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LESS TALK, MORE ACTION -- FIGHT RACISM

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Workers and Students Fight Racist Curtis Bros.

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For over two months truck drivers at Curtis Brothers Furniture Co. in Washington, D.C. have been on strike and supported by U of Maryland SDS and other chapters in the area. During this period, despite early disappointments, the strikers' determination to win has grown rather than diminished; and contact between the strikers and SDSers has increased. As students have shown themselves to be honest, open and able to fight racist and anti-working class attitudes within themselves, a real worker-student alliance has been forged which has been able to more effectively fight Curtis, the boss.

The Curtis family owns a real estate company, a bank, and Washington's largest furniture store -- all of which prey off of Washington's Black working class community. Their holdings aren't limited to the Washington area -- a textile factory in Georgia, for example. While Curtis rakes in hundreds of thousands in profits, he pays Black drivers \$1.60 an hour to start (white workers get a little more), deducts for health and welfare benefits known only to him, and forces his drivers to operate unsafe trucks. The strike was started to alleviate some of these problems through unionization. A wage increase to \$3.20 an hour to start, health and welfare benefits, safety conditions and union recognition were the issues.

Fighting Racism

One of Curtis's main weapons against the strike has been racism -- none of the white workers have gone out on strike. Curtis's racist practice of paying white workers slightly more than black workers and granting them somewhat better working conditions has very successfully divided the white and Black workers. Thus, a major point in leaflets put out by both the workers and SDS has been Curtis's racism, and how the union, if won, would benefit all workers.

This approach of directly confronting racism was more effective among white shoppers than we origi-

nally anticipated; many turned around and refused to buy at any of Curtis's many 'sales'. One way we fought the racist attitudes among customers was for a Black worker and a white student to approach customers together and discuss the issue of racism specifically, talking about how it was the boss's rule of thumb -- divide and conquer. Moreover, the experience of supporting the strike and getting to know the Black workers helped us to fight many of our own racist attitudes and involved many students new to SDS in the fight against racism in a concrete way.

The strikers were able to rely on support from the almost completely Black working class community of the area, support they have built by leafletting and talking to people. As a result, Curtis's profits have fallen 60-70%. In retaliation there has been increased intimidation and repression of the Black community. One day when a large number of high school students showed up on the picket line, police went around telling parents not to allow their kids to 'get into trouble'.

Students and Workers Learn through Struggle

Recognizing the need for a union to fight the bosses, the strikers also knew the sell-out nature of the union leadership. One union 'organizer' used to show up every few days and sit around in his air-conditioned Cadillac and turn back some of the union trucks making deliveries. The strikers knew what this kind of support meant and ran this 'leader' off (he was the same one who had told the media that SDSers were not wanted on the picket line). The workers have dealt much more effectively with trucks making deliveries than those who drop in occasionally from the local. Earlier in the summer, however, some of us spoke out too generally against the union. It was the workers who reminded us that it was a union they were striking for, and that it was the leadership, not the union, that was the problem.

At the same time we learned lessons about the nature of state power. Some so-called 'revolutionaries' came and suggested that the strikers use the courts. When pressed, they admitted you couldn't win through the courts, but that you could harass Curtis and reach the community through publicity in the media. The workers, however, have been winning on the picket line with militant action, and Curtis is hurt by shrinking profits more than he could ever be by court cases. Slashed tires and a burned truck cab have been accompanied by workers' leaflets to the community documenting Curtis's treatment of tenants and his robbery through banks and furniture stores. They have called for strong community action, leading the fight against Curtis's racist exploitation of the Black community. It has become more and more obvious to us that to win you must rely on the people, not on the courts or 'good' elements among the bosses they serve.

Events in the strike have also cleared up many of our questions on the nature and uses of nationalism; two instances stand out. Early in the strike a Black cop approached a striker and a student and asked the worker what he was doing 'walking with trash'. The Black worker's reply was that he knew where he stood, where the cop stood, and where the student stood, and it was obvious who was together. And later, in an even more revealing incident, a Black scab told a Black worker that he shouldn't be angry at him for scabbing since he was a 'soul brother'. 'You're no soul brother of mine, you scab,' was the reply. 'You're on the wrong side of the line.' At which point the scab went after the striker with a hammer and hit him in the head. This attack was warded off by workers and students on the line; and it was the striker and his defendents who were arrested, not the scab.

We made a particular effort to raise political ideas with the workers during the strike, and this

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Letters

Dear New Left Notes:

The campus work-in will be a great program, but the article on it in the July issue of NLN leaves a lot of questions unanswered. I think that many of us need a far more thorough explanation.

Various people have given me various reasons for backing the program. Here are some of them:

1. SDS members should organize campus workers to fight the administration

2. SDS members should make friends with campus workers on the job, so that when a strike comes, the alliance with SDS will be natural

3. Same as (2) with the additional reason that after a strike the ties with SDS can be strengthened instead of dissolving as usual

4. SDS members should help fight students' bourgeois attitudes by getting other students to take campus jobs (as in the industrial work-in)

5. SDS members should take campus jobs to fight the anti-working class attitudes of other students on the same jobs, by getting those other students to ally with the full-timers

6. SDS members should take campus jobs in order to strengthen their own understanding of the condition of the working class (again, as in the industrial work-in)

7. SDS members should organize student workers (as well as full timers as in (1))

8. SDS members should take campus jobs so they can get to know students who work so much it's hard to reach them other ways.

9. SDS members and others should take campus jobs in order to strengthen their understanding of the university-as-a-ruling-class-institution

10. SDS members should take jobs to discipline themselves

11. SDS members should take campus jobs so that when student struggle emerges, they can make it harder for the university to lie to the campus workers about what's going on

12. SDS members' taking campus jobs seriously can help break down the myth of SDS as a poor little rich kids' club

Most of these reasons sound good, and some sound alike, but they're all distinct. If we assign priority to one reason over another, that will help answer the questions people are asking now: Should we concentrate on getting jobs where our contact with full-timers is as great as possible? Or shall we concentrate on getting jobs where our contact with other working students is as great as possible? Is a secretarial job much worse than a kitchen or maintenance job? Is a job in a hospital run by the university just as good as a job on the campus itself? Is it really important for everyone in SDS to take a campus job -- how can we decide whether anyone's other tasks are more important? On what basis, if any, should we win students outside SDS to take campus jobs? How quiet should we be to avoid being fired?

These aren't just tactical questions. Everyone has his own answers to them. I happen to think it would be terrible

for large percentages of SDS women to take jobs as relatively 'privileged' secretaries, for example. However someone who thought reason #11 was very important would think there should be as many SDSers in these jobs as in others. I also think we should maximize our contact with full-time, permanent employees, even though this will be hard. But someone whose main concerns were reasons #7 and #8 would disagree. And so on. The point is, I'd like to see some detailed comments. 'All the reasons are good' isn't good enough.

Mimi Gerstell, Harvard-Radcliffe

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The split at the June SDS Convention was a disaster for the left. Reconciliation is a necessity, not a luxury. I have no interest in assigning blame, making accusations, or taking any side except the side of anti-imperialism.

I am sending this analysis and proposal to both versions of SDS. It will be most interesting to see who fails to print it.

Leftist unity is a necessity. First, as long as we preach unity and solidarity to workers, GIs, black people and others, yet are bitterly divided among ourselves, we not only appear to be hypocrites, we are hypocrites. This observation will not be lost on the people we are trying to organize and will destroy the credibility of all leftist factions. Nothing could please the ruling class more. Secondly, unity is essential because whether or not we are together may mean whether or not I am alive ten years from now, and the same goes for you too, brother and sister. Think about that.

Despite frustrations and antagonisms, many of which no doubt were justified, it does little for leftist unity to exclude a faction from participation instead of making intelligent political criticisms as I hope I am doing here, in a spirit of advancement of consciousness and unity. The requirement of verbal support for the NLF and the Panthers (while commendable by itself) as a prerequisite for SDS membership falls into the same category as a loyalty oath or a pledge of allegiance and is subject to the same criticism.

One issue which is central to any leftist program is self-determination. If this is to mean something, we must respect the judgment of those among us (nationally and internationally) who are leading struggles for self-determination. We must avoid judging their performance against standards which may not be relevant. For example, criticism has been made of black studies and open admissions on the grounds that it will not be concretely attacking imperialism. However, this criticism raises several issues.

1. It is to tell black leaders who are class conscious and anti-imperialist that they do not know what is needed for black people.

2. It fails to recognize that a struggle to include anti-racist courses (i.e.

courses oriented toward the needs felt by black people) acts to politicize and educate a campus regarding racism, regardless of whether or not the demand is granted.

3. If the struggle is successful, it builds faith in the method of collective and militant struggle. If it fails, it may expose the racist and imperialist nature of the institution.

4. If it succeeds, it opens the ground for courses about how black people become doubly oppressed, plus the additional advantage of providing teaching jobs to class-conscious black teachers, if the control of the programs is in the hands of black students, as has been the demand.

5. The demand for courses from an anti-imperialist, anti-racist perspective on the part of blacks can be a stimulus for similar kinds of demands on the part of white radicals. The ruling class is not without its contradictions. Gains for the left can be made with united militant action because many administrations would prefer to make concessions of this type in exchange for relative peace on the campus and avoidance of public embarrassment and the possibility of a consequent financial crisis.

Most of the same arguments can be made as well for the concept of student power. Both black studies and student power are not part of the ultimate solution, but can provide excellent training. They are not the end, but part of the means to the end.

If people are to be organized for a struggle, it must be around issues that are problems as perceived by the people to be organized. Yet I have seen criticism of the American Servicemen's Union for failure to raise revolutionary demands: Do such critics actually believe that GIs can be mobilized around the slogan 'All power to the working class'? Blindness to elementary psychology is a major barrier to leftist success or unity and stands in the way of understanding that the struggle is being fought on many fronts.

Much the same criticism holds with reference to criticism of the black revolutionary unions for failure to mobilize across racial lines. The obvious reality is that black workers are far more ready for anti-imperialist, anti-sellout union struggles than white workers. To expect blacks to wait for the white workers to abandon their conditioned racism and join them is preposterous. It should be evident that the management uses racism to keep whites and blacks in competition. The blacks are getting the short end of the stick (as usual) and are mobilizing in a militant fashion. While of course it is desirable for white workers to see through the management-union manipulation, for us to reject militant black unions on the grounds that they amount to only half a loaf is to commit a gross error, subjectively and objectively.

The Panthers have been criticized by some for the politics of their food for children program. In particular, criticism centers around the fact that some food is donated by food chains like Safeway. The critics contend that the people will be fooled into thinking the stores just benevolently and of their own free will decided to give food to hungry children. This criticism amounts to having no faith at all in the people, people who know from experience that they have been consistently screwed by the supermarkets. What they will understand is that the power of the Panthers has been sufficient to force the food stores to give food against their will. This lesson will not be lost on the black population. Results count.

It is a mistake also to assume that a black cop is necessarily and permanently against the liberation struggle, and for any predominantly white organization to make such an assumption is out of order.

Community control of police or schools has been opposed on the grounds that the community cannot have such

control while capitalism lives. Ultimately, this is true, but there are intermediate steps. To reject the issue of community control is like rejecting wage improvements categorically on the grounds that they will not destroy the system of wages. That also happens to be true, but none other than Marx himself clearly supported intermediate demands prior to the end of the wage system. Similarly with the issue of community control: if the people have some say in the behavior of the police, they may be able to spare their people from indiscriminate beatings and gassings even though the police still protect exploitative capitalists.

On the question of women's liberation, the criticism has been made that change in life styles by way of less consumption of cosmetics, etc., is not the proper way to fight imperialism. Once again, here is an example of a superficial criticism, offered dogmatically and without much thought. It totally neglects important subjective elements. For women to free themselves of the 'need' to use cosmetics is an act of liberation from the domination of mass media conditioning. This in itself is a good thing. This break can be the beginning of an understanding of the role of the media and of advertising.

It is a break from a form of exploitation, i.e. by the cosmetic industry in its creation of false 'needs'. To refuse to consume its products is a way of reducing its profits, and this is a way of fighting capitalism. Imagine the impact if 50 million women stopped using cosmetics!

Although women are exploited as women, it is not simply economic exploitation that we need be concerned about. Male chauvinism is not an economic condition but an attitude deriving from subjective ideas about roles people play, roles that derive historically from an economic status that is now obsolete. Faulty subjective ideas that oppress, as well as economic conditions which oppress, must be destroyed.

The single most important thing the left has to do is stop vicious attacks on other leftists. There are many ways to attack the system, not just one, and we should have enough faith in each other's efforts to leave them alone, unless we intend to assist. The lesson of Ben Franklin ought to be recalled. He said wisely, 'Either we hang together or we'll hang separately!' To internalize this maxim as an everyday working conviction is more important than a hundred resolutions or programs.

We must be far more prepared to praise and encourage the efforts of other radicals, despite differences that we have, and far less ready to criticize. None of us have all the answers, individually or factionally. Instead of condemnation for the activities of any radical (and physical attacks on other factions are totally inexcusable) let us offer general praise and then friendly suggestions for additions or modifications of their programs. The differences which separate PL from the Panthers are miniscule when compared to the differences which separate them from the Chase Manhattan Bank. Let us not get so involved with the trees that we forget the forest.

Specifically, to begin to reverse the disastrous trend toward hostile factionalism, we can do the following:

1. Delegations from the Revolutionary Youth Movement and Progressive Labor must meet to reaffirm that their opposition to capitalist imperialism is stronger than their own differences concerning the most appropriate method of attacking the enemy. Such delegations should consist of those other than the main factional spokesmen at the convention to minimize existing friction.

2. Mistakes made in the past must be acknowledged on both sides. Dogmatism among leftists is indefensible. So is condemnation of the efforts of our brothers. The split of the June

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Panther Leaders Blast RYM - RYM Leaders Attack White Workers

And that I think that they need to be reminded that if it were not for the Black Panther Party, or black people in particular in America - that there would be no need for S.D.S. and that they would probably be - be laying up in some park - Yellowstone Park somewhere freaking off. And we want them to know that we're not going to stand any shit from them.

And that they're not revolutionaries, that they are national chauvinists, that they are national socialists. That the kind of socialism that they advocate is nothing more than an acute case of racism, manifested in every organization that white counterparts are allowed to participate in.

THE BLACK PANTHER SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 1969 PAGE 16

Excerpts from interview with Chairman Bobby Seale and Chief of Staff David Hilliard, Black Panther Party.

Jamie Kilbreth, Editor

The Revolutionary Youth Movement leadership has based their legitimacy so much on the Black Panther Party (BPP) - which they have hailed as the vanguard -- that the BPP leaders' attack on them comes as a surprise. Their alliance with the BPP leaders was probably the main way the RYM leadership got any honest people to follow them when they walked out of the June Convention, declaring PL and who-knows-who-else 'expelled' (by a minority). The RYMers said:

...because the groups we look to around the world for leadership in the fight against U.S. imperialism, including the Black Panther Party (our emphasis) and the Brown Berets, urge us to do so, SDS (read: RYM) feels it is now necessary to rid ourselves of the burden of allowing the politics of the Progressive Labor Party to exist within our organization. (from RYM statement on why they walked out)

Now, in a Berkeley Barb interview (excerpts are printed above) with BPP leaders David Hilliard and Bobby Seale, the BPP labels RYM 'national socialists' - that is, fascists! Does RYM still consider the BPP leaders' word all-im-

portant? Are groups the BPP condemns to be purged? Is the BPP still the vanguard?

The Panthers' attack on RYM takes away a respected group on whose coat-tails they can ride. It was apparently provoked by RYM's decision not to push the Panthers' 'community control' of police petition in white communities. RYM objected to the Panthers' plan to circulate the petition in white as well as non-white areas. Said RYM: 'This flaw in the petition not only undermines the fight against white supremacy, but might even reinforce racism that would use police forces to 'protect' whites from Blacks.' (from statement by RYM NIC)

I think 'community control' of police is a reactionary demand because it creates the illusion that the people who are oppressed by capitalism can take control of a chunk of the very government the capitalists use to keep those people down! The idea is, in effect, for a given community to create an oasis of socialism while the society as a whole remains capitalist. It is impossible to share control of the government; fighting for 'community control' of police can only be diversionary.

But what if 'community control' of police were a GOOD demand? Then it would be good for both Black and white working people! While I think the Panthers' program of 'uniting against fascism' by circulating 'community control' of police petitions is wrong and harmful -- RYM's criticism of the petition is precisely the WRONG one! RYM argues that it would be bad for white workers to control the cops -- that this would increase racism, and harm Black and other third world working people. That means white workers can't be won to an anti-racist viewpoint. It means that white workers are seen as more reactionary, potentially, than the present power structure! (For, they imply, it would be WORSE, it would be MORE harmful, than at present, it would BUILD racism to circulate the petition.) Thus the workers - not the ruling class - are seen as the vanguard of fascism.

So when the BPP leaders now attack RYM for being parasites, for not wanting to fight racism but for wanting to fight to the last Black and other Third World person, their argument is not without justification.

The reasons for this criticism and the furious counter-attack by the BPP leadership are not exactly clear. It may be part of some elaborate power struggle within RYM. Or maybe the 'Communist' Party was offended by RYM's 'attacks' on revisionism. Or maybe the BPP leaders just got tired of being allies with a dead weight. A clearer explanation will probably be possible in the future.

Advance the Worker-Student Alliance

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was instrumental in our getting to know the workers well. In addition to racism, we talked about how Curtis was part of a class that exploited all workers, and made this concrete with research showing his own particularly widespread interests. We raised that it was this same class that oppressed students, and that on campus we were fighting in the interests of workers against our common enemy. One very important issue to raise was male chauvinism, not in the abstract but discussing how it divided the strikers from their wives and the SDS women who came down to support them on the picket line. We've tried to avoid abstraction, but we've often used this as an excuse for not raising our politics -- a weakness we'll have to correct.

Advancing the Worker-Student Alliance

In order to build a real worker-student alliance, more is needed than recognizing the oppression

workers face every day in this society, or even fighting together with them in a specific instance; trust and lasting friendship between workers and students must be developed. At the Curtis Bros. strike, activity which began on the picket line was expanded to helping workers build community support for the boycott of Curtis Furniture, and contact between workers and students was broadened to social activities such as parties and picnics or simply meeting and talking after picketing. This has reached a point where some of the students and workers are so close that they wouldn't let a week-end go by without seeing each other somewhere off of the picket line -- genuine friendships have developed. Both workers and students are already planning ways to get together in the fall and throughout the rest of the year.

These ties have rendered useless the bosses' and their cops' attempts to divide the students from the workers through the use of traditional anti-communist baits (such as 'all they want is disruption'). Because we have been open and honest with the workers about our politics and about our anti-working class and racist attitudes, the bosses' line that we were all students... that we didn't have to work the way the strikers did... didn't work at all. We also talked to the strikers about how we were taught certain ideas in school that divided us from workers, and how our actions on campus and at the strike were efforts to defeat those attitudes and ideas. In the end, though, practice was what convinced the workers, not words.

If our actions won first of all the respect and later the trust and friendship of the strikers, this was determined by the attitudes with which we approached the task of building ties with the workers. We were interested in learning from them; we didn't arrive with any message to deliver. Because of this attitude, one of the primary results of our work has been the political development of individual SDSers and of SDS in the area. And it is probably this attitude that most sharply differentiates us from most of the Revolutionary Youth Movement supporters who came down to the line. While some RYMers have played a good role, most of them arrived on the picket line with a lot more to say than to learn; they spent most of their time with each other, engaging in abstract theoretical discussions which separated them from the strikers (as did their Mao buttons), and thus learned little.

Through our experience at Curtis Bros., Black workers and white high school and college students have greatly increased their understanding of what a worker-student alliance should be and how to build it. The workers, who know us and our politics, have expressed an active willingness to defend us. In one instance a scab in a Curtis truck tried to run down a student who was standing alone. Within seconds



Worker-student pickets cut business in half

a student who was standing alone. Within seconds the scab was dragged out of the cab by one of the strikers; other strikers let students know that if he hadn't been there to do the job, they would have, and would be in any incident in the future. This is the beginning of a fighting alliance.

Many of us feel that the building of such a strong alliance has been partly due to the length of the strike. Because of the short length of most strikes (which do provide the basis for developing a worker-student alliance) all too often long-lasting ties are not developed. The program of building a campus worker-student alliance provides the time and contact needed to develop the kind of fighting alliance forged at Curtis Bros. Last year at the University of Maryland, a struggle began among University employees (who are mostly Black women) to build a union and gain union recognition. This is particularly significant because Maryland is a state institution; any struggle must be waged against both the University and the State. SDS at Maryland supported this effort last year, but because we didn't have the perspective of really developing close ties with the workers we were not as successful in our support as we could have been. We plan to change this by getting jobs on campus this fall, and putting into practice there what we have learned at the Curtis Bros. strike -- not to mention bringing together the people we have gotten to know from both places. There has already been a meeting of the shop stewards of the Curtis teamsters and the U of Maryland Association of State and Municipal Employees in order to discuss ways in which they might be able to help each other. The workers have seen how their struggles relate -- how they are in fact part of the same struggle -- and how they can fight together. And they also see that students are willing to fight on their side and can be trusted, that a worker-student alliance can be built that fights in the interests of workers and students, against the concrete ways they are exploited by the bosses who run the shops and the universities.

Letters (cont.)

Convention must be renounced and the grounds laid for some unified and concrete action in order to provide an occasion in which all concerned may for once co-operate instead of compete. It is the system of competition which we are trying to replace with one of co-operation, remember brothers?

3. Once a basis for co-operation has been established, let a two-sided (or more) delegation approach the Panthers and explain the progress that has been made, acknowledging the error of vehement criticism for its weakening effect on the anti-imperialist movement, and offering plans for concrete co-operation and mutual trust.

4. Pledge not to interfere with programs sponsored by other leftist organizations, and to solicit support for them whenever feasible.

We believe that it is suicidal and nonsensical (emphasis added) for such potential allies to remain aloof and isolated from each other any longer.

--Eldridge Cleaver, March 16, 1968, at the Peace and Freedom Founding Convention, Richmond, California

Is it any less suicidal and nonsensical for predominantly white radical organizations to be hostile to each other?

Factionalism aids and abets the enemy: Fight it!

Jon D. Olsen

U of Hawai chapter of SDS

Dartmouth Students Fight ROTC, Recruiters

Jim Van Hoy, Dartmouth

This spring some 50 people got 30 days in jail and a \$100 fine for seizing the administration building in an attempt to throw ROTC off campus and end military recruiting. This was the culmination of a year's work in an Anti-ROTC, Anti-Military Recruiting campaign. However, ROTC is not off campus nor has military recruiting stopped. Unfortunately for the administration, the fight continues in spite of the jailings, because we built a solid base.

Initial Lack of Clarity

We began our campaign in the spring of '68, on a muddled basis at first. One of the arguments we put forth was that ROTC should go because it is incompatible with a liberal arts education. This argument really builds on anti-working class ideas that students already have. It views ROTC as a blemish on a university that is basically good: 'If only we could make ROTC like the rest of the college...' the argument runs. ROTC is seen as an ugly militaristic thing, a sample of the unscholarly 'outside world' in-



Dartmouth students seize the initiative

truding on 'our' university. This is anti-working class because the 'outside world' students are thinking of is 'the great mass' of 'unaesthetic people' whose 'insensitive values' have no place on campuses delicately creating the elite. So this argument about purifying the university really strengthens students' arrogance towards workers, giving it a 'radical' veneer. Moreover, this approach does not build a base for throwing ROTC off! It leads one to discuss questions such as: Are ROTC courses 'liberal' enough, or are they too militaristic? Should ROTC officers receive professorial status? Should ROTC get academic credit? Perhaps it should be made an extracurricular activity? Seeing ROTC as an unnatural blemish, not as one of many ways in which U.S. schools are used against the people, this view leads to considering the administration as neutral or at worst confused. Thus one tries to wheel and deal (trying to get on committees and making moralistic appeals to the administration) for ROTC reform, such as removing academic credit and professorial status for ROTC officers, while not fighting to get ROTC off campus. That, by the way, is just what the Dartmouth faculty came up with. Picking up on this argument, they passed a resolution in January 1969, 'purifying', but not abolishing, ROTC.

This approach was directly contradictory to the second argument put forth by SDS, that ROTC should be opposed because it trains officers for the ruling class's army, an army which is used for the suppression of workers and peasants in Vietnam and students and workers, especially Black workers, in the U.S. This second position puts one directly on the side of the majority of people and against their oppressors. We found that while the first position mentioned would get students out for a demonstration on a bad basis, it would not build a movement to get rid of ROTC. The only way to get rid of ROTC is to unite people on a class basis. People will do what is necessary to get rid of ROTC only if they understand that ROTC is a tool of the bourgeoisie and that only that class benefits from it. How does this understanding come about? In part, it came from finding out that Dartmouth Trustees hold five presidencies, five chairmanships, and 52 directorships in major banks and corporations, which operate on an international scale and benefit from having ROTC on campus since they use these officers to protect their interests world-wide. Workers, in contrast, get screwed by the Vietnam war. For one thing, they die. And if the U.S. keeps control of Vietnam, the threat of moving plants to Vietnam will be used to keep wages down in the U.S. One of the main ways this class position is directly opposite to the first (and is a winner, not a loser) is that it sees most people as having an interest in abolishing ROTC, and thus the majority can be won to a movement which will throw ROTC off campus.

A Better Position Emerges

We changed this mixture of good and bad arguments in the middle of the '68 campaign to a solidly pro-working class stand. Reflecting this change in politics, our style of work changed. From a small group, without any mass support, which did little work among students to build that mass support, but just called demonstrations and hoped for the best, we changed considerably. This occurred primarily during a 'fast' and petition campaign to get rid of academic credit and professorial status for ROTC officers. We had a meeting every afternoon before dorm discussions that evening, in which we discussed problems from previous dorm meetings. In these meetings we argued that to get rid of ROTC would require more than saying ROTC was incompatible with a liberal arts education, and that this argument was in fact incorrect: ROTC students get money to go through college; if ROTC students could speak their minds and instructors were more qualified ROTC would be compatible with the rest of 'liberal arts'. And, anyway, we realized this 'purify the blemish' position really reinforces the elitist, anti-people attitudes which colleges teach students already. Because we realized that the only way to get rid of ROTC was to build a base against the ruling class and engage in militant action, we began to organize seriously. We realized that just trying to 'turn out' the most students, on any basis, would not accomplish our goal. We engaged in dorm discussions, talking to people on an individual basis, aside from leafletting and holding mass meetings, winning more and more people to a fuller understanding of ROTC. Such base building is vital.

The next fall we continued the campaign with renewed vigor. As part of the campaign, we blocked a military recruiter in November. Not wanting to use its power openly, but wanting to expel some of us, the administration threw student power at us in the form of a student-faculty-administration court. We attacked the court, exposing it so much as a front for the administration that they were afraid to expel anyone. We explained to other students why stopping the recruiter was just and we should get no punishment. We also said the court was a fraud, that it was not impartial or legitimate just because some students sat on it. Although about 50 people blocked the recruiter, the Dartmouth proctor picked out only four as 'readily identifiable'. Clearly, the administration had picked out some 'leaders' to punish as an example. Within 24 hours over 350 people had signed a petition saying they would not be bound by administration guidelines on demonstrations and supported what we had done. Because we did not back down, and were winning students to our side, the court could not get away with severe punishment and still maintain its legitimacy.

Student Power Fails

After three months of talking and organizing, SDS called a demonstration which demanded that Dartmouth abolish ROTC by fall '69. In response the administration again used student power: they established a student referendum to ask the faculty to reconsider its previous stand on ROTC. Various administrators admitted they were hoping for a student vote for ROTC to use against us. But the administration was mistaken -- the students voted overwhelmingly to get rid of ROTC! What did the administration say then? President John Sloan Dickey told the faculty that the 'Trustees would not take a slap in the face of the government' and that 'men who hold ultimate corporate responsibility do not act in this way'.

That's right, the administration will let students sit on committees. They will allow you to make decisions as long as you don't go against the interests of the class they work for. As soon as you go 'wrong', they drop the facade and state their class interests directly, as did Dickey. At that point, all 'channels' exhausted, we decided to take a building.

We Seize a Building

Removing the felt glove and baring their fist, the trustees got an injunction against us. We knew that they could put us in jail for a fairly lengthy period, but we were upping the ante and weren't budging. If they wanted us out of the building they could either abolish ROTC or call the cops!

Supporters waited outside in the cold, building bonfires to try and keep warm. Finally, at 3:30 a.m., the police arrived. Students blasted an air horn, the chapel bell was rung, cars drove around the campus with horns blaring. Suddenly nearly 2000 people were outside the building. The cops pushed their way through the crowd and broke in the doors. At first, people outside were fairly quiet. Inside we chanted: ROTC MUST GO NOW! U.S. OUT OF VIETNAM, ROTC OUT OF DARTMOUTH! The chants echoed loudly in the building. As the cops dragged us out, nearly everyone was cheering us. A chair came flying out of the crowd at the pigs. A large police van was attacked. We were up the rest of the morning, being photographed and having belongings checked. Less than a week later we were in jail. We realized that, conveniently, the 30-day sentence would keep us off the campus for the remainder of the year. However, because of the base-building work done previously, the few SDSers left on campus were able to build SDS. While the 50 of us were in jail SDS grew more than it had all year.

After we got out of jail, the administration threw the student-faculty (no administration now) court at us. We attacked once more. The chairman of the court blatantly exposed its nature when he was quoted in the N.Y. Times as saying their purpose was to separate the 'committed revolutionaries from the tourists'. They weren't interested in the act committed. They went straight to the heart of the matter: people were to be punished on the basis of political commitment. They charged nine people with 'leading, directing, and controlling the takeover and ushering out deans' when close to 100 people took part. Also, people in the takeover who had just come into the movement were extremely mad at the chairman's contemptuous attitude towards them. They knew they were not duped by 'evil commies', as the redbaiter said, but had reached their conclusions on ROTC, capitalism, imperialism through clear thinking and looking at reality.

We defeated each attempt of the administration to defeat us with student power. We turned the student-faculty court into its opposite and the referendum backfired on the administration. SDS must be clear that student-faculty courts are just fig leaves for the administration and must expose them as such. As a result of our attacks the trials have been postponed until next fall, i.e. the administration could not get away with expelling us because their facade of legitimacy had been severely damaged.

We Learn a 'Legal' Lesson

At a different kind of court, the county court, we learned an expensive but important lesson about lawyers. Two ACLU-tax lawyers were hired to take our case, which they did -- for \$8500. We had serious illusions about courts and lawyers which we have

continued on p. 5



Students at SDS rally outside building

Cambridge P & F Fights Imperial City

Ken Hurwitz, Cambridge-MDS

For several years, working people in Cambridge have been under special attack by the ruling class. More and more, skyrocketing rents are forcing them out of their homes to make room for a big research area for Imperialism, with Harvard, MIT, NASA, and other research agencies, plus high-rent housing for technicians. Greedy landlords, while not the direct cause of the situation, have fit in fine as part of the ruling class's plan to take over Cambridge and make it Imperial City.

Rent Control is Part of Fight

Last October, the Cambridge Peace and Freedom Party (Cambridge MDS) initiated the Cambridge Rent Control Referendum Campaign to get a strong rent control law on the ballot. The idea of this campaign had come about after several months of door-to-door canvassing of working people in relation to an anti-imperialist electoral campaign we had run the previous summer.

Legally, getting 3400 'valid' signatures on a petition requires the City Council to place rent control on the ballot. This tactic may seem at first a mistake, since it can give the illusion that you can win something good from the system by signing your name to a paper or voting. We decided, however, that while rent control could not be won without masses of workers fighting hard for it, a rent-control referendum would be an excellent way of beginning to organize mass support for a fight which people clearly would not have been ready for last October. We have consistently explained that signing a petition meant nothing to the landlords and the bosses, and that only fighting, organized strength could win -- to rely on the politicians or on voting was a loser. Most important, winning rent control would be meaningless unless the people were organized into tenant's unions and other organizations which could back the law up with power and keep it enforced.

Mostly by canvassing door-to-door, we got 9000 signatures and passed them in in July. Our base-building in the community enabled us to mobilize over 400 people, including many workers, for a city council meeting and to militantly demand that the law be put on the ballot with no stalling and no sellouts. The city council decided that at this point they had no choice but to put it on the ballot in November. This was an important victory -- however, it is now clear to most that the bosses don't give up that easily, and that the law will be challenged as 'unconstitutional' in the courts. Our major task now is to organize people to recognize and defeat every tactic the ruling class uses to fight against rent control -- from the courts to the cops.



Beginning the battle... scene on Cambridge corner

'War on Poverty' Part of Plan

A key part of the ruling class's plans for Cambridge is the government's local 'War on Poverty', the Cambridge Economic Opportunities Commission (CEOC). Three months after our referendum began, the CEOC leadership entered the struggle. They began a campaign to lobby in the City Council to get rent control passed. Their strategy was clear: to flush out all the misleaders they could find in the community and give them enough money to carry out the ruling class's dirty work in Cambridge. The CEOC exists to build bad and losing ideas among the people. Among these is the illusion that workers can win by convincing the politicians to fulfill their 'responsibilities' to the people -- instead of organizing people to rely on their own strength. The CEOC also builds anti-'outsider' feelings in general -- not anti-boss, anti-landlord ideas needed to win. By blunting the class differences in the struggle (with such slogans as 'Keep Cambridge Ours' instead of our slogan 'Stay and Fight') they try to pit long-time Cambridge residents against students, especially CP&FP members, by lumping them together with the speculators, calling both 'outsiders'. They try to convince people that students are as much the cause of high rents as the landlords. Our response to this attack has been to point out that outsider doesn't mean how long you've been in Cambridge, but whether you serve the bosses, landlords, politicians, etc., or whether you serve

Cambridge working people.

Very important in their anti-'outsider'-in-general politics has been anti-communism. We have spoken to many honest working people who support the CEOC knowing full well that relying on the Council will not win, but who nevertheless have been won to the CEOC solely because they did not want to be identified with 'communist-affiliated Peace and Freedom'. While we have never hesitated to say that there are communists (members of Progressive Labor Party) working on the campaign, we must go even further to defeat anti-communism in all forms. This is necessary to win masses of working people to follow



Peace and Freedom attacks politicians at city-wide forum

the leadership of our campaign and to fight militantly for rent control, seeing as their enemies not 'outsiders-in-general', but the bosses and landlords who run the city, including the Council and the courts, and the whole US ruling class, which wants Imperial City. One of our weaknesses up to this point has been not putting forward our anti-imperialist politics in the clear mass way necessary not only to win rent control but also to build a base for further activity. To correct this, we are planning to push our anti-imperialist politics very hard. One way of doing this is an election campaign which puts forward anti-imperialist positions very clearly on Viet Nam, on racism, on elections being no solution, on fighting the CEOC, and on helping to organize for mass action.

'C'P-Ruling Class Alliance

Perhaps the main reason why the CEOC has been such an important enemy for us has been that it includes within its leadership one of the most skilled anti-working class fake radical forces around -- the 'Communist' Party. The 'C'P's main strategy for defeating the Cambridge working class has been to try to transform this struggle into one for community 'control'. The 'C'P has consistently helped the CEOC choose the best 'left' cover for its right-wing anti-working class actions. The 'C'P and the CEOC led a drive to have a Black man and a man with under \$5000 yearly income appointed to the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (an urban removal agency), saying that they would be more 'responsive to the community' -- instead of pointing out that the ruling class would continue to kick workers out of their homes in Cambridge, no matter who was appointed or elected to what, until the people organized and fought back. In fact, the 'C'P pushes their reactionary politics clearly in an independent community leaflet: 'If the (city) council refuses (to pass rent control) we must carry the issue further... by electing Councillors out of our own ranks...'

It is important to note that the 'C'P is not the only supposedly radical group that fights the workers by allying with the Federal Government. The RYM 'Old Mole' recently ran an article in which they talked about how the Cambridge Housing Convention (CEOC) was leading the struggle for rent control in Cambridge; and a position paper put out by RYMers Eric Mann, David Loud, Terry Poe and Ron Bitten calls for support of the CHC.

Build a Base to Win

The most obvious difficulty we have had in the campaign is that we are for the most part students, ex-students, mental workers, etc., trying to organize working people. To a certain extent the extraordinary class composition of Cambridge (including large numbers of both students and workers living close together) and the extreme severity of the housing crisis has helped us overcome this, but we realize that real long range community organizing can only be done by

radicals who plan to live permanently in the community as workers. What we can do, however, is to build strong ties with working people we have met and will meet in the course of the campaign, and try to help them build working class leadership and mass participation in the fight. Our major failing has been that we haven't gone back and talked to people enough, really become interested in them and their problems. This comes from a basically anti-working class attitude of not wanting to get too involved with workers. It's okay to devote a Saturday afternoon canvassing across town, and then go back home and forget it, but few of us have really involved our immediate

neighbors, people who we can see and talk to every day, in the campaign. We have been able to overcome this attitude somewhat -- we were able to bring some working people we knew to the City Council meeting where our law was discussed. And they were very militant in response to the stalling techniques and red-baits the councillors used, refusing to be intimidated even when cops were brought in to quiet us down.

Despite the strength of the ruling class (and its allies from the CEOC to the 'C'P) the main fight is to get ourselves to do the individual base-building among workers needed to win and enforce rent control. By winning students, ex-students, and workers to the necessity for a strong worker-student alliance, we can smash Imperial City.

Dartmouth (cont.)

been ridding ourselves of. Many of us thought that technicalities in the case would get us off -- but in court it became clear that the ruling class was out to smash our movement, not play legal games about the letter of the law. As an example of the rulers' seriousness, one student's father said that Nelson Rockefeller had informed him he wanted us in jail(!) We got 30 days and \$100 fine. The administration had used student power against us and now they used an injunction and jail, the carrot and stick.

We attacked the ruling class and shouldn't be under the illusion that any legal arguments will get us off. Our only real strength is a movement against that class, relying on the people rather than 'legal defense'. They wanted us in jail to keep us off the campus and from talking with working people, building a pro-working class movement that means their doom. They hoped to frighten us into giving up our campaign, not having been able to buy us off with student power; however, we won't give in.

Starting as a group of people who were against the war and wanted to do something that could seriously hurt that war effort, we attacked ROTC. We started with bad politics in part, but quickly came to see what was needed to get rid of ROTC: a campaign with pro-working class politics that can rally masses of students to smash ROTC. We haven't taken our campaign to workers enough nor have we attacked racism as hard as we could. These are two key things for next fall. For instance, campus workers (whose union the college is attempting to bust) have been quite favorable towards our leaflets -- redbaiting by the foreman didn't work. Winning campus workers to our side (there are 500 of them) would surely be a big help in throwing ROTC off!

'ISADORA' PUSHES PHONY LIBERATION

Jay Sargeant, Boston State

Most current American films push individualistic, escapist, and romantic notions of life. We could review any one of the current gems ('The Chairman', 'Che', 'True Grit') and show how they contribute to building illusions among people. Why pick 'Isadora'? Because the film is supposed to be a faithful portrayal of the essence of Isadora Duncan, a famous dancer of the '20s, a liberated woman, and a revolutionary who adopted socialist Russia as her country. Through her and her art, the revolution was supposed to be epitomized. Basically, however, this movie is a celebration not of liberated womanhood, not of revolution or of socialism, but of selfish individualism. If we examine it closely, we find that it presents a version of revolution that is very common these days because the ruling class pushes it so hard -- namely, resisting 'square' culture, doing your own thing spontaneously whether through music, drugs, communal living, or whatever, and ignoring or putting down the masses of people whose lives are full of hard work and struggle and are, therefore, boring and 'square'. 'Isadora', pretending to glorify liberation, revolution, and socialism, turns these things into their opposites. Thus liberation becomes loneliness and isolation, revolution comes from contempt for the people, and socialism is capitalism in thin disguise. How is this possible? Let's examine a couple of representative scenes which show these ideas pretty blatantly.

Scene I: Women's Liberation

Isadora is pregnant by a man who has left her. He comes to visit her and she does not ask him back, but rather rejoices in their mutual strength and freedom to go it alone. Although she tearfully confesses to her mother dreams she has of home and family life, she knows these are terribly 'bourgeois'. Later on, in labor, she is screaming pitifully, 'Help me, someone, please help me!' -- but when the child is born it is suddenly, 'I did it! I did it all by myself!' Moral: men are cads all right; they leave you to have their child and go it alone. But you shouldn't struggle with men about their attitudes. Rather you should rejoice in their irresponsibility; that makes you free too and you are both better off. Although these ideas are pretty blatant in 'Isadora', they have more subtle forms too. It is often said that men stand to gain from the very real oppression of women in this society; that is, male chauvinism, or 'male supremacy', makes the man the boss in personal relationships. Therefore it is better for women to be free of men and push for their own special interests and concerns, which includes freedom from really binding personal relationships. If chauvinism is really hurting a relationship, leave it; don't have families because you will be trapped in them, get rid of all sexual ties and then you can fight for socialism. These ideas are wrong because real liberation means being involved with the masses of people in their struggles for liberation. Thus it means being responsible to the people, and, particularly, to build responsible personal relationships. It is not in most men's interests to dominate and enslave women, since this means that women will not be able to fight hard with them against their common enemy -- the ruling class. Responsible personal ties, based on fighting and defeating male chauvinism, are the ground on which responsibility to the interests of the people as a whole must be built. You can't have socialism without responsibility to the masses of people. But Isadora wants 'socialism' for herself and nobody else.

Scene II: Socialism

A high point of the movie is Isadora's visit to the new socialist Russia. The state having been seized, we zoom in on some of the Bolshevik leaders and intellectuals relaxing in a cafe. There is much finery of dress, drinking, and carousing; the beautiful Bolsheviks cluster around Isadora admiringly as she reclines on cushions. Suddenly the famous poet arrives; he and Isadora, meant for each other through the communion of artistic truth, embrace and go off together. No one seems surprised at this 'love at first sight'. Cut to winter Moscow street scene, where starving workers and peasants, in rags, hang on to Isadora's coat, begging her to take their children into her dancing school because there, at least, they will be fed and clothed. Thus socialism, according to the film, is just like capitalism -- a few people (this time the party bureaucrats) living well and keeping the masses down -- the only difference is that under socialism the people actually starve. In fact the Russian revolution was made by the masses of workers and peasants, under the leadership of the Bolshevik communist party, and it was only later that the party bureaucracy began to destroy socialism by bringing material advantages, personal power for themselves, and capitalism back to Russia. The point here, however, is that these scenes are supposed to be true socialism, and it suits Isadora just fine. Again, not because the masses of people are building a society and state in their own interests, but because Isadora's art, dancing, beauty, 'freedom', and straight bourgeois charity are fully appreciated. This section of the movie is perhaps the most blatantly anti-communist, because it presents communists as being a group of self-indulgent, cynical pleasure seekers living off the poverty of the masses. But it is consistent with the rest of the film in showing revolutionary consciousness as primarily a matter of intellectual elitism and superiority. Only artists, poets, and intellectuals really have the 'truth' and understand each other.

Scene III: Revolution

Isadora and her Russian poet have arrived in the United States for a tour. After being greeted at the boat by a parody of a demonstration, they hold a press conference. Asked whether she is a socialist, Isadora sums up her philosophy and the film's: 'The Revolution is not political. Revolution is in the soul of every artist; it is only the artist who creates revolution out of his own truth.' Later in a recital in Boston, when her dance of socialist liberation is booed by the audience, she bares her breasts and shouts, 'This is liberation!'

These ideas of revolution are bad in many ways, but perhaps most so because they show an incredible contempt for the people. It is the masses of people who through years of day to day struggle have both the knowledge and the power to make any kind of progressive change. As students who are isolated from working people, the only way that we can serve them is by going among them and by learning from them about their struggles. Because many of us are intellectuals and have read a great deal, we tend to think that we do have the truth, that we are going into the Work-In, for instance, to get a few examples of case studies to bolster our version and also to tell it to a few workers. But the Work-In, and our experience talking to workers and other students there and on the campus, should teach us that building a movement means precisely the opposite of Isadora's dramatic personal revelation -- that is, identifying with and fighting alongside of working people in their struggles, day to day and year to year.

The reasons for making a movie like 'Isadora' and pushing these elitist, escapist, and mystical ideas of revolution and liberation, are very clear. The more we see our own individual consciousness as primary, the way Isadora and her friends did, the more we will be doomed in trying to win real changes and reforms in this society. Personal 'liberation' can only be achieved at the expense of the people (as are the pleasant personal life styles of the ruling class). The ideas that this movie pushes are the warped and sick views of revolution the ruling class wants people to have -- because these ideas, to the extent that we have them, isolate us from everyone else.

RYM Builds Racist Rally

When the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM) leaders staged their minority walk-out at the June SDS convention, they justified this action with various rationales. For one thing, they claimed those they were 'purging' (i.e. walking away from) were 'racists'.

This charge was a cover for the RYM leaders' inability to get people behind their politics -- exposed in struggles all over the country as harmful to building an anti-imperialist student movement.

On August 6, in Boston, RYM leaders once again showed their willingness to take an opportunist path to gain some 'political capital'. In this case it was pretty extreme -- they tailed after a racist movement!

The New England Taxi Drivers' Association sponsored a demonstration and proposed a work stoppage to protest the murder of cab driver Stephen Paillet, murdered in a holdup. The leadership of the Association is basically honest and, along with the membership, sees their main task as fighting the bosses. But because of racism and the failure to have a long-range perspective, their demonstration demanded a hundred tactical police to follow cabs in ghetto areas of Boston! If this demand were not granted, a 24-hour work stoppage was threatened.

Boston Cabbies Demonstrate

The death of Steve Paillet, cabdriver driver and organizer for the New England chapter of SDS was not only greeted with sorrow by his friends. The New England Taxi Drivers' Association held a rally Wednesday Aug 6th in protest over his murder. They were also angry that Mayor White had killed a bill that would make cab companies responsible for installing bullet-proof partitions on the request of the cabby. And the Association demanded a hold-up fund, and more police cars to follow cabs when driving in ghetto areas.

THE OLD MOLE PAGE SEVEN

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(This excerpt from The Old Mole, Boston RYM newspaper, characterizes the entire article -- which didn't even mention racism or criticize the rally's demands.)

RYM supported and built for this racist demonstration. If the work stoppage had come off, it would have resembled the New York teachers' 'strike' last fall -- it would have been a direct attack on Black people. RYM handed out leaflets and posted signs about the march which played on people's racist fears by telling them to come for the sake of their wives and children. (!) At the demonstration, a member of the RYM-run New England Resistance gave an arrogant and abstract speech that failed to confront racism in any concrete way and didn't even mention the demand for a hundred cops. (In fact, the bosses have broken strikes in Boston by having armed cops ride shotgun with scab drivers.)

When approached by some members of SDS, they defended their actions, saying it would be 'elitist' and 'anti-working class' not to support the demonstration and work stoppage, because cab drivers were 'relating' to protection and it was important to 'get them where they were at'. This is an 'anti-racist' position? This is 'support' for the Black Liberation Movement? RYM made this concession to racism to 'get in good with the workers'. Their racist efforts flopped. To top it all off, the RYMers who were driving cabs decided to show their solidarity with the other drivers by making a collective decision to quit because it was too dangerous!

a cab driver

Raising \$\$ - a Political Necessity

There have been a lot of non-struggle attitudes toward raising money for SDS. The money pledged at the convention was not a misestimate yet very little has appeared. Students who have money from their parents must be shown that it was stolen from the workers they claim to support. Students who don't have much must see the necessity of actively raising it. For this office to serve SDS and the people, it must have money, and we must raise it.



STUDENT WORKERS CAUCUS AT U.N.H.

Jaan Laaman, U of New Hampshire

The University of New Hampshire (UNH), like all other bourgeois institutions, not only indoctrinates its students with individualistic lies, but also exploits the people who work there, i.e. janitors, grounds-workers, etc. Five years ago when the workers tried to unite to bring in a union, the university used fascist tactics to stop them. In its place the administration formed a company union, State Employees Association (SEA), which included bosses as well as workers. This, along with the administration's use of student (part time and summer) workers who get the federal minimum and no benefits, has enabled the university to keep the wages and working conditions of the permanent workers at a bare minimum, i.e. most workers get \$1.75/hour.

This summer one of the ideas of the work-in at UNH (which included three students working as janitors) was to see if anything could be done about this situation. In mid-July the work-in students put out a leaflet about grievances, the use of students as potential, if not real, scabs, and asking workers to attend a meeting to discuss these problems. About 5% or 6% of the summer workers, along with some permanent employees, attended. Everyone agreed that this was a worthwhile effort and that we should talk to more workers and try to get them to come to another meeting where some kind of organization of student workers could be formed which would advance the interests of all workers, permanent as well as temporary.

At the next meeting it was brought up, by permanent workers, how UNH has been screwing working people for years. Last spring representatives of the administration went to Concord to oppose legislation which would have increased wages; cases were brought up of how especially women workers never received scheduled pay raises, etc. The work-in students, although not dominating the meeting, did bring up many points showing how the same administration screwed students and used students to screw workers at UNH and elsewhere: ROTC, racist courses, recruiters on campus.

This meeting, composed mainly of student workers, unanimously decided to form an organization (called the Caucus of UNH Workers) which would first lead and later fight as a united front with the SEA to better the conditions of all workers. A petition was also drawn up asking for a \$2.00 minimum for all workers, free hospitalization, guaranteed 40-hour work week and paid sick days for temporary workers, and a guarantee from the university



THESE STUDENTS ARE USING YOU! THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF RICH KIDS BENT ON OUCH! DESTRUCTION!

that buildings wouldn't be undermanned if wages were raised. This petition met with very favorable response from all workers: temporary, part time and permanent.

Meanwhile the administration was trying to squash the efforts of the work-in students and the Caucus of UNH workers. At the second meeting the assistant dean of students and the head of the business office tried to get in, but were voted out and told that they would be evicted if they didn't leave. Failing at this they forced one of their stooges, an ass-kissing painter who is also the editor of a company (so-called workers') paper to write an article discrediting the actions of the Caucus of UNH Workers. Their main attack was a red-baiting statement to the effect that SDS Work-ins were a communist plot to use the workers. Had they gone only this far they might have

placed some questions in a few people's minds, but they went on to tell the workers to come to their bosses or supervisors if they had a problem. Of course the workers saw right through this shit and it only helped to gain interest in the workers' caucus.

One of the main obstacles in our fight has been the ineffective nature of the SEA. Even with good leadership it is difficult to judge whether or not student workers should try to work in or outside of the permanent workers organization. As far as following up on this fight, we believe that it would be best to try to mobilize mass student and faculty support behind the workers, exposing the university's discriminatory policies toward workers (especially women) and how students help the university to keep down workers and students by just following along and not fighting the university.

Regional Conferences

New York Adopts CWSA

Mike Golash, Columbia, NIC

On August 12, 250 people gathered at Columbia University for a meeting of the New York Region of SDS. This meeting discussed resolutions on the campus worker-student alliance, the Revolutionary Youth Movement, and proposals by the New York Labor Committee concerning post office and mass transit workers.

Dennis Kamensky of CCNY presented a proposal on the building of the campus worker-student alliance, stating that the worker-student alliance has been more of an idea than a fact so far. Although SDS projects such as the Work-In have gone a long way in breaking down anti-working class ideas in the student movement, the Work-In has never led to the building of many lasting ties between students and workers, and this has been its central weakness. He argued that the campus worker-student alliance affords us the opportunity to overcome this failure and to build major struggles of workers and students against racist and imperialist college and university administrations.

People asked if it wouldn't be difficult for SDSers to get jobs on campus, particularly in positions where they would be in contact with full-time workers, but SDSers from Queens, Columbia, CCNY and Brooklyn said they had already gotten jobs without too much difficulty, although they foresaw the possibility. Someone else raised that obtaining jobs on campus would be taking jobs that other students needed to pay college expenses, and in reply it was noted that this situation exists any time a radical takes a job, whether on campus or in a factory. This aspect of taking jobs is far outweighed by radicals using their jobs to engage in struggles which can improve conditions for all working people. After more discussion a resolution was passed to establish a committee to build the campus worker-student alliance in the New York region.

At this point in the meeting, ten members of the Revolutionary Youth Movement marched in and started to hand out a leaflet entitled 'This is Not SDS'. Hank Gehman, a RYM leader from Columbia, spoke and attacked the people at the meeting for having been duped by PL and the WSA caucus. He did not

present any program for fighting racism and imperialism on campus (or for that matter anywhere else), but he attacked PL for opposing the struggles of Black and Third World peoples and for being anti-working class -- not making primary the organizing of working class youth in bars, on street corners, at youth festivals and in street gangs.

People pointed out that most working class youth either go to school, are in the army, or work, and are not on street corners or at youth festivals. And they added that SDS is certainly interested in organizing students at working class schools to fight racism and imperialism and ally with working people, and that the meeting was being held to discuss concrete programs for doing this, not abstract 'support'.

Jeff Sokolow, of RYM, responded to these arguments by repeating that PL opposed the struggles of the oppressed, and the debate ended.

The New York Labor Committee then presented two proposals for support of potential strikes in the Post Office and the transit system. Criticism of these centered around the idea they put forward that students could play a leading role in workers' struggles by handing out leaflets telling them what to fight for. A further contention was that the proposals, which included various taxation schemes to raise money for higher wages, failed to reveal the nature of the state as essentially opposed to workers' interests. After heated debate both proposals were defeated.

There was general agreement among most that a crisis in the transit system was likely and that we as students should play a supportive role in any transit workers' action and a leading role on campus in fighting racist and anti-working class ideas that lead students to oppose workers for closing down essential public services.

California - RYM Falls Flat

Jim Prickett, UCLA, NIC

Several months before the SDS convention, the Los Angeles regional office voted to dissolve itself and become a 'communist' collective. The decision

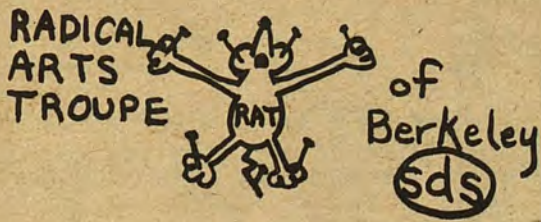
reflected a method of work that people in Southern California have come to know all too well. No attempt was made to assist chapter people in forming a new regional organization. Even though the old regional staff have played no role in SDS, they have not given their list of chapter contacts to any of the functioning chapters, intentionally making the task of building SDS as difficult as possible.

The first steps toward overcoming these difficulties were taken at the Southern California regional conference on August 8-10. Although publicity could have been better and despite the fact that a number of chapters are dormant over the summer, attendance at the conference was good. There were delegates from UCLA, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State LA, UC-Irvine, UC-San Diego, San Fernando Valley State, Valley College, Orange Coast College, as well as interested students from chapters not functioning over the summer.

The conference opened Friday night with a panel on 'What Happened at the SDS Convention' featuring Pat Forman (SDS Interorganizational Secretary) and Leslie Lincoln (SDS NIC). The RYM forces in the area were invited, but none of the RYM leadership showed up. The Valley State chapter, led by 'Communist' Party member Cliff Fried, attempted to disrupt the meeting. When the audience made it clear that they wanted the meeting to proceed, Fried accepted a place on the panel, made a speech in which he attacked RYM for being unprincipled, and then called for a walkout. Only the delegates from Valley State walked out.

Morale was extremely high at the conference, even though it was much smaller (70 people attended) than most of the regional conferences held throughout the country. The RYM leadership is in total disarray, and most RYMers are justifiably bitter about the manipulation and misleadership that culminated in the dissolution of the regional office. (Rumor has it that Mike Klonsky will join 'C'Per Fried at Valley State.) SDS, on the other hand, has a number of strong chapters in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties, and a firm and spirited commitment to defeat the split and build SDS as an anti-imperialist, pro-working class organization.

Build RAT and Serve the People



Start a guerrilla theater troupe! It's a good way to get the politics of SDS across in an entertaining, non-rhetorical fashion to masses of people. (Besides, it's fun.) Here are some suggestions gathered by RAT (Radical Arts Troupe) from experience at Princeton and Berkeley.

Politics

Politics is primary. This means that the political purposes of RAT are more important than the artistic; though the better the artistry, the clearer the politics will be to the audience. Our plays are designed primarily to spread SDS ideas and only secondarily to entertain. For instance, male chauvinist jokes must be excluded, no matter how funny they may appear to some (and no matter how popular they can be expected to be). RAT is not Hollywood, and politics is not a popularity contest.

In particular, we must fight the tendency towards opportunism -- 'we know that liberalism is just as bad as conservatism, but most students don't, so let's not mention it, and we won't alienate them.' If our ideas are correct, we should be able to convince large numbers of students. Theater provides us with a forum which appeals to everybody and allows us to present our politics in a principled way. For instance, the Berkeley RAT play 'RLTC' (Reserve Liberal Training Corps) was criticized at first by some members of the chapter as 'sectarian' and 'isolating'. Once it was performed, the audience understood and enjoyed it.

It is sectarian to attack an idea without explaining what's wrong with it. In the 'RLTC' play, for instance, an incorrect way of attacking student power would be:

Misleader: Hooray for student power!
 Leader: Down with student power!
 Masses: Yeah! Down with student power!

It is also sectarian to attack people who hold wrong ideas instead of attacking the ideas themselves. Example:

Some students: Let's have student power!
 Leftists: Get lost, counter-revolutionaries!

Style: Less Talk, More Acting

Still another incorrect approach is to have lengthy dialogue. Experience shows that after about twenty seconds of speech without action, an audience will begin drifting away. Shun the 'reading from leaflets' and 'three speakers for, three speakers against' formats.

Illustrate your points. For example, Berkeley's Chancellor Heyns is a director of Hunt's Foods. A high school radical theater group exposed Hunt's racist exploitation of Chicano tomato-pickers with the following scene: one of them mimed tomato picking while Heyns was sucking his blood through plastic tubing, and spitting it in a Hunt's Catsup bottle. A third character poured the Catsup on a fourth character's hamburger. The fourth character: 'This isn't catsup, it's blood!' All actors were mechanical, like well-oiled machines. The scene was repeated several times, and was really powerful.

Keep it simple: Avoid cluttered, complicated stories requiring subtle acting and elaborate props. It

will only detract from the value of the play. Eliminate all superfluous lines and gestures. Instead, rely on good politics, simple jokes, and sight gags.

Stock characters will emerge after a few plays -- the fat, avaricious businessman, his various lackeys, deans, profs, pigs, etc., and on the other side the people and some leftists. An effort should be made to identify those characters with some symbolic costume (Uncle Sam hat, play money, pig mask). If this is impossible, it may be necessary to wear signs.

Use music and other noisemaking to add to your dramatic effects. Anything will do. Tambourines, bongos are easy to borrow. Kazoos are cheap. Voices can be used, too, and all sorts of simple instruments can be improvised (fill an empty coke can with pebbles and shake it, for example). Again, keep it simple. Background music can create an atmosphere (e.g. military fanfare) and smooth over transitions from one scene to the next. Finally, a good song is always appreciated by the audience.

Useful gimmicks:

- plots based on a parody of well-known stories and plays. We've used Hamlet, Little Red Riding Hood.
- commercials. (e.g. the play is interrupted for a word from the sponsors: 'Be the first kid on your block to kill a communist with the new Mattel toy gun. War may be hell, but with Mattel, it's swell!')
- flashbacks, instant replays, plays within the play.
- court scenes in which the enemies of the people are tried (and convicted!) of their crimes.
- the 'machine' view of the world: having a few people do some interrelated actions in a mechanical fashion, as though they were cogs in a machine -- often a highly effective way of describing the working of society or of an institution. (e.g. students standing in line, turning pages and nodding, while a dean or professor keeps up the cadence by screaming rhythmically 'Read! Read! Learn! Learn! Learn!')

Putting the Play Together

Casting: Our plays have had 6 to 12 'actors'. The fewer actors, the more flexibility and mobility you have. Avoid type-casting. Fight racism and male chauvinism by not casting according to sex or race. Casting should be decided upon primarily in terms of building the troupe and the play. That is, new people should take key parts to develop aggressiveness and responsibility; a girl struggling against male chauvinism should take the part of a left-wing leader. Avoid building up stars -- RAT is a collective of radicals struggling together, not a road to fame or an ego trip.

This does not mean that available talent should not be used. There is always someone around who is particularly able to make good jokes or puns. There is always someone who has had some experience in bourgeois theater, or someone who can play some musical instrument. But beware of the tendency to rely on the 'specialist'. 'Ordinary' people will display greater creativity.

Collective creation: Avoid having one person write, direct, and star in the plays. The whole troupe should collectively discuss the politics of the play. This serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, it will provide for political struggle with new recruits; quite a few people become committed SDSers through RAT. On the other hand, a clear understanding of the politics helps enormously in figuring out scenes.

Combine spontaneity and discipline. Usually most ideas and jokes in a play originate by ad-libbing during the first meeting (or outside the meetings). An occasional ad-lib during a performance will keep everyone's spirits high and improve the acting. Good performances are only possible with a spirited, enthusiastic troupe but avoid chaos during rehearsals. One experienced member of RAT (not necessarily

always the same one) should direct each rehearsal. It is often helpful to write out the script, but it is essential always to have at least a clear outline in mind. Be flexible in removing from and adding to the play.

Fight defeatism. RAT is hard work, and the play won't write and perform itself. Experience shows that the first production of a troupe is the toughest -- so don't get discouraged, especially by rehearsals that seem to fall flat. Remember that your performance will almost invariably be better than the rehearsals.

The Performance

Start with a bang to attract an audience. In one play in which we tried the Chancellor for his crimes, we started with the whole troupe chasing him around Sproul Plaza, screaming and yelling.

Experience shows that a run-through before each performance is important for ensuring RAT's success.

The play itself can last any length of time (ours usually last 7 to 15 minutes). The only limitations are imposed by the time you want to spend working on it. Bigger chapters can afford longer plays and a greater variety of productions than smaller ones.

You can perform anywhere, anytime -- during classbreak, at demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins, take-overs, etc. -- whenever and wherever a lot of people will gather to watch. Performing before a seated audience is more difficult than performing before passers-by because a seated audience will expect a higher degree of technical proficiency.

Different audiences will react differently to the same scene. For example, in one play, striking students drown a scab. When we performed this on the Berkeley campus, the response was rather weak. But when we performed it for striking oil workers at a union meeting, we got an enthusiastic reception. After many performances, a few people will come to congratulate you -- try to recruit them! And ask the audience for donations.

In performance, always remember the purpose of RAT - to communicate the politics to the audience - and that this purpose must outweigh our fears of performing before the public. Try always to reach out to the people!

Toward People's Art

The basic difference between guerrilla theater and 'regular' theater is a class difference. Specifically, guerrilla theater seeks to serve the people. It draws its inspiration from the struggles of oppressed peoples, not from the visions of an alienated poet. Our plays come from 'ordinary' people with political consciousness, not from 'gifted' actors and directors who are in a hurry to get away from the people.

A director in RAT is responsive and responsible to the troupe and the public. A director in bourgeois theater is often a despot. A guerrilla theater actor is in it to build SDS and the left in this country; an actor in bourgeois theater is on an ego trip. Our plays are intended to reach hundreds and thousands of people, most of whom never 'go to the theater'.

People's art has an enormous potential for growth in this country. If we build our commitment to serve the people, it will reach rarely attained heights. New Left Notes can be a good vehicle for discussion of these ideas. Chapters and individuals should send in articles about their experiences in radical art, along with scripts, posters, poems, etc.

The last issue of NLN carried a play by RAT entitled 'Reserve Liberal Training Corps'. This has produced many favorable comments, and is an excellent play to form a troupe around. Copies of the play are available from the NH for 10¢ (includes postage) for singles, 5¢ for orders of 25 or more. Write: SDS, 173a Massachusetts Ave., Boston, Mass. 02115.

