

-A Discussion Paper-

Because of the rapid growth and present political crisis of the radical student movement in this country, it is more important than ever that we begin to formulate a long range strategy for that movement. This paper is intended only as an initial contribution to the process of formulating a strategy and it is necessarily incomplete on several counts. In particular, the section on program is no more than a list of important possibilities. This gap was purposeful, since the paper was prepared as an introduction to a discussion of various programmatic options. How various programs contribute to the long range strategy for a revolutionary student movement, and how they relate to the class and institutional analysis presented here, must be an important part of this tactical discussion.

Class Analysis

History and Karl Marx have taught us that the key to all social development is class struggle. Therefore, in order to overthrow capitalism and achieve socialism, it is necessary to determine the leading class and the class composition of the revolutionary forces. In spite of all the speculation about "mass dropouts from the system", "youth as a class", or the "new working class", capitalism is still based on the primary contradiction of exploitation of wage labor by capitalists. Because the essence of capitalism is the extraction of surplus value at the workplace, capitalism cannot be brought down except by that group which is capable of stopping the flow of surplus value. Only by cutting off the lifeblood of capitalism will the revolutionary forces be able to overwhelm the repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie in the struggle for state power. This means that the industrial working class, the creators of surplus value, must therefore be the leading class in a revolutionary socialist movement. Many other allies, however, will support the working class in its revolutionary struggles. The petty bourgeoisie will support anti-monopoly struggles. Youth and many elements of the new middle class of professionals will support struggles against imperialism and the militarization of society. Also, due to the deep divisions in the working class at present, some of its members (especially national minorities and women) may organize separately on the basis of both class and special national or caste demands.

If the working class will lead the revolution, where does the student movement fit in? Some adopt an extremely broad definition of the working class and conclude that "the struggles of students ... are part of the class struggle" simply because students are workers. Others overgeneralize from the elite student movement of the 1960's and conclude that all students are petty bourgeois. Therefore, naturally, the only task for revolutionaries in organizing students is "support for the struggles of black and white workers", since a movement of petty bourgeois elements around their own interests would be counter-revolutionary. These two analyses correspond, respectively to the revolutionary youth movement/weatherman (Jim Kellen) and worker-student alliance (Jeff Gordon) factions of S.D.S. In contrast to these two tendencies, we do not believe that students, as a group, are workers or that they are petty bourgeois. As a consequence, we believe neither that all struggles of students in their self-interests are revolutionary, nor that none of these struggles are revolutionary.

While students are not divorced from the class structure, they are neither

....

a class in themselves nor a direct part of any class or classes. Students are defined by their transitional position between their class background and their class future. Sometimes the most important element is the class origin; sometimes it is the class future; and sometimes (but not always) it is their transitional position as students. For instance, with many students in "mainstream" schools, their class background is the same as their class future (the new middle class), and this class has not been notably revolutionary to date. For such students, radical (and eventually revolutionary) consciousness will grow out of their special oppressions as youth and students. Working class students in community colleges also have identical class origins and futures, even if they advance slightly to join the upper levels of their class. While they are also oppressed as youth and as students, working class students, by and large, will come to revolutionary consciousness through recognition of their exploitation as workers.

The class backgrounds and class futures of students fall into three broad categories: the ruling class, the working class, and the middle class. The former are the owners of the means of production and the means of social control, i.e., the capitalists and leading politicians. The second are the producers of surplus value, who do not control the means of production and who therefore must accept their exploitation by the capitalists in order to survive. The middle class is a diverse group, including the traditionally independent petty bourgeoisie and the new middle class of "proletarian" professionals, employed by the corporations and the government. The new middle class is far larger than the petty bourgeoisie, is growing larger, and is especially prominent in the class futures of university students. In four-year colleges and universities, middle class-origin students outnumber those of working class origin.

Because of the numerical importance of the new middle class, we must pay closer attention to it. We can distinguish at least three groups within the class, namely public services workers (teachers, social workers, white-collar government employees), technical engineers (technicians, engineers), and social engineers (advertising men, market analysts, time-and-motion analysts, personnel managers). All three groups, as well as the traditional petty bourgeoisie, are intermediate between the working class and the capitalists, for they are both oppressed by the capitalists, yet also in a somewhat higher position than workers. They could defend their privileges or fight their oppressions. Public service workers and social engineers are placed in an even more ambiguous position, since they are directly responsible for oppressing the working class. Given this analysis, which of these groups can be brought over to the side of the revolution, and how? With technical engineers, it seems likely that they will choose sides depending on the amount of relative privilege as opposed to the degree of their exploitation as workers. Thus technicians may become radicalized, while engineers are not. Social engineers in private industry, who have always been explicitly trained in techniques of social control and manipulation, are not workers at all, but part of the superstructure at the service of the ruling class (as are the police). They can be written off. Public service workers, especially teachers, are much more open to radicalization for a number of reasons. First, they are caught in a sharp conflict between the traditional ideology of "service" and the real

....

requirements of their jobs today. Due to the crisis in imperialism, teachers must choose daily between revolution or reaction. The middle ground of professionalism has been cut away; they must choose sides, willing or not. Secondly, public service workers are increasingly "proletarianized" in the sense that they are as oppressed as many productive workers, and their working and living conditions are markedly deteriorating. Poor wages, bad working conditions, high taxes, inflation and the general crisis of the cities (housing, transportation, pollution) are the fate of these professionals just as much as any worker. In spite of their intermediate position, it is likely that large numbers of public service professionals will ally with the working class.

There are two implications to be drawn from this class analysis. In the first place, a unified radical student movement will be built around those issues which oppress all students as students, and as youth. Above all, these are conditions which result from the decay of imperialism. The draft, the war in Vietnam, deteriorating conditions in the schools, increasing repression all result from this cause, and they affect students and youth regardless of class. Moreover, the large number of students headed for jobs as public service professionals will be greatly influenced in choosing between service or repression by this general oppression. In the second place, however, many students will become radicalized by experiencing their oppression and exploitation as a member of a class, nationality or caste. Working class students will become revolutionaries around their exploitation as workers. Although they are in a transitional position (as students), most continue as workers in part-time jobs, and (in contrast with middle class and elite students) most have a very clear notion of the purpose of education and what type of job they will end up in. Working class students should be tied to working class movements as well as to the student movement. This implies that a major emphasis in working class schools should be on community and shop issues, rather than on student issues. Blacks and women may come to revolutionary consciousness by organizing around their oppression as a national minority or caste. In the early stages this may imply organizing around discrimination and oppression within the movement, or oppression within the universities. Eventually, as these movements become more advanced politically they will ally with black and women workers in particular, and therefore they also may focus their activities off campus. Middle class students, especially those who will become public service professionals, can be brought to revolutionary consciousness by exposing the contradictions between their training and traditional ideology and the actual content of their future jobs. Groups such as Teachers for a Democratic Society can be very important in radicalizing middle class future-professional students around these issues and equipping them to act as revolutionaries after college. Elite, or ruling class students, however, cannot become revolutionaries around class issues. They must reject their class interests and respond only to their special oppression as youth and students. Thus in organizing elite students, only the anti-imperialist struggles should be emphasized. Until now the student movement, and S.D.S. in particular, has often been a movement of elite students. Moreover, anti-imperialist struggle has been almost the sole focus. This is correct for that type of a student movement. As the movement grows to become a middle class and working class movement, however, organizing around class and group oppression will become increasingly important (without diminishing the importance of anti-imperialist struggle).

....

While it would be absurd to conclude from this analysis that we must set up five student movements on every campus (ruling class, middle class, working class, female, black), the class differences between different schools mean that there will be important differences between the student movement in elite schools, say, and working class community colleges. The unifying aspects will be a common emphasis on anti-imperialism and, to the extent that student radicals become true revolutionaries, support for the international working class, its vanguards abroad and at home (today the MLF and the Black Panthers), and eventually for the industrial working class of this country.

Analysis of the Colleges

An effective program of revolutionary action depends also on correctly analyzing the nature of the university. This is not something new to the movement. In the past several years we have taught hundreds of thousands of students that: The university is an integral part of imperialist state monopoly capitalism, not some isolated ivory tower. In the advanced stages of imperialism, universities are absolutely vital to the system because (1) they produce high level technicians, social engineers and public service professionals (i.e., they train the new middle class); (2) some of them train tomorrow's ruling elite of the capitalist class; (3) they perform vital research in the fields of basic science, advanced war technology and pragmatic social analysis; and (4) they are a primary source for the development and diffusion of bourgeois ideology. In keeping with this important role in serving the ruling class, most colleges and universities are under the direct control of the capitalists and their politicians, in the boards of trustees, regents, overseers, etc.

Since universities and colleges do play important roles in maintaining capitalism and imperialism, and since we argued earlier that there is a need for a student movement around student issues (as well as support for working class actions), one important implication is that the student movement should attack the universities around their principal functions for the ruling class. We must move beyond exposing the nature of capitalist control of the universities (who rules Columbia, etc.), to effectively impairing the ability of the colleges to carry out their duties. Thus, in many elite schools we should make a major effort to attack counter-insurgency institutes - an important weapon used against national liberation movements everywhere. We should not ignore pro-working class actions such as anti-expansion fights, for building working class ideology is an important task. But we should attack the universities where we can hurt capitalism and imperialism the most. At other schools this might mean a focus on war research. At some middle class schools this could mean an emphasis on fighting bourgeois ideology. At working class schools, this might mean exposing the class nature of the education and the way in which it channels students into particular jobs, and then organizing around job issues (since working class schools seldom have any other function than training).

Goals of a revolutionary student movement

At this point in its history the student movement must move towards three

....

which could be fought alone by students at a particular college, should be fought jointly by college students, high school students, community groups and industrial workers. The same is true of anti-expansion fights and rent control struggles. Students can also help to build the working class movement through providing organizing cadre for shops, and by exemplary actions that are models of struggle and organization for workers. But unity in struggle is the most important.

Placing such an emphasis on building and aiding the working class movement means that much of the organizing activity of students should be spent off-campus, in high schools, communities and shops. This is particularly true for working class schools, where the college itself is not the primary target. It also means that the organizational forms for the movement will be forms that unite radical universities students with radical high school students, youth, industrial workers and community residents. At this point, our task is to organize the beginnings of a working class movement in these different settings. Eventually, such a movement might come together in a city-wide council, an embryonic city Soviet, an organ of struggle and, at the highest point of struggle, of dual power.

Organization

City-wide councils of revolutionary students and workers are not possible at this point. But some form of area-wide organization is necessary. We propose the formation of a Boston Organizing Committee, affiliated with Chicago-based S.D.S. around the principles of support for anti-imperialist struggle (including the NLF), support for black liberation and national self determination (and for the Black Panther Party), support for women's liberation and support for a socialist revolution. These principles are only the beginnings in developing a revolutionary movement in this country, and through discussion and struggle we will gradually work out a more complete strategy and program. Support for these principles does not imply complete agreement with the dominant faction in Chicago-based S.D.S. (the weatherman group), nor does it completely summarize our differences with the Boston-based, worker-student alliance-dominated SDS.

In the colleges, chapters would be formed or would continue at each school. Similarly in high schools, ^{the weatherman group} However, the focus of political activity need ^{not be that particular school (e.g., a number of schools might focus on fighting war research at MIT), nor any school at all (e.g., some working class schools might concentrate on community issues and shop-related actions).} Chapters when they consist of more than a dozen people should be broken down into action committees of around 10 people. These groups can be formed around any convenient organizational principle (dorms, departments, campaigns, etc.). They would involve students in general political discussion and active struggle. They are a response to the tremendous growth of the movement which makes large meetings necessary, but almost unworkable. The small groups should meet frequently, with work (either theoretical or struggle) at an intensive pace.

High school students, ^{whether} in various chapters, ^{at high} should be grouped together in a city-wide coalition, possibly including non-high school youth. College chapters would be affiliated with a city-wide (possibly regional) council.

Non-campus organizations would be quite varied. They would include issue-oriented or campaign groups around housing demands, open admissions campaigns, anti-imperialist actions, tax or transportation programs. They would involve all who support these campaigns, and must not be student dominated. Work-study groups would involve individuals from many different occupations, especially industrial workers. They would aid on-the-job organizing through mutual support and strategic discussion. Some groups would also include a number of students interested in shop work. Neighborhood collectives might be formed with high school and non-high school youth. In particular professions, such as teaching or social work, groups such as T.D.S. would be important. Also, the regional office would play a major role in coordination and stimulation of activity.

Program

The following is simply a list of possible action areas which must be discussed in relation to the strategic, political and organizational perspective already put forward.

A. City-wide programs: (1) Open admissions for all black, brown and working-class white students from community (i.e., Boston, Cambridge, etc.) high schools to a selected school or schools. (2) Anti-imperialist actions united around opposition to U.S. aggression, withdrawal of troops, support for the NLF. These would include students and workers, and different campaigns at different schools (war research, ROTC, counter-insurgency institutes, war surtax). A national action in late September and local actions in early November. (3) Support for black liberation struggles, particularly the Black Panther Party. Opposition to police repression of the BPP, support for its political program, propaganda for breakfast program, cooperation with the united front against fascism. (4) Support for Cambridge rent-control campaign in cooperation with the Housing Convention. Support for Boston area tenants union for rent control in Boston and possible rent strike. (5) Possible support for free mass transit campaign paid for by taxing colleges. (6) Anti-expansion fights in certain universities. (7) Teachers for a Democratic Society groups at various colleges and in public schools. (8) Cooperation with female liberation groups. (9) Cooperation with GI-organizing groups. (10) Support committees in labor struggles.

B. High School programs: (1) Campaigns to end tracking systems and flunk-outs. (2) Opposition to ROTC, military recruiters, selective service system in high schools. (3) Campaigns (in coordination with community and college groups) for open admissions to Boston colleges or a particular school, for black, brown and working class high school students. (4) Support for black high school students demands. (5) Demands for right of high school students to organize. Protection against administration and police repression of radical activities.

C. College and university programs: (1) Major campaign to end war research at selected school(s) (e.g., MIT). (2) Major campaign to end counter insurgency institutes and research at selected school(s) (e.g., Harvard, MIT). (3) Major campaign for open admissions at selected school(s) (e.g., B.U.). (4) Campaigns against university expansion at selected schools (e.g., Harvard). (5) Major effort to build national anti-war, pro-NLF actions at all schools. (6) Major effort to support labor struggles at all schools, especially working class schools. (7) Major campaign for strategic discussions in all chapters and sub-groups.