations, our sections intervened with a proletarian approach, i. e., in the French abortion campaign the ex-Ligue pressed for free abortion on demand (paid from social security funds) in order to extend the initially predominantly petty-bourgeois mobilization around "repeal anti-abortion laws" to working class women.

This orientation toward the working class is illustrated again in the actions against the Debre Law and the Fontanet decrees, that culminated in a demonstration of 200,000 in Paris and close to half a million nationally. According to Le Monde, the comrades of the ex-Ligue Communiste had hegemony in all the strike and action committees, and it was their influence which extended the high school struggle against the repeal of student draft deferments to the technical colleges and universities, as well as to young workers and apprentices, by transforming the demand for student deferments to the right of draft deferments for all youth and tying it to agitation against the military as an agent of bourgeois rule and repression.

No organization could "stumble" into such a major campaign without thorough preparation and without a sound base among high school and technical college students.

The Growing Importance of the European Sections

Among the most outstanding concrete successes of the European sections of the Fourth International are undoubtedly their tremendous numerical growth, and their growing political weight. Where the Fourth International had a total of a few hundred comrades all over Europe in 1969, we have thousands of members today with all sections still growing. The circulation of the weekly newspapers is in the tens of thousands in each country; the Revolutionary Marxist Ligue of Switzerland, which has its regular weekly in French, publishes a bi-weekly in German and monthly newspapers in Italian and Spanish for a few hundred thousand immigrant workers of these nationalities. The theoretical discussion takes place in monthly or quarterly magazines that each section publishes in its specific language; even the Austrian Revolutionary Marxist Group that was formed one year ago only, has a quarterly Communist Journal.

All sections have successfully intervened in working class struggles, have gained credibility among the advanced layers of the working class, and are beginning to become a factor in the organized workers movement in Europe.

Everywhere in Europe, the Trotskyists of the Fourth International have begun to defeat, organizationally and poli-

tically, their opponents to the left of the traditional reformist and Stalinist workers parties. A most important political consequence of the correct line applied by the European sections and outlined in the European perspectives document is the marked decline of all Maoist currents in Europe, while the organizations of the Fourth International are on the rise.

Political and organizational success, in the final analysis, is proof for a correct political line.

In conclusion, we repeat that revolutionary Marxists have the historic obligation to base their work on a correct Marxist analysis of the current period; only by doing so can they arrive at a correct understanding of their immediate and long-term tasks and perspectives. We made clear how the assessment of the revolutionary perspectives flows from the character of the period, and allows the application of the Transitional Program in the actuality of rising class struggles in Europe.

The strategic orientation outlined in the European perspectives document, how to build revolutionary parties in

capitalist Europe, projects a concrete application of the Leninist concept to unite the revolutionary nuclei with the vanguard of the working class.

The success of the European sections of the Fourth International since the last world congress in specifically orienting toward the working class and applying the Transitional Program to the class reality in each country should serve as a final indication for the correct line advanced in the European perspectives document.

We have attempted to demonstrate how the European perspectives for revolutionary work apply the fundamentals of Marxist analysis, the Leninist theory of organization and the Transitional Program in theory, in method and in practice.

We call on all comrades to renew their dedication to the building of the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, the Fourth International,

December 13, 1973

SUGGESTION FOR A YS SUBSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

By Dayne Goodwin, Logan, Utah (At-Large)

I think it would be productive to begin 1974 with a Young Socialist subscription drive. Campus YSA activists can greet returning students with the opportunity to subscribe to the YS for the rest of the school year (six months) for only one dollar.

The YS has been widely spread and gained recognition through the fall circulation campaign. This success increases opportunities for growth of the YSA. One opportunity I perceive is to consolidate this sales success into a much stronger subscription base for the YS.

As the draft political resolution states, "The Young So-

cialist is our major vehicle for introducing young people to the YSA, our program and activities." A YS subscription drive would be an excellent step in our continuing propaganda offensive. I think it would be directly fruitful in recruitment as well as enhancing all aspects of our work.

Because I think a YS subscription campaign would be a productive use of our time and energy I bring this suggestion to the attention of the NEC and the YSA membership for consideration under the "Organization" point at our convention.

December 17, 1973

THE POLITICS OF THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY: THE VIEW FROM BLOOMINGTON

By Dennis Drake and Robin Hunter, Bloomington Local

The debate in the Young Socialist Alliance between supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction and those of the International Tendency will in many locals be experienced at the level of theory only. This is because the IT has little support within the YSA, particularly in locals not directly in contact with a branch. As a result many comrades are dealing with a political position with which they have had no personal, firsthand acquaintance in the political struggles they have been dealing with.

Yet it is in these struggles that one gets a sense of the real meaning of opposing lines. "What would the IT propose here? How would it deal with this or that particular question? How does it differ with the majority line of the YSA, and where does the difference originate?"

The Bloomington YSA has some experience in this respect which may be illuminating. For the past year our local has had several active supporters of the IT within it. Of course, these comrades were operating in an organization adhering to a national line which they could not (and did not try to) explicitly reverse. Nonetheless there was a clear difference between their proposals and the majority's in applying that line, significant enough, we feel, to be outlined in the current discussion.

We want to emphasize that the differences which emerged have their roots in political, not organizational questions.

Origin of the IT in Bloomington

The IT appeared in Bloomington in a relatively developed form when a comrade who had been in the local in 1968-69 returned in late '72 from two years in France, where he had been active in support of the Ligue Communiste. From the outset he was very clear about his adherence to the European majority, in particular on the question of Latin America, and the European resolution currently before the International. A number of comrades were attracted to and interested in his ideas, but until the end of the Spring '72 semester, solid IT support was restricted to five out of about 35 comrades. Transfers cut the local to 15 by the fall semester, and reduced support for the IT to three, at which level it remains.

Over the summer of 1973 the pre-SWP convention debates were intense and of good quality. Both tendencies sent outside speakers to make presentations and participate in discussion, and the local's membership has, we believe, an above average grasp of the issues in question. Half the local's fall membership had attended Oberlin.

The IT in the Local

Issues in the local in which the differences between the

IT and the LTT made themselves felt were numerous. Some of the most important are discussed below. Some of them represent concrete actions with serious and direct political repercussions. Others may seem to be merely differences in tone while the essential content is not an issue. We would merely say here that tone of actions, statements, etc., can be an important political variable influencing the effect of political action. What is more, we think we can show in the examples we cite that the tone or "cast" the ITers wanted to give to the issues in question was both damaging and a function of their incorrect political perspective.

The Bloomington IT's errors are generally ultraleft, they lean to an excessive emphasis on military concerns in politics, and display little evidence that the comrades involved have grasped the concept of defensiveness in political action and speech. Below we link these facts to the IT's agreement with the program and theory of the "New Mass Vanguard."

Whether the Bloomington IT can be taken as representative of the IT as a whole is of course open to dispute. They did participate in its caucus at the 1973 Oberlin Convention. One Bloomington comrade was co-signer of the 23 July letter informing the YSA NO of the IT's formation in the YSA. We think the Bloomington ITers lean more toward a literal agreement with the European sections than the IT nationally. But this point is hard to establish because the IT itself is vague as to where it stands. It is not clear, for example, from the IT's political resolution to the SWP convention that a New Mass Vanguard in the European sense is believed to exist in the US, though the phrase "broad vanguard" is used a number of times, and remarks supporting such tactics as "raising consciousness through transitional demands aimed at the vanguard"² in the antiwar movement imply at least a measure of accord. Pierre Frank draws a clear distinction between "the radicalized sectors in the United States" and "the vanguard currents in Europe," finding them "qualitatively and quantitatively different."³ We have heard no clarification of this point from the ITers who have spoken in Bloomington or Oberlin.

The IT's Initiatives in Action

It is a truism in our movement that we avoid "ultraleft" errors, by which we mean programs, actions, and demands which are so far removed from the understanding, perceived needs and level of combativity of the people we are working among that our political propaganda and agitation cannot bridge the gap or draw them into action. Isolation and vulnerability in the face of government attacks are the common fruit of ultraleftism.

Yet this understanding seems to have eluded the IT comrades. Consider for example earlier this year, around the period of the Vietnamese accords. The US government was

persuading the American people that it had virtually ended the war, and it became evident that for the time being the mass action basis of the antiwar movement was eroded. The movement itself was split on what the accords meant. In the YSA and SMC "what to do next?" was the question of the hour.

In the YSA's antiwar fraction the IT answer was posed in terms of "initiatives in action." SMC had to set the terms of the struggle for the whole movement. Specifically at Indiana University, in a quiescent period, an action such as a sit-in or a building seizure was needed. As in other discussions, the argument became general. "Selective violent initiatives" and "armed actions" on the part of the former Ligue Communiste were raised as relevant (NB--they were not proposed for concrete action) and it was argued that the YSA and SWP would in the future have to move toward these positions. "SWP reformism" was attacked because the Party failed to construct "armed groups" for the defense of itself and the broader movement.

It should be understood: the sit-ins and building occupations were proposed in a period of mass doubt and hesitancy. Many people--grudgingly and suspiciously, it is true, were willing to give the Nixon administration leeway, to see if they were actually able to stop the fighting. Even within the forces of the antiwar movement, there was hesitancy and confusion. Political questions (Signs Now vs. Out Now, the accords as continued violation of Vietnamese self-determination, the long-run unviability of the truce, etc.) had to be clarified by events as well as education on our part. They would not be resolved by audacious acts aimed at the most advanced activists alone. To have proceeded as the IT proposed would have meant abdicating our leading political role and substituting for it an "action" role entirely divorced from the existing state of the movement or the population at large. Not only this, it was almost certain that such action would be small, and open to serious counterattack by the forces of the state. The history of the movement at Indiana, as elsewhere, abounds with instances such as this. Indeed, one of the major factors in the survival of our organization in the past period is precisely that we educated ourselves and others to avoid such adventures.

Whatever the YSA could reasonably project in the early months of 1973, it did not include the arrest, payment of bail for, and legal/political defense of the local's membership and the best activists of the movement at large. The IT proposals were not adopted.

In advancing their proposals the IT was motivated by the belief that it was essential that we galvanize the most advanced sections into action by "exemplary" means. Perhaps they felt that this galvanizing process would then spread to the broader masses who also opposed the war, even though our actions would not answer the political questions which had paralyzed them. We believe this is a total miscomprehension of the nature of a "political vanguard," a point to which we shall return below.

The IT "Defends" our Rights

Another early manifestation of what was to become the IT in the Bloomington local centered around the organization of Militant sales teams. An IT comrade had been appointed Militant sales director and proposed to step up sales by emphasizing teams of salespeople rather than uncoordinated individual efforts. There is nothing new or controversial in this, and in fact, the re-organization which ensued enabled us to eliminate a rather large Militant debt.

However, the comrade, in his written report didn't stop there:

"Another fundamental reason for doing this was centered on the concept of self-defense units; initially with the thought of protecting our sales interventions on the campus, at the shopping centers and at the factory gates. While stating that we thought this to be a physical necessity only 2% of the time in this period, we felt it constituted an important political learning experience for the comrades which would be of crucial importance in the not-so-distant future. Also, this form of activity constitutes the groundwork for future, more offensive initiatives that will be taken by revolutionaries. . . . As a final word--while we have a multitude of opportunities for building our movement in this period, any organization that is veritably revolutionary will sooner or later be an illegal organization. The formation of our units shows that we are at least conscious of this fact." ⁴

The local, which at that time contained about a dozen new comrades, was a little nonplussed at this proposal. There had, it is true, been an isolated attack on a single comrade selling the press in 1972, and to that extent, group sales were recognized as a valuable precautionary move. As far as we know, no other attacks have occurred since the present local was organized in 1968-69.

But the proposal clearly goes beyond this. The protection of numbers was only an "initial" function of the groups, which would lay the "groundwork" for "future, more offensive initiatives." No clue was given in the report as to the nature of these "more offensive initiatives," nor how group selling alone would constitute its groundwork. Phrases such as "commando groups" and "revolutionary violence" were used, but as is frequently the case with the Bloomington IT, these overworked phrases were given no content.

The local felt that this hollow addendum to the quite reasonable sales-team proposal was unnecessary and flamboyant verbiage, not warranted by anything at all in the situation we faced, and misleading as to the real functions our sales teams would be performing. Furthermore, it was a political decision which (since events did not demand it at the local level) we would be arrogating to ourselves, when the correct body to deal with it was the YSA as a whole, or, in an emergency, its national executive body.

We would like to mention a concrete example of a Militant sales team's defense work in Bloomington this year, which we think contrasts quite effectively with the ITeR's proposal. Since the summer, a team of five comrades has been selling Militants at the gates of a large RCA plant in Bloomington. Weekly sales have ranged between 10 and 30 copies.

Beginning in September the company, and later the union, attempted various forms of harassment. Both the company and the union made verbal threats (one comrade was told if selling continued "your organization will be smashed"), the company had us thrown off an entrance that was "their" property, and a union official called the police when we moved from company property to what we learned was the union hall's property. The company photographed us from the street and the factory roof. Sales were clearly dropping off as the workers felt intimidated by the company and union's hostility. When the plant guards began confiscating The Militants we had sold to workers, we felt it was time to move.

The next week we not only sold the paper, we handed out 1500 leaflets entitled "Don't Let the Bosses Tell You What to Read." It stressed our right to sell The Militant on the public sidewalk, exposed the company's repressive measures and explained why the company was afraid of our ideas. We argued that the Indianapolis Star was available inside the plant and explained that the company had no right to forbid Militants in the plant. The leaflet concluded by urging that people defend their right to read what they want, and gave subscription information.

After this, sales at the plant moved up--probably as a result of interest generated by the leaflet, and to the present at least, harassment has ceased. No further photography, no more threats and no more paper confiscations. We would not, of course, argue that this is a conclusive victory or that further attacks are precluded. We merely want to emphasize that under the repressive circumstances we met at the RCA plant our form of defense (involving no "commando groups," no preparation for illegality, etc.) has so far met our needs.

How We Say What We Say

The form in which Trotskyists present their political positions and analyses is not a matter of "line." Excepting those cases where circumstances require us to be very precise and specific, our articulation of any given political position is relatively open and flexible. Wording and line of argumentation are in general the choice of the comrades writing or speaking. We are not an organization which speaks in formulas or repeats by rote the utterances of the central committee.

Nonetheless, there are certain general lessons to be learned from the last century or so of struggle which if not

applied can prove costly. One of these is that of "defensive" political formulations.

This is in a sense a "secondary" or "instrumental" point, but since it concerns the vital question of how we present ourselves to the thousands and millions of people whose political confidence and respect we must win, it is a very important "secondary" point. In the History of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky is at great pains to demonstrate this. "Observe," he urged, "that twenty-four hours before the insurrection the task was still defined in terms of defense and not attack." ⁵ Power was seized by the Soviets not simply as an abstract "leap" to socialism by the workers and peasants. The Bolsheviks successfully convinced the masses that a new political order based on the Soviets was the only program which could defend the gains already accomplished, or lay a firm basis for their development.

Defensive formulation, which is necessary not only in demands and slogans, but also in public statements of a more complete type, must take care to clearly place responsibility for social and political problems on the class which controls society. The inevitable capitalist insinuation that the grievance in question is the fault of the masses or revolutionists themselves must be anticipated and combated. Formulations must avoid giving the capitalists legal or propagandistic ammunition.

For example, one would not, at a public forum on the crisis in Greece (as one ITeR recently did) pose the alternatives for that country as either "bourgeois democracy or proletarian dictatorship." The majority of the audience, presented with such a bald, unelaborated choice, uneducated in the precise terminology of Marxism, either gladly choose bourgeois democracy or retire in confusion. Since it takes more time (and a comprehending reporter if the remark gets in the press) to explain that all bourgeois democracies are merely forms of class dictatorship, and that proletarian dictatorship may well take the form of a representative democracy, it is best to choose other words, to make the statement more defensible. It is only if one is interested in appearing very very radical that one might state things in their most easily attacked form.

Consider then this, a letter published in The Indiana Daily Student on 18 September, 1973, at a time when the tasks of the left included defending the lives of a large part of the Latin American left and making it clear that the violence and illegality in Chile were entirely the responsibility of the Chilean right and the US government:

"To the editor:

"What we see today in Chile confirms some of the classical themes of Marxism: there can be no socialism without a violent revolution. The coup probably opens a long period of civil war with the mass of workers and peasants on one side fighting against the bourgeoisie, the

military, the fascists and the imperialists on the other side.

"The bourgeoisie is certainly stronger than the working class and its allies from a military point of view, especially since the masse must make their way empirically without the benefit of a real revolutionary leadership.

"The militant Socialist Workers Party of Bloomington feels that it is the duty of all revolutionists to show their active solidarity with the armed struggle of the working masses in Chile. The bourgeois press in this country has developed a news black-out on the arrest and murders of leftists in the course of fighting throughout Chile.

"The fascists are given free hand to carry out their much publicized 'Operation Djakarta.' There is no peaceful road to socialism--the bourgeoisie will never allow itself to be dispossessed little by little.

"The key question in social revolution is the destruction of the bourgeois state, its institutions and its armed forces and its replacement with the dictatorship of the proletariat based on a revolutionary workers army. Victory to the armed Latin American socialist revolution!

"Bill Yaffe

"Socialist Workers Party"⁶

Nicely put! "... some of the classical themes of Marxism... no socialism without a violent revolution... the dictatorship of the proletariat," bald and unexplained. The Indianapolis Star couldn't have put it better. An incidental afterthought, buried in what must be, for most of the readers, obscure verbiage, the passing remark that it is the bourgeoisie which imposes the violence to maintain power, and this is why the proletariat must be ready to fight. No mention of the US role in the coup, no mention of American responsibility to defend the Chilean left in concrete terms. Merely a lecture which seems to lean over backward to play into the hands of the most retrogressive rightist cliches about leftist violence. In essence, we agree with much of what Comrade Yaffe wrote here. But he can't have given the slightest consideration to how his audience would respond, how he might avoid giving fuel to reaction, how he might most defensively present his case. In fact, the only time we remember hearing the IT comrades use terms like "proletarian democracy" rather than terms like "dictatorship of the proletariat" is when they are in disagreement with a procedural decision in the local. Then their invocation of that most defensible word "democracy" reaches chorus-like proportions. In public, where awareness of the Marxist use of terms is at a minimum, the comrades make no concessions at all.

Please understand, this letter was submitted without consultation with the local or the exec. It was shown to one of

the present authors who urged the comrade at least to submit it to the organizer first. This was not done. No necessity was seen for the Trotskyists as an organized political group to decide collectively on its public response. It may be that its author felt the YSA local would not express itself "militantly" enough.

A minor point here, but symptomatic: notice how in the letter it is the lack of a military response that is blamed for the workers defeat. Similarly, Robin Blackburn, in the IMG's initial response to the coup,⁷ lambasted the Unidad Popular for its failure to arm the workers, yet omitted even once to mention the UP's popular front nature as the main factor preventing the arming of the proletariat. In failing to probe the political basis of the military policy, these comrades easily slide into an exaggerated view of the role of military questions independent of politics.⁷

Why the Errors?

We want to look now at what we see as a theoretical underpinning of much of the above behavior, which we have generally categorized as ultraleft or adventurist. We think it hinges in large part on the notion of the New Mass Vanguard and the task assigned to it by the IEC majority.

The New Mass Vanguard seems to have two salient characteristics: first, it is politically radical, and second, it has broken in organization and action with Stalinism and Social Democracy.⁸ The IT in Bloomington defined it as "the most politically militant young workers and students, the people most ready to act outside the traditional working class organizations."⁹ The present central task of the Fourth International (at least in Europe) according to the European perspectives document, is to win hegemony over this "vanguard," and recruit it to the revolutionary party.¹⁰ To achieve this one tactic which "must be used as much as possible in the present stage" is:

"... organizing national political campaigns on carefully chosen issues that correspond to the concerns of the vanguard, do not run against the current of mass struggles, and offer a chance for demonstrating a capacity for effective initiative, even if still modest, by our sections."¹¹

If this were to translate (as some comrades have argued) as an aim to recruit "the most advanced sectors" of the generally radicalized student and young worker mass to our program, nobody would object. In fact, that is what we presently aim to do, though we would hardly call it our central task. But there is something else involved.

The "New Mass Vanguard" tends to be seen strictly in terms of its political positions: that is that it is to the left of this or that grouping, that it is not under the organizational influence of the CPs or the SPs, etc. What isn't stressed or analyzed is its relationship to the political process as a whole. But it is this question which is at the root of whether

any formation can be considered vanguard or not. "Vanguard" doesn't imply simply a set of political ideas, it implies a political relationship between the "vanguard" and the masses it seeks to lead.

On the basis of their ideas, for example, we would have to consider the radical, ultraleft elements of the antiwar movement as far more politically advanced than the majority of Americans. In many cases, they were more advanced on the level of ideas and theory than were rank-and-file SMCers. The SMCers, however, displayed one virtue the ultralefts lacked: they wanted to persuade the American people--not of their guilt in the war, but of their interest in ending it. They saw their political role as reaching out and involving the general population, whether or not all of them could be reached at any given time. So, for that matter, are the Maoists clustered around The Guardian. They want socialism, are "free" of the Social Democrats and the Communist Party and on occasion have mobilized in the thousands. Yet, does this in any way mean they have a vanguard relation to the masses? Are they even capable of relating dynamically, with real impact to the concerns and struggles of the working people--whatever their present level? The answer is "NO" and can be demonstrated by listing some of the erstwhile "concerns" of these "most politically militant young workers and students": Mayday, the Bach Mai Hospital Fund, the People's Peace Treaty, the Bobby Seale Brigades, sundry "Anti-Imperialist Contingents" only begin the list. While it is true that these concerns "do not run against the current of mass struggles," it is so only because they are not even in the same river.

We are not arguing that politically advanced masses, in or out of groups--even when they differ with us extensively--cannot be worked with and recruited from. Our point is that it is self-defeating to work with or recruit them on the basis of their subjective concerns. They can only become part of a political vanguard if in action they can deal with the real concerns of the masses, imposed by history in the concrete. The Trotskyist's role in this is to show the advanced layers that Marxist science and the Transitional Program are the best methods of understanding this process and leading the people into struggle.

Germain (perhaps essaying a rearguard) speaks of initiatives which "correspond to the needs of the most militant sectors of the masses which will be tomorrow recognized by the much broader masses as their needs as well." ¹² These are the "concerns" of the mass vanguard which we should pursue. And we cannot disagree--we should prefer this to be the case; and it takes no special theory of the mass vanguard to see this. But to identify those common issues, we first look at the masses, and the state of capitalist society. And of course this includes an assessment of the left outside our organization.

In a way, the theory of the New Mass Vanguard simply restates a traditional goal of Marxists: to recruit the most

advanced sectors. But it does so in a confusing and downright misleading way. Attention is focused on a section of the movement, which may well not be in any given situation the "vanguard" its theorists claim it to be.

The IT seems to see its role as becoming the "vanguard" of this "vanguard"--the best builders of the New Mass Vanguard, so to speak. We see this impulse at the root of the adventurism and ultraleftism of the IT comrades not only in our local, but also in Europe.

And this in itself is futile. The European comrades are adamant on the point that the organizations of the Fourth International can and must move from propaganda to mass action. But it seems to us that in focusing on the New Mass Vanguard we limit ourselves to precisely the former. Are we going to recruit the most politically advanced layer in Europe simply by showing that we're as militant and strident as anyone else? We have to persuade this sector politically. "Exemplary actions" only secondarily related to the masses simply offer them more of the same. Isolation from the masses and ultraleftism invariably appear in the vacuum created by the lack of a program. It is this that we possess: a Transitional Program which offers a bridge to the masses, and in its application the means of recruiting the New Mass Vanguard on a political basis.

Notes

1. "Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America," SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 18.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. P. Frank, "Two Ways of Constructing the Revolutionary Marxist Party and Engaging it in Action," International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 8.
4. "Tasks and Perspectives: The Militant," report given to the Bloomington YSA local, May 1973. Emphasis added.
5. Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. III, p. 188, University of Michigan edition.
6. The author, a member of the YSA and IT, is also a member of the SWP. The letter's content was not known to the SWP before it was published. While this may seem strange to comrades, it is not dealt with here, being essentially an internal question for the SWP.
7. See Red Weekly, Sept. 21, 1973, "Chile: The Lessons Must be Learnt."
8. P. Frank, "Two Ways of Constructing the Revolutionary Marxist Party and Engaging it in Action," International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. X, No. 14, p. 7; E. Germain, "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 4, p. 45; "The Building

of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," International Information Bulletin, #5 in 1972, p. 13

9. IT speaker, internal discussion on the world political situation, Oct. 28, 1973, Bloomington, Indiana.

10. "Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," pp. 13-14.

11. Ibid., p. 24.

12. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," IIDB, Vol. X, No. 4, p. 48.

December 13, 1973

SHOULD THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY?

By Ninure Saunders, Chicago Local

The Internationalist Tendency in the YSA has launched an attack upon everything the YSA stands for. They question the need for socialist, revolutionary Trotskyists, to participate in the student movement, in the struggles of revolutionary youth. They deny the need for independent youth groups. They accuse the YSA of being no more than an appendage of the Socialist Workers Party.

Now these comrades have the right to hold these views. But the majority has the right to know why these comrades feel this way. The majority of the YSA has the right to know how these comrades have arrived at their positions, and where these positions will take the YSA should they somehow win majority support at the convention.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency claim to be supporters of the IEC Majority Tendency. I say that "they claim," because there seems to be a contradiction between their positions, and the positions of their international leadership's positions, that is to say against the written record of their leaders. This is particularly true of their positions on the student movement, and the document "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International."

I hope that comrades will be willing to forgive if I seem to be resorting to a tactic that is more characteristic of the methods used by the Internationalist Tendency than the methods of the YSA majority. (Our comrades of the Internationalist Tendency have a fondness for digging up articles, speeches, or just general muck out of the past of leaders of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction to embarrass or completely discredit them. Usually it can be clearly shown that these leaders have since refuted such articles in question.) I think I can safely say that I shall be a little different in the way I use this tactic.

The comrade that I would like to use to "embarrass" the IT via his written word is Comrade Mandel. And I'll try to be a little more fair in my use of Mandel than the IT was in their use of Comrade Moreno. The articles that I wish to quote from, which Mandel wrote in 1968-1969 have yet to be refuted. (And since Mandel is basically right in these articles it will be very sad if he does.)

One article I would like to quote from can be found in a very interesting book: The New Revolutionaries, A Handbook of the International Left, edited by Comrade Tariq Ali (IMG), published by William Morrow and Company in 1969.

This book is interesting not only from a literary point of view, but from a political point of view as well. It contains articles from many radicals and revolutionaries. Tony Cliff (IMG), Pierre Frank, E. Mandel, and of course Tariq Ali. But who did Ali choose to represent Trotskyism in America, revolutionary politics? George Novack? James P. Cannon? No, American Trotskyism was not represented. However, there was space for such sterling "new mass vanguard" type leaders such as Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, and Paul Rockwell.

But back to my original point. I shall attempt to use Mandel's own words, in the above mentioned article and others, to show that the author of many of the positions which the YSA holds, and which the Internationalist Tendency says are the invention of a "school-boy" leadership, are in reality also those of Comrade Mandel whom they claim to be in agreement with.

Does the YSA Claim Students Have a Special Social Weight?

One criticism which the IT is fond of making is that the YSA holds the position that in the last few decades, students have emerged as a new social stratum, with added social weight. This would be a very valid criticism if the YSA indeed held such a position. Some comrades have mistakenly held that view, but it has never been the position of the YSA. But it is the position of Comrade Mandel.

He puts it forth in an article entitled the "New Mass Vanguard" which is contained in the book The New Revolutionaries . . . mentioned earlier. He says:

"Any analysis of the student revolt must start from one basic consideration: the university explosion. A new social grouping has emerged from the very vitals of capitalism, from all that it considers its essential 'achievement': the higher standard of living, the advances in technology and the mass-media, and the requirements of automation. There are six million university students in the United States, two and a half million in Western Europe and over a million in Japan. And it proved impossible to integrate these groupings into the capitalist system as it functions on any one of these territories."

And further:

". . . . In speaking of a third industrial revolution, of a scientific revolution, many Marxist sociologists have not always drawn the obvious conclusion about the place of intellectual workers in society. They do not understand that as a result of profound changes in intellectual employment the majority of university graduates will no longer be bosses or professionals, or even direct agents of the bosses with strictly supervisory functions. They do not understand the specific character of the student mileiu as a special social stratum . . ." (p. 47-49)

I don't think that it is necessary for me to go into why it is incorrect to say that students now carry an increased social weight. Comrades who don't understand why it is correct to argue against such a position are referred to an article contained in a Socialist Workers Party Discussion Bulletin (Vol. 31 No. 33), entitled "For a Full Discussion on the Trade Union Question and Aggressive Implementation of the PC Resolution," which takes up this question under a section "Student Movement and Labor Movement."

Do Students have an Intrinsic Revolutionary Role?

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency are also fond of accusing the YSA majority of having the position that students have an intrinsic revolutionary role. It will be good then, to see what Mandel has to say about the role of students.

"Q. Do students have an intrinsic value as a revolutionary agency, and if so, what is it?

"A. There may be some confusion here about what I said. I did not say that students must become workers in order to have revolutionary consciousness. That flies in the face of history. I'm sorry if I speak a little like a grandfather; I am not even a father. The revolutionary role of students has existed as long as the working class movement. The fact that revolutionary students can introduce revolutionary ideas to the working class was recognized by socialists, not only by Lenin but by Kautsky, Adler, and many other Social Democrats nearly 100 years ago. Students can plan an independent role - of course they can. Students can give the first impulse to revolutionary action, of course. They can have revolutionary consciousness; nobody can deny that. Read the history of the past 80 or 90 years of the socialist movement and you will see at numerous moments students played precisely the role they are playing as they are doing today in many underdeveloped countries and even in some more developed countries . . .

". . . However, this power is limited and students cannot get a real social transformation going unless they are linked with a stronger social force such as the working class. This is on the level of activity, not on the level of consciousness . . ." (The Revolutionary Student Movement: Theory and Practice by Ernest Mandel, p. 25-26)

Neither the YSA, nor Mandel of 1968, is afraid to recognize the revolutionary potential of students or the student movement. The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency (YSA) should be glad of this. For if the YSA held any other position, the majority of them would not be in the YSA today, would not be revolutionary Trotskyists.

The Internationalist Tendency becomes very upset when the YSA talks about the possibilities of the student movement, of radicalized students, to be a detonator to struggles outside of the campus, i.e. the workers movements. They tell us that such a contention is hardly Marxist.

Strange that they should say this, for Mandel is a Marxist in their eyes, and he says of the students:

"They can and must play a powerful role as detonator. By playing this role within the working class, above all through the intermediary of the young workers, they can free in the working class itself enormous forces for challenging the capitalist society and the bourgeois State."

Strange that they should say this in light of the recent events in Greece, Thailand, and South Korea.

Transitional Demands for Students?

The Internationalist Tendency accuses the YSA of attempting to develop a transitional program for students, and for the student movement. They say that it is revisionist for us to do this. They say that there is ONE Transitional Program, and one only. Well in a very simplistic sense this is true. But the Transitional Program written by Trotsky was never meant to be the last word on transitional and democratic demands, but to be developed even further.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency point out that Trotsky does not mention students in the transitional program, and that proves that Trotsky never meant for there to be a transitional program for students. This is stupidity of the worst kind. Trotsky did not often write about Africa, does that mean that we abstain from defending the struggles for liberation that are sweeping across Africa? Trotsky did not write of Chicanos in this country, should we ignore them? Comrades of the Internationalist Tendency, Trotsky is not the God of the Fourth International, we are allowed to think, and to develop the fundamentals left to us by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky!

Did Mandel have anything to say about transitional demands for the student movement? Yes, and it would seem that he is closer to the YSA's position on this question, than he is to that of the Internationalist Tendency.

"I do not say we should be indifferent to any kind of reforms for the university. It is necessary to find some transitional slogans for university problems just as Marxists have tried to find transiti-

onal slogans for other social movements in whatever sector these come to life." (The Revolutionary Student Movement: Theory and Practice, p. 8)

Should the Internationalist Tendency be taken Seriously?

So it would seem that the comrades not only disagree with the YSA on the student movement, but with a comrade with whom they claim to be in complete agreement. Can such a tendency be taken seriously? I think not.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency have a lot to explain to the majority of the YSA if they truly hope to get a serious hearing, if they expect to be treated seriously.

The comrades must explain to us how it is that exactly a year ago many of them were calling Mandel a Pabloite revisionist, but today they have forgotten his "revisions."

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency must explain how it is they have a position on Black and Chicano nationalism that is the exact opposite of the IEC Majority Tendency's position.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency must make it clear as to whether or not they stand on the position of the YSA being dissolved or fused into the Socialist Workers Party. They must stop avoiding the issue by falsely claiming that the YSA has "already been liquidated into the SWP." It is obvious that they really don't believe this, since they have participated in this discussion and submitted counter documents.

They must explain how it was that the PRT(C) managed to carry itself right out of the Trotskyist movement while following the line of the IEC Majority Tendency.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency must explain why they, and the IEC majority use the words armed struggle and guerrilla warfare interchangeably, as if the two meant the same thing.

Unless the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency answer these and other questions, they should not expect to be taken very seriously.

Since the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency do not even offer a semblance of an alternative to the program of the NEC, comrades have no choice but to reject their so-called line, and their imaginary criticisms.

December 14, 1973

THE QUESTION OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

By Mary Wismer, Chicago Local

One of the questions that has come up during the course of the YSA's pre-convention discussion is the question of youth groups. I feel that this question is a very important one, in fact central to the very existence of the YSA. It should not be viewed as a purely academic question, but a question that, should the implications of the Internationalist Tendency's line be put to the test, affects the very future of the YSA.

In my presentation, I'd like to review what the comrades of the IEC majority have done in regards to their sections' youth groups; touch upon some of the reasons for their actions; and go into the implications of these actions for the YSA.

"Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International"

Before the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International, a document called "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International" was submitted as a draft resolution to the United Secretariat. This document was adopted unanimously by the United Secretariat and submitted by that body to the world congress. In general what the document did was to analyze the growing radicalization of young people and point out the importance of this radicalization as well as suggesting tactics for the Fourth International to follow in its work within the student and youth movement. The congress did not vote on the resolution as a whole as some differences were raised over it; but the congress did pass a motion on youth work that read as follows:

"1) The Ninth World Congress reaffirms that work among both the proletariat and the student youth is the central task the International must confront in the immediate period ahead. 2) It calls on all its sections to mobilize their best forces to promote this work. 3) The militants of the Fourth International must integrate themselves in the mass student and youth movements to become their best agitators, propagandists, and organizers." (IIDE, Vol. X, No. 19, "The Red University Strategy VS the Irreversible Turn," by Andy Rose, p. 3)

It is the same comrades that voted in the United Secretariat for the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (comrades such as Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, Peter Petersen) that today go totally against the line and idea of the document. What is the record of the sections of the IEC majority in the youth movement? In some cases, such as the case of the Ligue Communiste in France, much has been done. In other cases, like that of the International Marxist Group in England, hardly anything has been done. But in all cases, great opportunities have been passed over by all the sections supporting the line of the IEC majority. The reason for this is that all the sections that support the line of the IEC majority have systematically abolished their youth organizations.

The Example of the IMG

The grounds that have been offered at one time or another for the sloughing off of the fraternal youth organizations of the Fourth International are made up of confused rationalizations. The IMG's perspectives document explains why it was necessary to get rid of their youth group, the Spartacus League in the following terms:

" . . . a cadre youth organization only made sense in terms of a rapidly expanding political movement in which rapid growth of the organization would occur. The SL type organization therefore was premised on a major possibility of expansion in the universities from which a cadre could be gained to intervene amongst young workers. The possibilities of such a dynamic as we have analyzed many times did not exist by 1970 because of the upsurge in the workers movement." (IIDE, Vol. X, No. 19, "The Red University Strategy VS the Irreversible Turn," by Andy Rose, p. 18)

Both of the reasons outlined here are totally insufficient arguments for the abolishment of a youth organization. The first argument given is that a youth group is only useful when it can grow rapidly. What the IMG did not realize then (and apparently doesn't now) is that the organization of a youth group should not be de-

pendent on the ups and downs of the student struggle. All of us, during the course of our political lives, have heard at one time or another that the student movement or the anti-war movement is dead. If we had followed the same reasoning in the United States as the IMG followed in England we would have been dissolving and reorganizing the YSA and SMC every few months. In short we would have gotten nowhere in the radical youth movement. The need for revolutionary youth organizations is not based, as was said before, on the upsurges or downturn of the student movement, but on the social and political analysis in which it is developing. It develops from the fact that the revolutionary youth organization is a significant feature of world politics for the foreseeable future.

The second reason posed in the IMG argument is that the need for revolutionary youth organizations ceases to exist when the workers begin to radicalize. This is totally unrealistic. To put forth in the first place, that the workers will radicalize without the layers of students and young workers is ridiculous. Time and time again we have seen the students radicalize along with or even before the working class. The IMG perspectives document calmly ignores the fact that we want to recruit young students as well as young workers.

The general thrust of the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" is by no means meant to put forth an orientation to only radicalizing students. In fact, the document points out that young workers as well as students are radicalizing around many of the same issues. The task of revolutionaries is to link these struggles together, not to ignore one part of them as the IMG does.

The "Critical Threshold" Theory

Let's take a look at some of the other reasons that IEC majority comrades put forth for the dissolving of their youth organizations. One of the arguments that is brought up in the European perspectives document, "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" is the "critical threshold" theory. The document states the following:

"The possibility for taking a turn to form (or rebuild) such a youth organization thus depends strictly on the relationship of forces, that is, the influence that the adult organization has already acquired in the vanguard, its base in the working class, and the number of cadres that can be put at the disposal of the youth organization. As long as it has not reached the critical threshold in forces and roots in the working class necessary to attempting such a project, the adult revolutionary organization will strive to organize sympathizer groupings specifically adapted to the youth, such as were mentioned above." ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe," IIB, No. 5 in 1972, p. 23)

The fusion of the youth organizations in Europe with their respective revolutionary parties resulted in the creation of many of the sections that are present today in Europe. What the European document is now saying could be phrased something like this: When we were weak the youth organizations we had helped made us into full sections of the Fourth International. Now that we are strong (or relatively so) we cannot build youth groups because it is the vanguard that we want to orient to, and besides we now are too weak to build them. This reasoning makes very poor sense to me. What the European comrades are saying is that the youth group has no further use for them, they have built their sections and now it's time to get into the class. If the critical threshold theory had been applied by the Socialist Workers Party, for example, where would the YSA be today? One can only think that we would either not be in existence or we would have been merged with the party long ago.

The Alien Class Influences Theory

Another reason put forward by the European perspectives document is the alien class influences theory. The document has this to say about the theory:

"On the other hand, there was a real danger that youth organizations lacking a sufficient number of experienced Trotskyist cadres would let

themselves be caught up in a sectarian (or spontaneist) tendency to underestimate and misjudge the organized workers movement and transmit these pressures coming from a petty-bourgeois social origin that were typical of a large part of the new far-left vanguard during the first phase into the Fourth International itself." ("The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe, IIB, No. 5 in 1972, p. 23)

According to the above statement, large recruitment of all those petty-bourgeois youth into the Fourth International would introduce alien class pressures. This is true to a certain extent. Students are prey to a number of illusions, such as reformism, or a tendency to underestimate the working class. But students are also prey to illusions such as workerism, ultra-leftism, substitution of the actions of a small vanguard group for the actions of the masses, even terrorism. Some of these "alien class pressures" are not so alien to the IEC majority today, in fact many of these illusions are contained in the IEC majority line on Latin America and Europe. Comrade Andy Rose in his presentation "The Red University Strategy VS the Irreversible Turn" summed this up quite succinctly:

"It is ironic that the same comrades that are so afraid of the pressures that might result from recruiting too many students, were perfectly confident about accepting the Maoist-Castroist PRT (Combatiente) as the official section of the Fourth International and then refrained for four years from discussing political differences with them." (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 19, "The Red University Strategy VS the Irreversible Turn," by Andy Rose, p. 19)

As Comrade Mary Alice Waters put it in her criticism of the European perspectives document:

"If we did not believe that many revolutionary-minded students could be won over to the program of Marxism we would have to throw out 90% of all the recruitment the Fourth International has done in the last decade and start over again. The only guarantee of the political firmness and revolutionary character of the Fourth International lies in uncompromising programmatic clarity - not in refusing to build a youth organization so as to avoid the dangers of student recruitment." (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 3, p. 18, "A Criticism of the United Secretariat Majority Draft Resolution of 'The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe' - an Initial Contribution to the Discussion," by Mary Alice Waters)

Sympathizer Groups VS Independent Groups

Another argument is often raised in this debate and that is the argument of sympathizer groups. Quoting from the European document:

"The position adopted thus opposed building or long maintaining hybrid (meaning groups like the YSA - MW) revolutionary youth organizations which, in certain contexts and in view of the relationship of forces, would continue to function as substitutes for adult revolutionary organizations and bear many of the failings typical of the radical student milieu. But this position is by no means opposed in principle to building genuine youth organizations that would confine themselves to the specific tasks of youth work on the basis of the sphere of activity, base, and influence, already achieved by adult revolutionary organizations." (IIB, No. 5 in 1972, "The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe, p. 23)

The IEC majority means red circles and sympathizer groups when it says genuine youth groups. In fact, it is clear

in the preceding quotation that the only purpose such groups serve are by being mere appendages to the party. Sympathizer circles are no substitute for independent youth organizations. Party sympathizer circles cannot intervene in the same way an independent youth organization can. They do not offer the same opportunities for recruitment. Youth in the circles have no say over the political line or activity of their group. There are many students of both high schools and colleges that are looking for revolutionary organizations to join, but are not attracted to an organization that is not independent. How can sympathizer circles have the same attractiveness as an organization where young people can make their own decisions, correct, or incorrect, and most important, lead these organizations themselves. A sympathizer group cannot train its cadres in the same way that an independent organization can, where members take on responsibilities and learn from their own experiences the traditions, program and methods of Bolshevism.

When you take into account the uneven character of the current radicalization you realize that there is no way that one organization can perform the functions of an adult revolutionary party and of a youth group. Either the party will tend to act like a youth group, reflecting the instabilities of the youth movement, such as rapid turnover. Or, because of the fear of becoming too much like a youth organization, the section will cut off its opportunities to take advantage of growth and recruitment in the student arena.

The question of independence of revolutionary youth organizations is a question of key importance. Lenin realized the importance of this question and wrote the following in 1916:

"The middle-aged and the aged often do not know how to approach the youth, for the youth must of necessity advance to socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances than their fathers. Incidentally, this is why we must decidedly favor organizational independence of the Youth League . . . For unless they have complete independence, the youth will be unable either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism forward." (The Youth International, Collected Works, Vol. 23, p. 164)

Implications for the YSA

Comrades of the YSA have the right to ask this question of the Internationalist Tendency: If the IT wins a majority at the Chicago convention what will the tendency's plans be for the YSA? Will the YSA be merged into the SWP, or would our organization be abolished all together? Comrade Rich Mitten of the Internationalist Tendency in Chicago has already told us during pre-convention discussion that the YSA doesn't exist as an independent organization; that we have in fact already been "liquidated into the party." If this is true then why is this debate taking place at all; why are we about to have a convention to decide upon the debate? After all the SWP already had its convention, many issues that YSAers are discussing right now have already been decided and voted upon within the SWP. If we were a mere appendage of the party the decisions would have already been made for us - there would be no reason for the debate or the convention.

In the debate in Chicago comrades raised these questions several times within the discussion. Other than the above quotation from Comrade Rich, these questions were not answered by any of the members of the Internationalist Tendency present. We appeal to the comrades of the IT to answer these questions and to clarify their positions. What strategy does the IT intend for the YSA?

December 14, 1973

REGIONAL WORK IN NYC

By Clemens R. Bak, Upper West Side Local

This contribution to the discussion is not intended to be a thorough or exhaustive study of regional work, but more to acquaint comrades with the nature of this work in New York City and with some of the lessons we've learned here. I would also hope that this discussion can help to provide material towards the development of a national perspective for this work.

In the course of the past year since the National Convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, the NYC YSA has made major strides forward in regional work. At this time in the states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut we have 7 locals and 6 additional areas where 3 or more at-largers are working together with the perspective of forming a local. Our regional membership list stands at over 100 regional comrades, equal to the combined strength of two center locals. We have a functional regional office, a citywide regional organizer and a regional committee made up of regional directors from each of the center locals. Before I get into the exact nature or function of the different elements of our regional structure, I want to explain how we conceptualize regional work. Our work in the region is oriented towards the expansion of our movement geographically and numerically. This concept is central to all aspects of the YSA and is of primary importance in our ability to affect the future and the creation of a socialist revolution. With the understanding of this principle, the various elements of the regional structure function can be understood.

Regional work contains all aspects of the work of a center local from finances to recruitment to sales and general propaganda work. On the other hand, the fact that this work is done within a framework of long distance organizing poses special problems, unique to this area of work. The existence of YSA'ers all over the region greatly facilitates the bringing to bear the resources of the regional center in order to establish visibility for our movement among the tremendous student mass in the region. Comrades can get a picture of the size of the student population from these figures:

REGIONAL CAMPUSES LARGER THAN 1000 STUDENTS

83 in Connecticut

140 in New York State, not including NYC

91 in New Jersey

The State University of New York alone has 71 campuses with a total student body of 246,000 students. As comrades can see from these figures, our strength in the region is very much at an early stage and much of our work is pioneering. The general receptivity of students to our politics indicates that the potential for rapid growth of the YSA in this area is staggering to the imagination.

The regional center should be viewed as the resource center. That's where the Speakers Bureau comes from, the team, and regional organizer. Most importantly, it's a repository of experience in revolutionary politics contained in the ranks of the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party. The regional organizer is responsible to the regional center local for the organization of the allocation of these resources.

The Speakers Bureau is a very important component of the regional structure, as it can assume a portion of the responsibility for financing regional work. Campuses in the region are multi-million dollar institutions which are supposedly at the service of the students who attend them. YSA'ers on these campuses can point out to the different financial bodies of the student bureaucracies the excellent range of radical speakers available. The brochure produced by the center should be professional looking, and consistent from year to year, (changing it all the time makes it look like a fly-by-night operation). The topics should be chosen to correspond to the political questions that our movement is taking up in the other areas of the propaganda offensive. The necessary thing to remember when designing a Speakers Bureau brochure is that it's a presentation of speakers. The speaker's credentials in our eyes is the experience gained in the revolutionary movement. However, to the financial institutions in the region, foreign travel, education and experience in various struggles are primary qualifications. Speakers Bureau engagements should be viewed as political interventions into the life of these campuses and attention should be paid to contact work and literature/press

sales. Where possible, comrades should be sent along with the speaker. In the past S.B. was seen as simply a financial gimmick. What we have found is that when regional comrades see it as a means to aid their work on campus that the financial understanding is easier explained and the results greater. In some cases a financial agreement can be worked out with the regional local, to help out their fund drive or other financial obligations.

Our experience with the Fall YS team has shown that it's important to view the team not just as a group of comrades with a literature table and a sales quota but as an important instrument that can play many different roles. Our team, in the course of carrying out its general propaganda responsibilities: built a regional conference in the region, established several new locals, recruited 23 new YSA'ers directly, on one campus carried out a free speech fight against Zionist intimidation, resulting in a mass meeting of 200 students in support of the Palestinian Revolution. It also helped in the direction of establishing a campus base for a city-wide regional local and helped strengthen several other locals. The team should serve as an example of what regional comrades should have the perspective of creating on their campuses. What we have found is that in many cases, the idea of joining the YSA in the region is more appealing when it is seen as the first step in establishing the YSA as a group on campus, which works as a team, each contributing what they can towards the work as a whole. With this concept, our politics, and the collaboration with the regional center, a group like this can have a tremendous effect compared with other groups on campus. Just as in the center, joining the YSA doesn't mean that the person is a fully-rounded Bolshevik, but one who has taken the first step. From then on it's important to help educate these comrades about our norms, through consistent collaboration. The next step in development for many of these comrades is the understanding that it's important that they come into the center. This should be a conclusion that the individual comrade comes to on their own, by the example set by the regional center and not from continual prodding.

In New York City the YSA is divided into 3 separate locals who function together through the medium of a city executive committee and a city-wide organizer. Regional work is organized on a city-wide basis, with the regional office as part of the city office and the regional organizer responsible to the city EC. Up to a year ago, a certain problem was posed by this method of organization. Regional work was an abstraction for most comrades in the center and regional comrades had no contact with the ranks of the YSA. This held back the expansion of regional work, made it difficult to motivate, and created misunderstandings in the allocation of resources. In order to reverse this situation we took several steps: one, to create an informal division of the region where each center local would be primarily responsible for a section of the region and, two, the establishment of regional directors. The regional directors function together as a committee to think out the work and act as a team with the regional organizer. They also serve as a means to bring back to the center locals the experience and lessons of this work. Lastly, they serve as a means by which the regional center can have a weekly picture of how comrades are doing in the region. This is important in a region like ours where it's impossible for the regional organizer to be completely on top of all areas in the region on a week-to-week basis.

Educationals in the region for YSA'ers and contacts was a project that we initiated this fall. For some areas in close proximity to the center we began holding educationals on a regular basis. This was organized from the local level and the instructors were from the Socialist Workers Party branches. Another project we carried out was a regional educational conference in Connecticut. This project was mapped out as a concerted effort by the regional comrades, the center local, (in this case, Lower Manhattan) and the team. The main objective of the conference was to recruit comrades necessary to build up the existing units of the YSA on several campuses in Connecticut. The second objective was to give the regional comrades a better understanding of what the YSA stands for. 8,000 leaflets were distributed throughout Connecticut. The leaflet was produced by the regional center and duplicated in the region. The

site of the conference was Hartford, with the local there taking the responsibility for arrangements with the assistance of the regional committee. Lower Manhattan YSA allocated a number of leading comrades to do contact work and material such as banners to give it a professional appearance. The conference was an exciting event for the participants and resulted in recruiting 5 of the contacts who were brought by the regional comrades from their campuses.

The central most important lesson that we have learned about this work since the last convention of the YSA is that every step forward opens up more opportunities for us to get out our ideas and forces the regional center to seek out more resources to do better regional work. If this work is well thought out and given good political direction, the results can be most rewarding to our movement.

December 15, 1973

CONTRIBUTION ON PRDF WORK

By John O'Brien, Lower Manhattan Local

One group of people that is under constant government surveillance are homosexuals. The recent pamphlet put out by Pathfinder Press completely overlooks homosexuals as a target group of government spying and harassment. The government has maintained a policy of harassment and discrimination that has resulted in the imprisonment of tens of thousands, loss of their jobs, constant fear and disruption of their daily lives and in the deaths of many for being gay.

During the 1950s Senator McCarthy was persecuting not only socialists but also homosexuals as a threat to security. Large roundups of homosexuals occurred throughout the 50s but did not end and continues to this day. There are still gay people in jail who were convicted of being gay out of the repression that occurred in the 1950s. The government still makes many arrests of gays in this country but now to a lesser extent due to the radicalization and particularly because of the gay liberation movement which has grown rapidly, as its influence, which has dealt heavy blows to the continuing oppression homosexuals face.

The Watergaters were caught twice during the recent election campaign in 1972 trying to use anti-gay attitudes.

We should seek to get gay groups around the country in support of our suit which will be to the gay movement's advantage if we win, thus enabling the gay movement to also bring suit for all the harassment that has endured over the years.

We should not miss this opportunity to reach out to large amounts of gay people who understand about government surveillance and harassment and who will help fight it since this is one of the chief causes the gay movement has (fighting government harassment).

We should join together as allies around this common goal. This is possible and the case of PRDF has already been published in several gay newspapers who are friendly to our movement.

December 14, 1973

RESOLUTION-AMENDMENT ON EDUCATION

By John O'Brien, Lower Manhattan Local

We should include educationals on the oppression of gay people in every local. We should have a series on how homosexuals are oppressed and the movement against that discrimination in the Young Socialist. We should then distribute it as a pamphlet put out by the YSA, as

part of our new pamphlet series. We should have an analysis on homosexual behavior and present a program for homosexual liberation. We should decide if homosexual behavior is natural and good.

December 14, 1973

WHERE DOES THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY REALLY STAND ON THE MIDEAST WAR?

By Brian Williams, Chicago Local

During the height of the Arab-Israeli War last October, I, as Chicago regional organizer, attended a meeting of the Madison YSA where comrades who support the Internationalist Tendency put forward their line on the Mideast conflict. Their position was clearly in conflict with that held by the YSA. Since to date none of the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency have submitted a document outlining their differences with the line of the YSA on the Mideast, I feel that it is necessary to outline for the benefit of the YSA as a whole the point of view put forward by these comrades and to point out where they go wrong.

At a time when Egypt, Syria and several other Arab states were in a military battle with Israel, the IT comrades in Madison put forward a third camp, abstentionist position on the conflict. They said that the YSA could not support either side in the Mideast war because it was just a battle between capitalist states. One IT member explained that Egypt is just as bad as Israel and he labelled them both as imperialist. This Mideast position was defended by John Holton - the national coordinator of the IT at that time.

Interestingly enough, this position is the same position publicly expressed by the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) in Madison, a split-off from the old International Socialists. This opponent organization holds a position of neutrality not only on the Mideast conflict, but for many years they put forward the same position for Vietnam. They said that the North Vietnamese government is no better than that of the US; therefore, neither side should be supported in the military battle raging in Vietnam.

The comrades of the Internationalist Tendency in Madison are confusing the position taken by revolutionary Marxists in a war between two imperialist countries with the position we take in a war between an imperialist power and a colonial nation. The YSA doesn't take sides in an inter-imperialist conflict because the question behind the conflict is which imperialist robber should exploit the colonial peoples. However, in struggles against colonialism and national oppression, the YSA gives unconditional support to the colonized nation. Thus we support their struggle against oppression regardless of the leadership of the colonial state.

Though it is true that both Israel and Egypt have capitalist governments, we do not think that a battle between these two is an inter-imperialist conflict. Israel, as a colonial settler state, represents the interests of US and world imperialism in the Mideast. Its perspective is to maintain the status quo throughout the Mideast. The Arab states, on the other hand, still represent colonies of imperialism; they are economically dominated by the imperialist powers.

Thus the YSA is not neutral in a war between the Arab states and Israel. We supported a victory for the Arab states against Israel in the October War. We know that a victory for the Arab states over Israel would advance the struggle of the Arab masses against Israeli and US aggression, and it would also be a step forward for the worldwide struggle by colonial peoples against imperialism.

Though the YSA supports the Arab states in a war against Israel, the YSA does not give any political support to the Arab governments. The two questions are totally separate. The YSA opposes the current bourgeois Arab regimes in the Mideast. We believe that only through a socialist revolution in the Arab states will the power of the Arab workers, students and peasants be fully mobilized against colonial oppression. We know that the perspective of the Arab rulers is the opposite of this; they do not have a plan to wage a consistent battle against Israel and the interests of imperialism in the Mideast. However, regardless of the subjective desires of the Arab rulers, revolutionary socialists support any and all concrete anti-imperialist actions taken by the leaders of the Arab states without providing one bit of political support to these leaders. For instance, when Egypt's Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in 1956, we supported this as a step forward in fighting imperialist control of Egypt. We knew that Nasser's perspective was not to consistently follow an anti-imperialist policy. In October, 1973, the Arab rulers, by launching the war against Israel, were again forced to undertake a fight with imperialism. The Arab rulers were forced to take

this step because of the mounting pressure they were coming under from the Arab masses to take actions to defend the Palestinians and to recover Arab land from Israel. We knew that Sadat of Egypt and Hassan of Syria had different reasons for participating in the October War. They wanted to gain a better bargaining position for negotiating some limited concessions from Israel and the US, which would be at the expense of the Arab masses. Yet, the act of waging war against Israel, was an important step forward in the arming and mobilizing of masses of Arab workers, students and peasants in battling a concrete form of colonial oppression regardless of the limited aims of the Arab leaders. In the context of the October War, the differences the YSA had with the Arab rulers was not whether to wage the war but over how to most consistently and effectively do it. In a military confrontation with imperialism, the job of Trotskyists is not to stand on the sidelines with criticisms of both sides, but to be the best supporters of the military struggle and to put forward a strategy to best defend the struggle of the Arab masses.

The Internationalist Tendency supporters in Madison lose sight of this perspective and fall into the error of assuming that the struggle of the Arab masses fighting Israel cannot be supported because of the political deficiencies of the Arab leaders. This position represents a concession to Zionism because it means a failure to actively fight against Israel. When the leadership of the Arab states are in a head-on battle with US imperialism, revolutionaries can't stand on the sidelines criticizing equally the faults of both sides. Such a position only amounts to back-handed support of the interests of imperialism. The logic of the Madison IT's position is that Arab Trotskyists should be for the defeat of their own army in a war with Israel. The Trotskyist position, on the other hand, is for Arab revolutionaries to be the best supporters of the military battle with Israel. This position flows from our unconditional support to the struggle of the Arab states against Zionist and imperialist oppression.

A couple of examples from history will illustrate how this position is in line with the traditional Trotskyist position of always supporting the struggle of colonial people against the exploitation of imperialism. In 1937, when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, we supported Haile Selassie in the military battle against Italian aggression. This never meant that we dropped our political criticisms of Haile Selassie. However, we understood that we could form a united front even with this reactionary monarch around the concrete anti-imperialist action of opposing the invasion of Ethiopia by the Italian fascists.

Trotsky's position on the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s also confirms our perspective. At that time, the Trotskyist movement supported the Chinese state in their battle against Japanese imperialism. This position was derived from our understanding of the progressive nature of the struggle by China as a colonial state against Japan as an imperialist oppressor. Concretely we supported the reactionary Chinese leader of the time -- Chiang Kai Shek -- in his battle to beat back the Japanese. We knew that Chiang's perspective was to maintain a bourgeois government in China which would be subordinated to the US rather than to Japan. Though Chiang Kai Shek wanted to support one imperialist power over another, his battle against Japanese domination of China represented another example of a colonial nation struggling against a concrete form of colonial oppression.

Trotsky in 1937 took a very hard line against those who urged our sections to adopt a line of neutrality toward Chiang Kai Shek's battle with Japan:

"... We have a war. The first question is should our Chinese comrades and with them all the others accept this war as their war or reject it as a war imposed upon them by the ruling class? The ultraleftists try to avoid the answering of this fundamental question. They begin by denouncing Chiang Kai-Shek with his former and future crimes. . . We know Chiang Kai-Shek well enough as the hangman of workers. But this same Chiang Kai-Shek is now obliged to lead a war which is our war. In this war our comrades should be the best fighters. Politically they should criticize Chiang Kai-Shek not for making war but for making it in an ineffective manner, without high taxation of the bourgeois class,

without sufficient arming of workers and peasants, etc.

". . . I believe that we cannot make in this respect any concessions to the ultra-leftists who are . . . yes, yes, - potential social-patriots. They remain passive internationalists in so far as they are ready to reject 'any war' in order to preserve their virginal 'neutrality.' But when events force these comrades to distinguish between war and war, they can easily slip into social-patriotism." (Writings of Leon Trotsky 1937-38, "Concerning the Resolution on the War," p. 110)

A second reading of this quote with the substitution of "Sadat, Hassan and Faisal" for "Chiang Kai-Shek" and "Arab" for "Chinese" will help clearly reveal how Trotsky would evaluate the line we should take on the war between the Arab states and Israel.

It is really ironical that despite all the talk by the IT of the need for "armed struggle," when a real armed struggle of the masses erupts, as occurred in the Mid-

east, the IT in Madison stands on the sidelines politically confused on which side to support. This mistake flows logically from the "armed struggle" line they put forward for Latin America. The IT in Madison is extending the mistake, or equating armed struggle with the political struggle, from Latin America to the Mideast. The subordination of politics to military questions leads them to equate support to the Arab states in war with imperialism with political support to the Arab leaderships. This position then leads them to oppose the armed battle with imperialism that the Arab masses have undertaken, simply because it is led by capitalist Arab leaders. Blinded by their policy of raising armed struggle above the forms of the class struggle itself, the Madison ITers fail to support the progressive armed struggle of the Arab masses against Israel.

To date, this line on the Mideast has only been expressed by the Madison IT. Do the other members of the IT throughout the country support this line? It is incumbent that the IT clarify their position for the benefit of the entire YSA and for the International discussion as a whole.

December 12, 1973

By Jim Rousey, San Francisco Local

The latest document of the IEC Majority on armed struggle, "On the Question of Armed Struggle in Latin America," (IIDE, Vol. X, No. 20), continues to defend the militarist deviations of the Ninth World Congress document on Latin America. This new document opens up the possibility of even further adventures, both in Latin America and in other areas. While claiming to represent the historical heritage of Bolshevism, it actually projects a schematic method foreign to the practice of the Bolshevik Party. This is most notable with regard to the July days.

The July Days: Lenin and Trotsky or the IEC Majority?

While much of the debate in the International has revolved around the 1905 revolution and its aftermath, the Bolshevik reaction to the events of July, 1917, which proceeded from their practical evaluation of 1905, are far more conclusive than comrades' impression of what they think the Bolsheviks' position on armed struggle was. First, it would be beneficial to see what the IEC Majority has to suggest.

The party's tasks should include:

" . . . not to remain content with general and abstract propaganda in this area (armed struggle - JR), but to undertake initial pilot-projects, to enter into initial actions that are carefully calculated for the effect they can have in increasing the combativity of the masses and their will and capacity for arming themselves. The revolutionary Marxist organization must take this road as soon as it has crossed a minimum threshold of cadre accumulation . . . " (Armed Struggle, p. 30-31, emphasis added)

Thus, as soon as a section of the International has accumulated minimum forces, (exactly how minimal is unclear; but in light of some of the experiences since the last World Congress, the assumption may be few indeed), it must begin armed struggle. Should these armed detachments be unable to raise the level of the mass movement, by "increasing the combativity of the masses and their will and capacity for arming themselves" and should this lead to a defeat, the IEC Majority has a plan to cover the problem.

"When the intensification of the class struggle has resulted in a temporary victory of the military dictatorship, and when experience has demonstrated to the masses that effective struggle against this dictatorship by trade union, semi-legal, routine methods is completely insufficient, it is perfectly legitimate to prolong the resistance against the threat posed by the dictatorship through armed resistance in the form of guerrilla struggle." (Ibid, p. 31)

We now have the IEC Majority's suggestions on what to do in two given situations. How did the Bolsheviks react to

the same challenge?

July 3-5, 1917, saw a mass semi-insurrection in Petrograd. Sparked by the continuing collapse of the ruble, the offensive which had been launched at the front, and the wave of lock-outs by factory owners attempting to break the workers movement, the workers and soldiers took to the street with arms in hand planning to overthrow those who they held responsible for their problems - the government of Kerensky. This occurred in spite of the urgings of the Bolsheviks whose position did not exactly concur with the IEC Majority.

"We have had to play the role of the fire hose." (History of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky, Sphere, 1967, Vol. II, p. 23) So Trotsky quotes the worker Bolsheviks of the Vyborg district. The Bolsheviks spent the days previous to the armed outbreak trying to stop an armed demonstration. Important to this task was the Military Organization of the Bolsheviks which was an instrument of fractional intervention into the army and the factory-based workers defense guards. As part of its effort the Military Organization issued a leaflet which said in part: "The Military Organization is not summoning you to action." (Ibid, p. 23) Thus, at the beginning of a movement of the masses toward armed struggle which was backed by elements of the army, we see the Bolsheviks trying to calm the masses, rather than spark them into action.

In spite of the fact that this movement commanded more support than all the adventures in Latin America that the IEC majority has supported, Lenin, who has been painted as the expert on guerrilla war, seemed less than enthused at the prospect of a premature armed insurrection. He had this to say in a message to the Petrograd workers:

"We understand your bitterness, we understand the excitement of the Petrograd workers, but we say to them: Comrades, an immediate attack would not be expedient." (Ibid, p. 23)

It is doubtful that this particular quotation will ever find its way into a document of the IEC majority. Yet this quote and those that preceded it set the tone for the Bolshevik intervention. As Trotsky said of Zinoviev's work in July:

"He raised the excitement of the masses to its highest note - not in order to summon them to decisive action, but, on the contrary, in order to restrain them. This corresponded to the moment and to the policy of the party." (Ibid, p. 57, emphasis added)

Here we see nothing about a "minimum threshold of cadre" who "must launch . . . pilot projects." Rather the Bol-

shevik method had nothing to do with this type of schematism and adventurism as Trotsky explains.

Trotsky Corrects the IEC MT on Armed Struggle

The July Days represented a huge urban uprising. "On the second day not less than five hundred thousand people participated." (Ibid, p. 71) It offered a chance to seize power and deliver Russia to the Soviets in a much less debilitated condition than it would be in another four months. "But nevertheless the leadership of the party was completely right in not taking the road of armed insurrection. It is not enough to seize the power - you have to hold it." (Ibid, p. 77, his emphasis) Trotsky then proceeds to outline the basic reasons why the seizure of power revolves around the political rather than the military.

"When in October the Bolsheviks did decide that their hour had struck, the most difficult days came after the seizure of power. It requires the highest tension of the forces of the working class to sustain the innumerable attacks of an enemy. In July even the Petrograd workers did not yet possess that preparedness for infinite struggle. Although able to seize the power, they nevertheless offered it to the Executive Committee. The proletariat of the capital, although inclining toward the Bolsheviks in its overwhelming majority, had still not broken the February umbilical cord attaching it to the Compromisers. Many still cherished the illusion that everything could be obtained by words and demonstrations- that by frightening the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries you could get them to carry out a common policy with the Bolsheviks. Even the advanced sections of the class had no clear idea by which road it was possible to arrive at the power." (Ibid, p. 77)

Thus we see as a central criterion for the seizure of power the political arming of the masses through prolonged struggle rather than a simplistic, schematic "military" concept. It is around this point that the militarist deviations of the IEC Majority from Bolshevism become clear. It is in this point we may seek and find the explanation, why after refusing the impulse to launch the insurrection prematurely, the Bolsheviks also resisted the temptation to launch guerrilla war in spite of the fact that "the intensification of the class struggle has resulted in a temporary victory of the military dictatorship." (On the Question of Armed Struggle in Latin America) But if the line of the IEC majority does not reflect the thinking of the Bolsheviks, on whose doorstep can the blame be laid? An article by Karl Andersson gives us further clues.

The IEC Majority and the German "Lefts"

Comrade Karl Andersson, in an article entitled "How Camejo Makes Lenin Say the Opposite of What He Writes" (IIDB, Vol. X, No. 18, P. 31) has a few further words to say about armed struggle:

"What interests us here are not the various qualifications and insinuations which we have excluded from the quotes, but the recurring thought that the size of the organization or the extent of its mass support could be the deciding criteria for the forms of struggle it proposes and initiates. We will certainly not deny the importance of this factor -- the strength of the party, its implantation in the working class -- but there can be no abstract rule which tells us when the necessary minimum of forces have been assembled."

In these lines he echoes other strategists of working class armed struggle.

"The March action as an isolated action of the party would be - our opponents are right to this extent - a crime against the Proletariat. The March offensive as the introduction to a series of constantly rising actions, a redeeming act.' (A. Thalheimer, Taktik und Organization der Revolutionare Offensive, Berlin 1921, p. 6) 'If it is asked what was actually new about the March action, it must be answered: precisely that which our opponents reprove, namely, that the party went into struggle without concerning itself about who would follow it.' (A. Maslow, Die Internationale, Berlin, 1921, p. 254)" (Third International After Lenin, Trotsky, Footnote No. 8)

These are the words of the leadership of the German Communist Party of 1921, those who inspired Lenin's famous pamphlet, Left Wing Communism and Infantile Disorder. Trotsky quoted these positions of the German CP as specific examples of revolutionary adventurism (putschism). Yet even the March action in Germany, regarded by the Bolshevik leaders as an adventurist disaster found more support than those of our comrades in Latin America. This is indicative of the extent to which "military" analysis has replaced that of Marxist analysis.

The Spreading Militarist Deviation

The fear expressed by comrades in the minority at the last World Congress that the guerrilla warfare strategy could not be contained in Latin America has been confirmed by events of the last four years. In addition to the debacle in Latin America involving those sections which followed the line of the Ninth World Congress, there are several other disturbing events. The continuing failure of the IMG to build a movement for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland can in no small part be credited to their ultra-left line involving support to the military actions of the IRA as a condition. The call by the French comrades of the ex-Ligue Communiste for a first round vote for parties which "reject a peaceful road to socialism" in the elections as opposed to traditional criteria of the Marxist movement reflects this adventurism. The debate in the International on the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party

revolves around precisely the question of "armed struggle." The recent debate in the SWP in which the IT espoused the theory of the state based solely on the question of armed struggle and totally detached from any economic considerations which finally culminated in the theory of the "feudal monarchical workers state" is a direct reflection of this deviation from Marxism. The substitution of adventurism for the strategy of party building opens the door to the destruction of the Fourth International. As Trotsky said of the struggle against

adventurism in the Third International:

"Had the Third International continued mechanically to follow the former path, one of whose stages was marked by the March events in Germany, perhaps within a year or two only splinters of Communist parties would have been left." (First Five Years of the Comintern, p. 2)

December 15, 1973

FACTS AND SLANDERS

By Ken Miliner, Lower Manhattan Local

Comrade Laird in his contribution "Critique of a YSAer's Election Campaign and Some Comments," starts off with a quote which is attributed to me: "Ken Miliner -- the Socialist Workers Party candidate for congress -- is talking on the telephone about election tactics . . . Miliner's final goal in running for congress is 'to help make a peaceful transition to socialism.'"

Not Revolutionary

"He denied that the Socialist Workers Party is a revolutionary organization. 'To get hold of this country, we have to work within the system; we must convince the majority of America to vote our way.'

"The above quotation is excerpted from an article in the Daily Californian, p. 3, October 30, 1972."

Comrade Laird doesn't comment on the supposed remark, why? I personally could not resist commenting on such a

perversion of Marxist principles. Perhaps it's because he didn't think that it needed comment -- after all what genuine Trotskyist youth could not immediately understand the revisionist nature of such a statement. The supposed statement by me is used as a jumping off point for a general attack on the electoral campaigns of the SWP.

However the problem is that I never made such a statement; in fact, I never even made a comment that could even be misinterpreted as what is quoted by Comrade Laird. Comrades should note the date of the article (Oct. 30, 1972). I do not know how long this comrade had the article, but he never checked for the truth. Since when do we take as fact articles in the bourgeois or campus press about us. But why check? Anyone who would make the fantastic statement that a party candidate advocated "the formation of a multi-class Black Party" will believe anything.

December 16, 1973

By Michael Maggi, Los Angeles Local

Comrade Gilbert Ramirez has submitted a contribution entitled, "For an Intervention Into the Gay Liberation Movement," (YSDB, No. 6), as a counterline to the NEC's perspective for gay liberation work. I urge comrades to vote against the amendment and to support the current orientation of the YSA. Previously I held views similar to those expressed by Comrade Gilbert, but further developments have convinced me that I was wrong.

A contribution to the discussion that might have pointed out some possibilities for YSA intervention into developing struggles would have been valuable for the discussion. But Comrade Gilbert goes well beyond this in a document which purports to be a full-blown analysis of the dynamic of the gay movement, an assessment of the current stage and political development of the movement, and proposes a general orientation to the gay movement by the YSA. Unfortunately Comrade Gilbert does not take up recent events in the gay liberation movement in any detail to explain how his proposals would have affected the YSA's policy and what these developments mean for the future.

When differences arise over the YSA's orientation toward the gay liberation movement, it is important to keep in mind that these differences are raised by comrades who agree with the YSA's fundamental international and national perspectives and who are actively building the YSA.

This does not mean that differences are not raised sharply and debated sharply. They are and will continue to be. But although the tone is sharp, the discussion must remain comradely. The purpose of the debate is to produce the political clarity that is necessary to arrive at the correct decision that can then be carried out by the entire YSA.

Beginning at the Beginning

The YSA's political position is straightforward and to the point: The YSA supports full civil, human and democratic rights for gays and is opposed to all forms of oppression and discrimination they face in this society. Comrade Gilbert proposes no basic change in this programmatic position; his disagreements lie elsewhere.

Differences arise over the assessment of the current stage of the gay liberation movement, on what our orientation would and could mean in this situation, and Comrade Gilbert believes important gains for the YSA are being lost. It is necessary to take these points up in some detail. Then we can address ourselves to the more important broader questions.

The Current State of the Movement

In a number of places Comrade Gilbert grossly exaggerates the numbers, political sophistication and readiness to struggle by gays. One example of this is he states 40,000

gays demonstrated in the 1973 San Francisco Christopher Street demonstration. A more sober figure would be 2,500. There are many such exaggerations, but it should not be necessary to go through his document and catalog them.

Comrade Gilbert's fundamental political assessment is this: the potential now exists for a large scale growth of political campaigns by the movement, a deeper politicization of gays, success for political actions, and the building of numerous united-fronts on a local and state level. The major obstacle he sees is the reformist leadership, a leadership that on the one hand is strong enough to block all independent action by the gay movement but on the other hand is so weak that they would not present our intervention with serious opposition.

He states:

"Where sentiment exists for a campaign against anti-gay laws, the reformist leadership or the general crisis of leadership prevents a campaign from developing (p. 16) . . . There is no organized central leadership in the gay movement. The ultra-lefts of the Gay Liberation Front period have lost much of their influence. The reformists appear to have filled the vacuum (p. 17) . . . While the fear of homosexuality and anti-Gay prejudice run rampant in the population, the main hindrance to winning the masses to the support of the gay liberation movement has been the crisis of leadership . . . This is reflected in the inability of the movement to build aggressive educational and mass oriented campaigns. This is a crisis that revolutionists can and must help resolve." (p. 19)

One should read Comrade Gilbert's contribution carefully and reflect on how he sees the situation in the gay movement. Even where the sentiment exists to organize a campaign against anti-gay laws, the leadership of the movement, or lack of leadership, prevents the organization of this campaign. This he feels is the single most critical factor. Last summer I agreed with this assessment and saw opportunities this fall for an advance in the movement. But now I disagree with this assessment for a simple reason: there have been tests of this assessment and no significant motion to organize such a campaign has developed.

"The National Gay Mobilizing Committee"

Last spring a national conference was called to organize a national march on Washington for gay civil rights. The conference was called by "The National Gay Mobilizing Committee for a March On Washington." It was obviously consciously patterned after anti-war conferences organized in the past by the SMC. An endorser list with some 60 organizations and prominent individuals was circulated, although the NY Gay Activists Alliance refused to support

it. Leaflets were laid out and circulated in a professional manner. It had the appearance of something that was going on somewhere.

The conference publicity included articles in the gay press, including The Advocate and The Lesbian Tide among others.

The conference was held in Champaign-Urbana during the Thanksgiving holidays. Somewhere around 50 people attended, mostly ultraleft counter-culturalists. The sole purpose of the conference was to set the date for a Washington gay rights march, but the composition of the conference made it clear that a national action could not be called and instead an ultraleft action at the American Psychiatric Association spring meeting in Detroit was projected.

From the fact that this conference was widely publicized and seriously built, we can conclude that there were not significant numbers of people willing to organize a national action for gay rights at this time.

The ITT Test

In September at a city-wide Tasks and Perspectives discussion, Comrade Gilbert and others spoke of a national call for demonstrations against ITT to protest job discrimination against gays. He urged support for this "campaign" and intervention into the movement to help call a New York demonstration for sometime during the fall or winter. A discussion of this is absent from his document because this whole episode was a fiasco.

A group in Minneapolis issued a "call" for "national demonstrations" against the hated ITT, Comrade Gilbert and others cited demonstrations on the West Coast as proof-positive that this was an important issue to relate to and build. But what were these actions? In Seattle there was a picket by 10 or 15 people for one or several days, then nothing more. In San Francisco 3 people carried out a bizarre action which culminated in a young man, garbed as J. Christ, chaining himself to a cross and leaning it up against one of the buildings owned by the phone company. To my knowledge no further actions of any sort were organized anywhere.

This is one of the events that led me to re-evaluate my position and finally change it. Why does Comrade Gilbert think the whole thing was such a debacle?

The New York Conference

But Comrade Gilbert would protest. He wrote about state campaigns and local campaigns, not national ones. But where is his evidence that sentiment exists among gay activists to organize such campaigns? Comrade Gilbert reminds us that "at the writing of this document a city-wide conference of gay and heterosexual supporters is being called to sponsor a mass demonstration for the passage of Intro 475." His very next sentence is, "The results of this campaign will have repercussions for the

gay movement around the country." Comrade Gilbert is so completely certain that this conference will produce a united-front that will mobilize a nationally important campaign that he forgets to tell us if anyone has endorsed the conference.

Has any group besides GAA endorsed the conference? New York has a history of many important groups: Gay People at Columbia, Gay Youth, some Brooklyn groups and several lesbian organizations. Have they endorsed the conference? Are they building it? What forces are actually involved in this conference?

Even though Comrade Gilbert omits such concrete information in his brief for a tactical intervention into this "struggle," some information can be stated somewhat reliably. Yes, several groups, including a couple of capitalist politicians endorsed the conference. From all indications, however, almost no one is interested in building it except for a few people in GAA.

And what about GAA itself? Isn't it true that in the past period it has declined in membership, influence and support by gay activists? Of course there have been ups and downs, but we should not confuse the two. At times over 100 will come to general membership meetings. At other times far fewer attend. The motion to propose a mass action to the conference was passed in a general membership meeting by 13 to 7. Several people spoke against it but voted in favor of it. What kind of real support can be expected from GAA for the proposed action?

Comrade Gilbert does not even address himself to analyzing the real forces involved in this conference or the real problems facing it. A conference has been called. Gays are brutally oppressed in society, so he believes with all his heart and soul that the organization of a mass gay rights campaign is in the offing. This perspective is a dream, born of hope, not reason or logic.

Certainly there is a need for such a mass gay rights campaign and I, too, have many hopes for such a development, but we cannot offer our hopes and wishes to the YSA as a political perspective.

Some radical GAA members certainly want a mass campaign. We support their efforts to initiate the action. But it would be total folly to substitute ourselves for a leadership that does not exist in the gay movement and attempt to organize sentiment when there are no other supporters and allies. From everything we have seen in real life, there is very limited base among gay activists to organize mass actions around Intro 475. Should real activity begin around this issue, then of course we would relate to it and discuss possible interventions. But why should we jump into this action when the overwhelming majority of gay liberation organizations aren't involved?

(Since this conference is taking place today, I can add some information about the actual event. A few com-

rades attended the conference, which at the high point attracted 44 people to it. Of these 44, 7 were women, 2 were Blacks and 2 were reporters. Two members of the city council gave greetings. The date of the proposed mass action is April 6. There was little enthusiasm at the conference.)

Should real activity begin around this issue we can discuss intervention into it. But the calling of the conference did not result in a major response; and the setting of a date does not ensure that it will be successful.

Comrade Gilbert proceeds from an abstraction and not from a real assessment of the relation of forces at any particular moment. Such a method is wrong since it could lead us to intervening in a situation where we face heavy opposition from the existing leaderships and have little prospect for actually carrying out any projected campaigns. Comrade Gilbert cites the importance of the Christopher Street actions. Let us look at them for a moment.

NY Christopher Street Liberation Day Comm.

Comrade Gilbert makes much of the annual Christopher Street demonstrations/parades/be-ins. On the whole they are a positive development. They keep the gay movement visible and at times have taken a political direction. But the actions are not uniform and present limited opportunities for interventions.

In the past the YSA has assigned comrades to build some of these actions. We may do so again. We will have the appropriate discussion at the appropriate time.

It may well be that the most effective intervention will be a propaganda one: selling our press, carrying a banner and giving general political support through our election campaigns, etc. In the last NY Christopher Street demonstration our banner supporting Intro 475 was one of the most prominent banners and one of the most political demands.

The New York Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee continues to meet regularly. They say they are planning next year's march. The thrust of Comrade Gilbert's document would require the YSA to intervene in this committee.

The Christopher Street committee is currently open but plans to become a closed membership committee during the winter. It is planning a parade around a general gay pride theme and takes the position that it should not be a political action.

What then would be the thrust of our intervention? To open the committee to all who wanted to participate? To adopt political demands? Even these two obvious positions would require a head-on fight with the current leadership entailing the probability of a split and the situation where the YSA would have to take primary pol-

itical and organizational responsibility for the action. In such a situation we would find few allies; we would have none in the beginning.

Comrade Gilbert would not have the YSA embark on such a course, but what is the line of his amendment if not to do just that? Doesn't he say the primary obstacle is the "crisis of leadership?" Aren't we in business to solve the crisis of leadership? Isn't this a crisis "that revolutionists CAN and MUST help resolve" (emphasis added -- MM).

Behind the "Crisis of Leadership"

The problems of the gay liberation movement are not simply problems of leadership. There has been a general ebb in radical activity on the part of the organized women's movement and the Black movement as well. The lessening of activities on the campuses has affected the development of the gay movement deeply and we cannot overcome this by proposing a demonstration and then going forward regardless of the response to such an action.

This is not to say that gays are not as open to radical or gay liberationist ideas now as a year or two ago. In general I think the opposite is the case: more gay literature is being published and more gay people are open to radical political ideas.

But the reality is that there is little prospect for any mass campaigns developing in the immediate period ahead, although some specific local actions may be organized.

Where such activity begins to occur, the YSA will discuss possibilities for intervening on the basis of the concrete situation. We will weigh the opportunities with other areas of work and we will collectively make and carry out our decision.

But Comrade Gilbert protests. He would maintain that even if opportunities developed, the YSA would automatically overlook them. The first line of his document reads, "The YSA has no perspective for the Gay Liberation movement of intervention into it . . . Without such a perspective as mine the YSA will be relegated to mere bystanding on the sidelines of the Gay Liberation movement."

This is not true.

Should important actions begin to develop, we will relate to them. But because of the general character of the current phase of the radicalization and the specific state of the gay liberation movement, we must resist any temptations to try to substitute ourselves for a viable gay liberation leadership which does not exist. We also must discuss any participation in gay liberation activities within the context of our central campaigns and priorities. (I will take this point up a little later in greater detail.)

This is not "mere by-standing on the sidelines" -- it is the proper perspective within which to place the discussion of these possible interventions.

The Question of Slogans and Political Campaigns

Comrade Gilbert wants to organize gays around political demands in mass political campaigns. But unfortunately he tosses the slogan "Gay is Good" into the hopper in spite of the fact that this slogan evokes many varied interpretations. At the same time, however, Comrade Gilbert avoids stating whether or not the YSA should raise this "demand."

Obviously homosexuality does not need the YSA's good housekeeping seal of approval to continue to exist either under capitalism or in the future society. We may all be permitted our own pet-theories about the nature of sexuality or homosexuality. I will spare comrades my opinions on the subject.

If Comrade Gilbert is concerned that the YSA identify with the sense of dignity that can be associated with the statement, "Gay is Good," he should be reassured. The YSA entirely supports the reassertion of dignity and humanity that can be behind such sentiments.

To the extent that "Gay is Good" is raised as a rallying point by persons in the gay movement, it is often associated with the counter-cultural view that gay is better than straight. The "Gay is Good" slogan also tends to ask people to support homosexuality per se, rather than to oppose the concrete oppression gay people face.

Isn't it obvious that "Gay is Good" is raised by all sorts of persons of different political persuasions for different purposes? The YSA should not be politically associated with "Gay is Good" as a slogan.

Comrade Gilbert seems to be raising another point in a somewhat oblique manner in his discussion of "Gay is Good." (p. 16) One might ask, he implies, whether the YSA is opposed to the oppression of gays in the workers states as well as under capitalism. Yes, of course. We are not working to abolish capitalist oppression only to continue oppression under socialism. In the pamphlet, Problems of Worker's Democracy in Cuba, referring to the Cuban cultural congress, Harry Ring states, for example, "It declares war on homosexuality in as shamefully a reactionary way as the worst of capitalist countries." (p. 10)

How We Determine Our Priorities

The YSA champions all the movements of the oppressed. This is because we stand for the rights and dignity of all the oppressed against the policies and institutions of the ruling class which rest on oppression and exploitation. We have a program for the complete abolition of classes and all the oppression spawned by this society. To bring about this future society we have to first abolish the present one. To do that we have to work with the SWP in

mobilizing the working class and its allies, especially the oppressed nationalities, in struggle for state power. This is our strategic goal.

But this does not dispose of the problem of deciding where to assign our comrades. It only poses the titanic scope of the questions we are confronted with.

We have never and will never assign comrades to interventions on the sole basis that we support the goals of that struggle. Capitalism oppresses and exploits people in every area of society. It would be complete folly for us to automatically assign comrades to every committee, group or struggle that develops against various aspects of capitalist oppression. We have very limited forces and always have to choose our areas of interventions carefully based on our political assessment of the objective situation and the opportunities before us.

Throughout this discussion we have to keep in mind that we are building a revolutionary socialist combat youth organization -- not a federation of activists in the various movements. We are not under contract to provide a service in the form of volunteers for movement offices. Within the context of our program we have to make a political judgment of our priorities at each conjuncture of the radicalization.

Clearly the gay liberation movement is not as fundamental to the class struggle as defense of the Vietnamese revolution. It was a basic responsibility of revolutionaries to initiate antiwar activities and to take political and organizational responsibility within united-fronts because the Vietnamese war was central to the class struggle in this country and internationally. Participation in the antiwar movement was a basic dividing line between revolutionists and non-revolutionists. Such a line does not exist with regard to participation in the gay liberation movement.

Central to our work at all times is presenting our socialist answers to the most pressing questions of the class struggle -- explaining our program against high prices, our solution to the energy crisis, our Watergate offensive, our strategy for the Black liberation struggle, etc. Gay oppression is an issue that directly affects a much smaller sector of the population than the major questions listed above.

The gay liberation movement is not as important to us as the women's liberation movement. The women's movement raises demands that challenge the oppression of women in the economic unit of the family and as underpaid, underemployed workers. The scope of the demands of the women's movement challenge fundamental aspects of capitalist society and as a whole cannot be met under capitalism. Because of the position of women in this society, struggles by women have more social weight than the gay liberation struggle. The socialist revolution will simply not occur unless masses of women are mobilized in struggle.

The gay liberation movement is a democratic struggle and is part of the class struggle, but because of the fact the struggle is limited to democratic demands without other factors such as a special social role for gays in the productive relationships, the gay movement will necessarily have less social weight and a secondary role in the revolutionary process.

I have deliberately refrained from trying to completely re-explain the YSA's program and analysis of society. To do that I would repeat the NEC political resolution, but only at greater length.

I am trying to illustrate a point here. In terms of our long-range strategic priorities, the gay liberation movement must not be placed on the same level as that of the struggles of the working class, the oppressed nationalities or women. Our interventions, election campaigns, press and YSA functions must always reflect this relative statement of priorities. When an upsurge occurs in the gay liberation movement, it does not follow that we will necessarily assign large numbers of comrades to it.

The central issues of war and peace, the oppression of national minorities, and the struggles of the working class as a whole are qualitatively more important to making the socialist revolution than our intervention into the gay liberation movement. When upsurges occur in these fundamental struggles -- which would in turn encourage the struggles of gay people -- we will need to retain a sense of proportion to be able to judge the relative importance of intervention into the various movements. To equivocate on this would threaten to disorient the YSA's overall perspectives.

In this regard it is necessary to directly take up the question raised by Comrade Gilbert about the "need" of capitalist society to suppress homosexual behavior.

I personally think that there is much food for thought in what people like Wilhelm Reich say about the inter-relationship of class society to the psychological and social repression of sexuality. HOWEVER, Marxists are just at the beginning of integrating such theories into the Marxist framework of understanding society and social changes. It should be noted that all the social transformations that have taken place in history have occurred without the question of the oppression of homosexuals or the repression of sexuality coming to the fore.

This is not to say that we laugh off the concern of people over the distortion and repression of sexuality which leads to what is legitimately called the sexual misery of the masses. We have hardly done so in the past. But one danger in this discussion is to characterize the repression of sexuality as a fundamental pillar of capitalist rule -- equating it with the economic exploitation of the working class or the racist oppression of Blacks and Chicanos. This is false and can distort our judgment of relative importance of the different struggles in a fundamental way.

We will not completely ignore sexual repression in our press or dismiss all opportunities for intervention in the gay movement because of an automatic relegation of these struggles to a low priority. But unless we have an objective understanding of these questions and their relation to class rule, we will not be able to engage in effective YSA-building activity through intervention into the gay movement.

In regard to Comrade Gilbert's highly abstract and idealist emphasis on "capitalism's need to suppress homosexual behavior," I think he is looking for theoretical justification for practical steps he feels would result in benefits for the YSA. But this debate and decision takes place in a situation with declining opportunities in the objective situation and his case is in any event in need of much more support. Since it can't be found in real life, perhaps it can be found in theory. With a calm discussion, real life will win out.

What Document? Which Orientation?

I think the NEC Draft Political Resolution presents a well rounded program for intervening into the class struggle as it is really unfolding in the United States today. Our obligation is not to provide every movement with leadership. We are trying to fundamentally change this society and abolish every oppression of class society. We remain very small, and must be clear about our political principles and our perspective for work. The line in Comrade Gilbert's contribution would unfortunately distort both the immediate and long-term perspective needed to build the YSA into a mass youth organization that will help lead the socialist revolution.

December 16, 1973

A NEW TOPIC IN THE INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION--THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

By Steven Warshell, Upper West Side Local

Among the topics that will soon have to come up in the dispute within the international Trotskyist movement is the question of the American revolution and the activities of Trotskyists here in the United States.

In what has become a fashion, the leaders of the IEC Majority Tendency have not stated anything specific about the United States, but here and there, amid a myriad of meaningless qualifications, generalizations and abstractions, they appear to have a different attitude than we of the YSA and SWP. Occasionally hints are dropped of what they think about the question of the United States and the American revolution. Here, for example, is the leadership of the ex-Ligue Communiste in their article, "The Mote and the Beam:"

"We can understand the difficulties that the rudimentary existence of political life in the United States causes for you, and in consequence, the use you make of the slightest electoral possibility to get out propaganda, general socialist propagands such as the pioneers of European socialism did for decades. We can understand the difficulties in a country where certain points of our program--the dictatorship of the proletariat, workers councils--have not appeared. But in Europe, and more particularly in France, this kind of propaganda is no longer necessary--the workers are only too familiar with it. It is the debate on the conditions of the transition to socialism that is on the agenda."

Leaving aside, for the moment, that the dictatorship of the proletariat and workers councils are not commonplaces in France, the article just quoted is trying to point out to American Trotskyists that we live in a country that is so backward, so crude, with such a "rudimentary political existence" that we are expected to act like the early social democrats, the "pioneers." What else could one expect?

In another example, the Draft Political Resolution submitted by the IEC MT, one finds the following assessment:

"Of all the important imperialist countries, the United States is the only one in which the proletariat is not yet participating in the spectacular resurgence of struggles of the last years. Revolutionary Marxists should give particular importance to the theoretical and political analysis of the causes of this delay, which is tied to the great historical delay in the formation of political class consciousness by the American proletariat, without, however, being identical with it. (IIDE, Vol. X, No. 20 p.8, emphasis added --SW)

Later on, the draft says:

"One cause of this backwardness should, without doubt, be sought in the fact that the union bureaucracy and the aristocracy of labor have systematically sacrificed the interests of the majority of the proletariat to those of a well-organized minority . . . The absence of a centripetal thrust of the working class also explains the sectoral fragmentation of the radicalization, which, in the absence of a solution of a total socioeconomic alternative (eh?--SW) to monopoly capitalism, in turn delays a massive entry of the proletariat onto the political arena."

Do these comments mean that a more developed theory and analysis on the prospects for the United States is already in the works? The Draft Political Resolution certainly encourages the formulation of such an item. In fact, it even begs the question, providing a skeleton for the scholars of the Internationalist Tendency to dress up with their "particularly important" work.

There is more than just the implication that there is something lacking or wrong with the analysis of the YSA and SWP in the IEC MT resolution.

As the Barzman letter disclosed, the comrades in the Internationalist Tendency have been waiting with baited breath to "take on the SWP on its own ground." Certain comrades in the IEC MT wanted to do the same. They seemed to feel that the resolution "Building A Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America" was not sufficient. In fact, they have even gone back to the history books to come up with reasons as to why the American Trotskyist movement has differences with the IEC majority. Comrade Bill Massey had the following to say on this point in his contribution: "The Barnes-Kerry School of Scandals: A Brief Response to a Last Minute Horror Story" published in SWP DB, Vol. 31, No. 34:

"Can we expect another open letter from Comrade Hansen, another split by the SWP from the world movement, and another retreat to the failure of IC politics . . . What a tragic scheme! The SWP, after ten years of reunification, has failed to integrate itself into the world movement . . . "

We have heard this line before, in the Domingo letter by Livio Maitan. I think that both Comrades Livio and Massey mean this in a political, rather than organizational way. They are telling us that the American Trotskyist movement has been politically mistaken since 1952.

If this is the case, then we can perhaps think that the following is the IT and IEC MT position on the American revolution.

"Only the blows resulting from a major economic crisis or a war will seriously shake the present foundations of the relative power of American imperialism. And there is every reason to believe that the real revolutionary eruption of the American proletariat will come only after the outbreak of the war, which the reactionary bourgeoisie will precipitate rather than let itself be caught in the catastrophic vice of a major economic crisis. Meanwhile, it is the progress of the world revolution which saps the power of American imperialism, and prepares and makes worse the conditions under which the major revolutionary crisis of the future will break out.

"Historically, the American revolution seems, as before, to take its place as the last link in the chain of the world revolution, and not as one of the next successive links.

"Furthermore, preparation for the virtually inevitable struggle of the revolutionary forces throughout the world against the last bastion of reaction--Yankee imperialism--must be freely accepted, with all its consequences." (Resolution of the Fourteenth Plenum of the IEC, December, 1953, "Resolution on the Causes and the Lessons of the Crisis in the International." Adopted unanimously just after the split in the Fourth International.)

Is this the line into which the American Trotskyist movement should have integrated itself? Here again, another interesting similarity between the "world movement" of 1953-63 and the "International Majority" of 1973 becomes apparent in the "historical delay" of the American workers to radicalize. In actual fact, the Draft Political Resolution of the IEC MT makes a case that the delay is so "historical" that the social and political crisis in the United States around the Indochina War prevented the radicalization of the American working class because of its "sectoral fragmentation." The authors also state that the sectoral fragmentation was caused by the absence of the "centripetal thrust" of the workers movement in the radicalization.

This kind of idea is a great help to us here! It leads one to the idea that revolutionaries should not participate in the movements of various sectors because that delays the working class radicalization. But it also says that the sectoral divisions in the radicalization would not have predominated if there had been a working class movement acting as a pole for the sectors in the radicalization. The latter is true enough, but the former concept is simply sectarian. We have all heard it before in anti-war coalition meetings.

The question of the American revolution is one of absolutely primary importance. If there are differences on the question, they should be discussed.

The American Trotskyist movement has already formulated its approach to the American revolution. It is codified in the Theses on the American Revolution written by James P.

Cannon in 1946 and adopted by the SWP convention in that same year. Today this document stands as our basic approach to this question. I would urge every comrade to either read it or reread it in the light of the above quoted statements. But the following are its basic positions.

1. That the American revolutionary workers movement is an organic part of the international revolutionary process. Every defeat the workers in another country inflict on imperialism is a stimulant to the revolutionary process in the United States.

2. The role of the United States in the world is decisive. Any victorious revolution anywhere in the world is immediately confronted by the counterrevolutionary power of American imperialism. A revolutionary victory in the United States is completely decisive--it will seal the fate of the capitalist order, and Stalinism.

3. The economic and social weight of the American proletariat is predominant in American society. Nothing can stand up against its power.

Because of the high living standard of the United States, it is very unlikely that a bureaucratic degeneration will occur in revolutionary America. There do not need to be any special "safeguards" against this. The one and only problem is the conquest of power.

The American working class has the highest standard of living of any working class in the world. This is not necessarily a conservatizing factor. In times of economic instability, this factor will make the workers more combative. We believe that the American workers will defend their gains and will not accept a major slashing of their living standard.

The American working class has the advantage of being free from reformist training. There has never been a mass reformist workers party, like the big Stalinist and Social Democratic parties in Europe. The American workers will not have to unlearn Stalinism or Social Democratic reformism.

The leaders of the IEC MT have already noted the "backwardness" of the American proletariat. This is completely one-sided and superficial. Today in all the countries in western Europe our comrades face a similar situation as we do here--the workers have not broken from the labor bureaucracy. Yes, in France today there is a higher general political level. The workers are more class-conscious. But, one cannot help getting the idea from their polemics that they are referring to other differences.

4. The history of the American working class is a history of lightning changes in consciousness. In 1929, the CGT in France had more than a million members, the Socialist Party federation was even larger. In the United States, less than 3 million workers were organized in the sterile craft union organizations of the AFL.

Ten years later, more than seven million were organized. Four million of these in the CIO. By 1946, the two federations had 15 million members between them. From 1935 to 1946, the number of organized workers in the United States doubled. They had built organizations more advanced than any other in the world. We are witnessing now the beginnings of a change of consciousness in the working class.

5. That a mass revolutionary workers party based on the Leninist model is essential for the victory of a socialist revolution in the United States. The Theses state:

"Given an objectively revolutionary situation, a proletarian party--even a small one--equipped with a precisely worked out Marxist program and firm cadres can expand its forces and come to the head of the revolutionary mass movement in a comparatively brief span of time. This too was proved conclusively --and positively--by the experiences of the Russian revolution in 1917. There the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin and Trotsky, bounded forward from a tiny minority, just emerging from isolation and underground in February to the conquest of power in October--a period of nine months."

All this took place in backward Russia.

We do not place a timetable on the American revolution. To do so would be meaningless, if not detrimental to the movement. Furthermore, I can see no reason to immediately assume that the American revolution will be extraordinarily delayed. Especially considering the history of the American working class movement.

Let's go back to the Draft Political Resolution, for a moment. They say:

"The absence of a centripetal thrust of the

working class also explains the sectoral fragmentation of the radicalization . . . which, in turn, delays a massive entry of the proletariat onto the political arena."

What this means to say is: Because the working class did not start the radicalization, and determine its character . . . the character of the radicalization that is occurring in the United States blocks the working class from radicalizing.

This is a wonderful tautology, but it means something that is not being said here. On one level, it means that the IEC MT members are at a loss on what is happening and what is going to happen in the United States. On another level, the level of the ex-Ligue Communiste's "The Mote and the Beam," they are willing to translate their loss into the only alternative for American Trotskyism-- "make use of the slightest electoral possibility to get out . . . general socialist propaganda, like the pioneers of European socialism did for decades." All this because of the backwardness of the United States?

The comrades of the IEC MT should give themselves a little help in their project -- that "particularly important political and theoretical analysis" of the United States.

They should give us their opinions. In the Draft Political Resolution they hint at a wide difference with the YSA and SWP. In the article "The Mote and the Beam" they decry the backwardness, the "rudimentary existence of political life," in the USA.

We do not need to defend the radicalization. But the point remains, however, that now the IEC majority has posed the question of the American revolution. The onus is on them to provide some answers--we already have our own.

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