27. 1967: THE STRUGGLES HEAT UP

A few days after the huge April 15 demonstrations against the Vietnam war, Muhammad Ali, the world heavy-weight boxing champion, denounced the war and said he would not show up for his scheduled April 28 induction into the army. Ali had been recruited to the Nation of Islam by Malcolm X, but stayed with the group after Malcolm broke with it.

The Militant reported Ali's statement: "Why should they ask me, another so-called Negro, to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are being treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?

"I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for justice, equality and freedom."[1]

Ali was stripped of his boxing title. The media denounced him. But wherever he went to speak in the following months, he was greeted by enthusiastic Blacks in meetings numbering in the thousands. Ali's courageous stand was an expression of the growing Black revolt and helped intensify the already overwhelming opposition in the Black community to the war.

In Oakland, California, young militants initiated the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, which spread to other cities and became known world-wide as the Black Panthers. They used the symbol of the Lowndes County Freedom Party, but the two groups were not connected. The Black Panthers gained national attention and notoriety by holding a peaceful legal protest while holding unloaded rifles in the gallery of the California state legislature.

In May, an all-Black conference on Black Power in Los Angeles drew 1,500 people, and was addressed by speakers including H. Rap Brown, who had recently been elected national chairman of SNCC. He talked about the "two-party myth," *The Militant* reported. "There is really only one party with two names, the Democrats and Republicans," Brown explained. He called for "black political action independent of both wings of this one party wherever we constitute a majority."[2]

Stokeley Carmichael received a tremendous ovation when he stepped to the podium. He advocated Black political parties for the South in predominantly Black counties, and Black control of ghettos in the North. There were similar Black Power meetings elsewhere.

Attacks on Blacks fighting for their rights in the South by cops and vigilante racist groups continued to take place. A vicious police raid occurred at Texas Southern University, directed against a student strike for the right of a SNCC chapter to exist at the mostly Black school. Cops not only attacked a protest, but invaded dormitories where the students fled the violence. They fired thousands of rounds, and smashed the facilities with axes. *The Militant's* account was written by an eyewitness.

In June, an antiwar demonstration of 20,000 in Los Angeles greeted President Johnson, who was attending a $500-a-plate fundraising dinner. The day started with a rally that heard SNCC leader H. Rap Brown, Dr. Spock, and Muhammad Ali. Then the throng marched to the hotel where Johnson was to speak. Massive numbers of cops were hidden in the parking garage under the hotel.

Seizing on an ultraleft action by a small group organized by the Maoist Progressive Labor Party, which the great majority of demonstrators were unaware of, the cops declared the action an unlawful assembly and attacked on motorcycles. Hundreds more police stormed out of the parking garage, clubs swinging. Cops also blocked the march from the rear, so people could not get away.

Hundreds of peaceful demonstrators were injured, 60 seriously enough to be taken to the hospital, and 50 were arrested. One thousand city police carried out the carefully planned assault. The cops clubbed reporters, and TV coverage exposed the brutality.

The Los Angeles Peace Action Council and the Student Mobilization Committee, which had called the demonstration, fought back politically. Joined by the ACLU and other antiwar and civil liberties organizations, they gathered hundreds of statements about the assault from witnesses. The PAC and the SMC called for a demonstration on August 6, the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

About 10,000 showed up for that march, and the police assault was not repeated. But the terrifying brutality nonetheless made it more difficult for a time to organize antiwar actions in Los Angeles. Many ordinary people feared a repetition of the police violence. The Los Angeles police department had a well-deserved reputation as a particularly brutal, corrupt and racist outfit.

The Militant was on a biweekly schedule to allow for summer vacations when successive issues reported on Black rebellions in Newark, New Jersey, and Detroit, Michigan. Like previous rebellions, these were sparked by police brutality. These uprisings were not easily put down. The Newark police had to call in the New Jersey

National Guard with tanks to drown the rebellion in blood. In Detroit, even the National Guard wasn't enough. The federal government had to send in troops.

The Militant covered these rebellions in full. SWP member Lawrence Stewart, a Black resident of the Newark ghetto for 25 years, provided us with a first-hand account, including interviews with people on the streets. Derrick Morrison, 21, did the same in Detroit. These accounts gave the real flavor of the long pent-up anger of those participating, in their own words, and the exhilaration they felt in massively fighting back against the white power structure. We also ran an anonymous article by a reporter for a daily Newark newspaper, an article that paper had refused to publish. It described the brutality of the police and National Guard as they indiscriminately beat, arrested, wounded and murdered Blacks. There were 4,000 arrests in Detroit, and nearly 100 were murdered by the forces of order in the two cities.

"In the rebellious area I got a taste of how a Vietnamese or a Dominican felt when American forces occupied their homelands," Morrison wrote. "The occupation forces had brought out all of their artillery — rifles, machine guns, tanks and helicopters with mounted machine guns."[3]

There was more systematic fighting back than in previous rebellions. Snipers fired on cops and troops.

Just after these events, the first conference of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity took place in Havana. Joe Hansen attended the conference for *The Militant*. He wrote that the "main theme of the conference was reaffirmation of the program of socialist revolution as opposed to the line of 'peaceful coexistence' with the so-called 'progressive' sector of the national bourgeoisie, adaptation to its fraudulent electoral process and abandonment of armed struggle in countries where all peaceful roads have been blocked by the oligarchs and their imperialist backers."

Stokeley Carmichael and others from SNCC were there. They were given places of honor. Their speeches explained the Black Power movement and the ghetto uprisings. "Their analyses … were highly appreciated by the Cubans," Joe wrote, "for whom many aspects of the black power movement and its outlook had been unclear and even puzzling. In return the SNCC representatives spoke in warm terms of how much they had learned by seeing the gains of the Cuban Revolution and listening to the revolutionaries from the 27 countries represented at the gathering."[4] *The Militant* reprinted Carmichael's speech.

The conference "opened the way for a regroupment of revolutionary forces in Latin America — a most welcome contrast to the attacks against 'Trotskyism' which marred the Tricontinental conference," Hansen wrote.

A few weeks later, the Communist Party's *The Worker* attacked the conference,

without mentioning it was held in Havana or that Castro gave the main speech. *The Worker* criticized Castro's speech in a roundabout fashion. They didn't take on Castro directly, but denounced speakers from the floor who echoed Castro's themes.

In September, The SWP nominated Fred Halstead for President in the 1968 elections, and Paul Boutelle for Vice President. The ticket embodied our two main campaigns, the fight against the Vietnam War and the fight for Black liberation. Boutelle, who had previously been a candidate for the Freedom Now Party in Harlem, had joined the SWP. We began the campaign early, so that we could use it for over a year in popularizing our ideas in the turbulent times.

Fred Halstead continued to play a leading role in the antiwar movement while he ran for President. Following the April demonstrations, strains were developing in the coalition that had called the actions. The debate was over what to do next. The Student Mobilization Committee held a meeting before the meeting of the broader coalition, the Spring Mobilization Committee, and adopted a modified version of a proposal by Kipp Dawson calling for a march on Washington in the fall.

Some in the coalition pushed for "going beyond" protest to "resistance," the orientation that the national SDS had adopted in opposition to mass marches. This vague slogan meant different things to different people. The radical pacifist Dave Dellinger interpreted it to mean non-violent civil disobedience. We agreed with Dellinger on non-violence because we recognized that peaceful demonstrations were the only tactic that could facilitate the involvement of large numbers of people at the time.

An agreement was reached that there would be a peaceful mass march, and that there would be separate acts of civil disobedience. The meeting of the Spring Mobilization Committee adopted this compromise, but there was a big fight over whether or not to set a date for a mass action. Failure to set a date, we feared, might give ammunition to those who were reluctant to call any action at all. Finally, however, it was agreed to hold a mass march on October 21. The march would go to the Pentagon, where the civil disobedience would also take place.

Why the Pentagon? Jerry Rubin, who had played a central role in setting up the Vietnam Day Committee at the Berkeley campus, had become part of the Mobilization Committee's leadership. He had evolved since his VDC days, and, along with Abbie Hoffman, had formed a loose grouping called "Yippies." The Yippies promoted activities intended to shock the public: street theater, exotic dress, drug use, and various absurdist tactics. Rubin proposed that at the Pentagon, the Yippies would attempt to "levitate" the building 300 feet into the air. While everyone in the coalition recognized the tongue-in-cheek character of this proposal, most liked the idea of protesting at the

command center of the US war machine. We agreed.

At first, the government refused to grant a permit for the march unless the Mobilization Committee publicly repudiated the planned acts of civil disobedience. The Committee refused. It appeared that the government might try to use troops to prevent the march, but the threat intensified support for the action, and the government backed down. It was agreed that there would be a rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, followed by a march across the Potomac River to the Pentagon, where there would be another rally. Those who wished to carry out civil disobedience would attempt to enter the Pentagon, and would be arrested.

Shortly before the action, we learned of the capture of Che Guevara in Bolivia, where he had been leading a guerrilla insurgency, and of his murder by Bolivian troops under orders from the United States government. That night I cried at the loss of this great revolutionary.

Fidel Castro's speech confirming Che's death was the lead front-page article in the issue of *The Militant* that we sold at the march. The issue included a page of excerpts of Che's writings.

I had selected a large picture of Che for the front page. The picture wasn't wholly rectangular, but in an "L" shape. This raised some eyebrows among some older comrades, including Farrell Dobbs, as this was a departure from our usually conservative style. The issue was well-received at the march.

The Young Socialist Alliance created a poster of Che, with his declaration, "Wherever death may surprise us, let it be welcome if our battle cry has reached even one receptive ear and another hand reaches out to take up our arms…." Many young people bought these posters, and held them up during the rally and march.

At least 100,000 people attended the rally, the largest antiwar demonstration yet in the Capital. John Wilson of SNCC called for a minute of silence in memory of Che. Everyone joined the tribute. Dave Dellinger spoke, as did Dr. Spock, the author of best-selling books on the care of infants and small children. Spock played an important role in the antiwar movement. In his book *Out Now*, Fred Halstead comments that Dellinger's speech "was a good speech, a before-the-battle speech, and he ended by appealing to the demonstrators to face the troops at the Pentagon without hostility and to carry the antiwar message to them."[5]

The march was spirited and colorful. There were all kinds of banners and signs from different groups. One contingent of Blacks carried the slogan "No Vietnamese ever called me nigger!" — echoing Muhammad Ali. The SWP branches and YSA chapters carried their own banners. One from the Columbia University YSA parodied the slogan of the extreme right, "Better dead than red." Their banner read "Better

Fred than dead — vote Socialist Workers!"

I wrote the lead story on the action for the *Militant.* Like many mass actions of all types, the event turned out somewhat differently than had been planned. The rally and march occurred more or less as foreseen, but the confrontation at the Pentagon saw an unplanned massive civil disobedience.

The army had brought in thousands of troops to defend the Pentagon. When the crowd reached the building, it did not go where the government had said the second rally could take place, but just naturally massed in front of the Pentagon. A few threw objects at the troops, and there was a scuffle, but then most began fraternizing with the troops, who were draftees. Pictures of young people putting flowers into the barrels of the troops' rifles were printed in newspapers nationwide and around the world. Groups of young people went around the troops and occupied areas the government had said were forbidden, such as the steps leading up to the entrance.

It was evident that the authorities pulled back from attacking those who had pushed their way past the line of troops. Such an attack could have infuriated the main mass of marchers. While many of the demonstrators left once they got to the Pentagon, about 30,000 were in the mall in front of it, and several thousand were above them on the steps and elsewhere. It was an exhilarating experience.

It was hard for those participating in the official civil disobedience to get through the crowd in order to be arrested. Dellinger, Brad Lyttle (another radical pacifist who played a key role in the antiwar movement) and Dr. Spock finally managed to break through. Dellinger and Lyttle were arrested by federal marshals, but they wouldn't touch Dr. Spock.

The crowd largely dissipated as darkness came, but a few thousand stayed well into the night. At midnight the troops were ordered to begin making arrests, but there were still 750 protestors left at dawn.

Some soldiers had a belligerent attitude, but many of the young draftees became friendly with the demonstrators. News of this fraternization spread and helped antiwar activists to begin to view the soldiers not as enemies but potential allies.

In October, there was an attempt by demonstrators, largely from the campus and city of Berkeley in California, to "shut down" the induction center in neighboring Oakland, during a week of activities. The first demonstration of some 3,000 converged on the induction center, and was brutally attacked by the cops. Some demonstrators sought to fight back, but were routed.

Another demonstration was set for a few days later, but this time with different tactics. This one was bigger, with some 10,000 participants. But they didn't march on the center, where 2,000 cops were waiting for them. Instead, they approached from

all sides, blocking traffic. When the cops would charge one group to clear the streets, the crowd would run away, swarming around the cops, blocking traffic somewhere else. These mobile columns thwarted the cops' efforts, and for some five hours the demonstrators ran them ragged and controlled about 20 square blocks around the center.

It seemed to many that a new way had been found to outwit the cops: "mobile tactics." The Student Mobilization Committee and other groups in New York tried to duplicate the Oakland demonstrations. YSA members in the committee warned that calling for shutting down the targeted induction center in lower Manhattan was unrealistic. But they were voted down.

I joined the demonstrations. But the cops had heard of "mobile tactics," by now and were prepared. The contingent I was in was led by Linda Dannenberg and Gus Horowitz. We ran all over the place, but could get nowhere near the center. The cops became pretty brutal, on that first day and in the days thereafter, as the demonstrations grew smaller. We got hold of a picture of a plain-clothes cop with a blackjack cracking the skull of an antiwar Vietnam veteran, and placed it on the front page.

28. THE 1968 TET OFFENSIVE IN VIETNAM

The year 1968 was marked by big struggles throughout the world. But three events stood out: the massive offensive by the National Liberation Front in the cities of South Vietnam, the "Prague spring" in Czechoslovakia, and the May-June student-worker uprising and prerevolutionary situation in France.

The Student Mobilization Committee held a national conference at the end of January 1968. The purpose of the conference was to launch a nationwide student strike against the war, in conjunction with other activities.

Some 900 students and youth from 110 colleges and 40 high schools attended the conference. The Communist Party once again tried to utilize the conference to turn the SMC into a "multi-issue" organization, in line with steering it into the upcoming electoral campaign of the Democratic Party. They tried to utilize the issue of racism to do this. Of course, everyone in the organized antiwar movement was against racism, but they were not agreed on how to fight it.

The first ploy the CP used was to try to force the conference to accept that the Black Caucus, attended by about sixty of the Blacks present, should be given 50 percent of the conference vote. This was intended to factionally misuse legitimate sentiments of support for what came to be known as affirmative action. It backfired when the Black Caucus itself rejected the idea, and instead founded a new organization, the National Black Antiwar Anti-Draft Union, affiliated with the SMC as an independent organization.

I was sent to the conference to aid the YSA members in the struggle with the CP over this question. I explained that the purpose of the SMC was not to try to become another civil rights organization or attempt to be part of the leadership of the Black movement. Blacks should be the leaders of their movement.

I noted that there were big differences in the room on how to fight racism. For example, the YSA and SWP supported Black nationalism, Black self-determination

and Black power, while others, including the CP, were opposed. We supported the right of Blacks to resist racist violence with armed self-defense, and others were opposed. We were for independent Black political action against the two capitalist parties, while others were for Blacks supporting the Democrats. We should stick to the area we agree on: opposition to the racist war in Vietnam.

With the Black Caucus adopting a nationalist line and rejecting factionalism toward the SMC, the CP prudently backed off. A motion was then passed overwhelmingly to the effect that the "purpose of the Student Mobilization Committee is to fight against the racist war in Vietnam." Ten days of action were projected on campuses and cities across the country, culminating in a student strike on April 26 and mass demonstrations on April 27.

Just after the conference closed, the National Liberation Front launched an offensive in the cities of South Vietnam during the Tet holiday celebrating the beginning of the lunar New Year in Vietnam.

The White House and the Pentagon had claimed that the war in South Vietnam was being won by the US and its client government. We were told that there was "light at the end of the tunnel," that the territory under NLF control had shrunk to a few border areas that were supplied by North Vietnam, and that the NLF had little or no support in the cities.

Although the Saigon puppet regime had 600,000 troops and the Americans another 500,000, the NLF was able to organize and supply troops in every major city. The US command was unaware of this fact until the surprise offensive was launched. It was obvious that the general population had to be cooperating with the NLF for this to happen.

On the first day, the US embassy in Saigon and significant areas of the city were captured by the NLF. In a few days, the NLF held most of the major cities.

The troops of the Saigon regime were not up to the task of retaking the areas the NLF had liberated. US troops had to bear the brunt of the fighting, often hand to hand and house by house, after the US had mercilessly bombed and shelled these civilian neighborhoods. Vietnamese civilians paid a big price in casualties.

The US forces prevailed militarily, in the sense that the cities were retaken. But politically the NLF had proved to the world that it was a potent force with vast reserves of support among the Vietnamese people. It was now clear that the US was nowhere near winning the war.

These truths had a big impact on the American people. In addition, US soldiers killed in the uprising and in the fighting to put it down numbered in the thousands. The war was affecting American cities and towns, big and small, all across the country,

as the number of young men coming home in coffins mounted.

For most antiwar activists, Tet ended the debate over the slogans of "Negotiate" versus that of "Immediate Withdrawal." The only way the war would end would be for the US to get the hell out.

Tet deepened divisions in US ruling circles about the war. The *New York Times* reported that the head of US forces in Vietnam, General William Westmoreland, had secretly requested an additional 206,000 troops. The next day, Secretary of State Dean Rusk testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in what became a debate between Rusk and the Committee's chairman, William Fulbright.

It was later learned that Johnson's top military advisors, meeting in secret, had decided against Westmoreland's request, which had been based on the strategy of continuing military escalation. Taking into account what the Tet offensive had shown about the military and political reality on the ground in Vietnam, as well as the growing opposition at home to throwing more young men into the quagmire, they adopted a new course. Their alternative strategy became known as "Vietnamization" of the war (a term which became identified with the subsequent Nixon administration). This meant bolstering the training and equipping of the Saigon puppet army, backing it with US airpower and cutting back on the role of US ground troops.

Senator Eugene McCarthy had already announced he was running in the Democratic primaries as a critic of the war. In the New Hampshire primary on March 12, he won a plurality over President Johnson. Then Robert Kennedy, sensing Johnson's vulnerability, announced he too would seek the Democratic nomination.

On March 31, Johnson made the startling announcement that he was withdrawing from the race. Westmoreland was pulled from his Vietnam command.

Tet also sparked widespread activity on the nation's campuses, sponsored by local SMCs, local chapters of SDS, and other groups, leading up to the April 26 student strike. It should be noted that while the national leadership of SDS did almost nothing on the war in this period, its local chapters were free to do what they wanted. In fact, most didn't follow their national leaders on this point, and joined in mobilizing for the strike.

On April 26, a million students struck against the war in over 1,000 schools, primarily colleges and universities but including high schools. In most places, students didn't just stay away from classes, but utilized the occasion for leafleting, teach-ins and other antiwar activities. A new layer of activists came into the movement.

The next day, demonstrations were held in cities across the country, the largest being some 200,000 in New York. A new feature of these demonstrations was the large turnout of high school students.

*The Militant*s that reported on April 26 and April 27 had a new format. For a few years, we had been building a party print shop, under the leadership of Al Hansen and Howard Mayhew. This was an offset print shop — as opposed to hot-type, which I have described earlier. Over time, our own print shop had become able to obtain the equipment and develop the skills to publish *The Militant*.

For some time Harry Ring and I had been working closely with Al Hansen, picking out our new type-faces and style, and working out the weekly schedule with the shop. One result of switching to offset printing was that the quality of the paper's photographs was greatly improved. The first issue in the new format featured a front page made up entirely (except for the masthead) of a single photograph of a huge throng of students lining up for the April 27 march, with the banners of the SMC being the most prominent.

While antiwar sentiment in the country as a whole was deepened by the Tet offensive, some in the organized antiwar movement became convinced that the war was winding down. Johnson had proposed, in his speech declining the Presidential renomination, to open negotiations with North Vietnam. Hanoi accepted. These negotiations immediately became bogged down, and would go on for five more years, as did the direct role of US troops in the war.

A few days after the huge success of April 26 and 27, a move was made to exclude two SMC staff persons, Kipp Dawson and Syd Stapleton, representatives of the YSA, from the staff.

A meeting in New York of the SMC continuations committee was called to settle the dispute. Some 400 observers and delegates met on June 29. It had become crystal clear in the preceding weeks that the move to exclude the YSA was yet another attempt to change the character of the SMC from an antiwar organization to a general radical group — "less radical than SDS, but still radical," as one of the organizers of the effort to exclude the YSA explained — by excluding those who disagreed.

The issues had been forced to the surface by our efforts to debate the real issues: non-exclusion and the need for a movement focused on fighting the war. The engineers of the purge took refuge in smear tactics, with one of them explaining in a New York weekly that Stapleton and Dawson had been forced out "not because they were socialists, but because they were douchebags." The radical pacifists joined with the DuBois Clubs and others in order to scuttle the SMC as an antiwar organization. In part, this was a reflection of the rising pressures of electoral politics in a presidential year.

As an observer at the meeting, it was clear to me that those who supported excluding the YSA and transforming the SMC into a different kind of organization had lost the political debate. I noted with surprise that the defeated side apparently convinced

themselves that the YSA had a mechanical majority of the delegates, which was far from true.

Linda Morse (formerly Dannenberg) suddenly took the floor to announce a walkout of the "independents." They started to march around the room, shouting "Up Against the Wall, YSA!" A counter-chant soon reverberated — "Bring the Troops Home Now!" About one-third of the delegates marched out, and the rest went on with the meeting.

Those who walked out held their own meeting that night. But their only real point of agreement was the need to get away from building a movement around the Vietnam war. They said that they wanted something more, but they couldn't agree on what that was. They never met again.

The DuBois Clubs and the CP hoped to destroy an obstacle to their line of joining the so-called "peace" forces in the Democratic Party. The split made things more difficult during the election year but they did not achieve this goal.

They also wanted to get their young members away from the YSA members in the SMC office. The YSA's views were having an impact on them, as the big events in Czechoslovakia were shaking Stalinism internationally, and the YSA's sister organization in France was playing a major role in the May-June upheaval.

The YSA was left as the only organized tendency in the SMC. The result was several months of relative isolation. But after the elections the isolation ended. It became clear that the war was not at all close to being over. The war and its consequences were still at the heart of world politics. The SMC would go on to play an even more important role than before.

29. The Assassination of Martin Luther King

Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4, 1968. King was there to build support for striking sanitation workers, who were mostly Black.

Powerful forces had set out to discredit and eliminate King. The FBI and its director, J. Edgar Hoover, had targeted Black and civil rights organizations for decades. Hoover zeroed in on King, keeping him under constant surveillance and playing all kinds of dirty tricks to undermine him.

When King came out against the Vietnam War, the pro-war liberals broke with him. In the last year of his life, King also opened a new front in the fight for Blacks, other victims of racial oppression, and the poor. He was reaching out to trade unions. He began to make speeches about the need to overcome the big disparities in income and employment between whites and Blacks, disparities which had widened since the Second World War.

King's first speech opposing the Vietnam war was a February 1967 address at Stanford University entitled "Two Americas." He connected the war abroad with the fight for equality at home. He explained that it was much more difficult to achieve economic equality than to get rid of legal segregation.

He called for a new "coalition of an energized section of labor, Negroes, unemployed and welfare recipients" that could possibly be "the source of power that reshapes economic relationships and ushers in a new breakthrough to a new level of social reform."

King took a further step by supporting the sanitation workers in Memphis. The city's racial discrimination against Black sanitation workers sparked the strike, supported by the all-Black Local 1733 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). The demands included union recognition. The city and state responded with violent attacks by the cops and National Guard.

Memphis' Black community was galvanized into support. The battle became nationally known, and we sent reporters.

The Militant's front-page photo was of National Guardsmen, rifles at the ready, confronting peaceful marchers, each carrying a sign reading "I Am a Man." The image of these dignified and determined strikers and their slogan was powerful.

King was on a return trip when he was gunned down. The official version is that King's killer was a lone unknown two-bit racist, James Earl Ray. The government still sticks to this version of events, but the story has never been very credible, and today it is more widely challenged than ever. But even if it were true, the federal, state and city governments were responsible for creating the atmosphere of racism and hatred of Dr. King that made the murder possible. In my opinion, it is likely, as in Malcolm X's case, that some wing of the government was involved.

It's hard nowadays, when King's name is used in vain by capitalist politicians of all stripes, even by racists who boast that they "have a dream" of ending affirmative action (which King strongly supported), to imagine the anti-King statements in the press, by government authorities, and in Congress at the time, especially after he had spoken against the war.

The reaction to the assassination in the Black communities across the country was immediate and violent. Uprisings took place in hundreds of cities as the news got out. It was the most widespread Black upheaval so far.

Television carried scenes of the Capitol building in Washington, partially obscured by black smoke, as Washington, D.C. itself was engulfed. The sentiment was overwhelming that if "they" could do this to King, who preached non-violence, no Blacks were safe. Sixty thousand National Guardsmen were called out to quell the uprisings, and 40 Blacks were killed. There were thousands of arrests.

Our presidential candidates, Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle, joined the memorial march in Memphis. White National Guardsmen were there in force, with bayonets unsheathed.

Large solidarity rallies were organized by the antiwar movement. Coretta Scott King spoke at the April 27 demonstration against the war, in place of her martyred husband.

The powers that be were shaken. They had hoped that the Voting Rights Act and other civil rights legislation they had passed would pacify Blacks. In the wake of the anger that exploded after King's assassination, more far-reaching laws and measures were instituted. Affirmative action in jobs and education began to make a difference in the lives of Blacks and women. Most of these gains have survived, even though they have been under attack ever since.

Andrew Pulley was one of the youth arrested for joining the popular upsurge in Cleveland against King's murder. The judge gave him a choice: jail or the army. He chose the army. At Fort Jackson, he came in contact with antiwar soldiers, some of whom had been in the YSA before being drafted. He became an antiwar fighter and socialist himself, and, once out of the military, joined and became a national leader of both the SWP and YSA.

30. The May-June 1968 Revolutionary Uprising in France

The antiwar movement, which originated in the United States, had spread around the world. In France, as in most other countries, university and high school students were in the vanguard. Student demonstrations against the war took place at the University of Paris in the suburb of Nanterre in March and again in early May.

Demonstrations in solidarity with the Nanterre students took place at the Sorbonne, the main University campus, located in Paris' Latin Quarter (renamed the "Heroic Vietnam Quarter" by the students). These were attacked by the police, and street battles took place.

The French sister organization of the YSA, the Revolutionary Communist Youth (Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire — JCR) played a central role in the student movement. On May 9, the JCR held a mass meeting of 6,000 in the Latin Quarter. One of the speakers was Ernest Mandel, a leader of the Fourth International. His speech was prophetically titled, "From revolt on the campus to revolt against capitalism."

Among the invited speakers were representatives of the German Socialist Students Union, SDS. But the French government barred them from entering the country, infuriating the protesters.

The next evening, May 10, some 35,000 students held a protest march. The paramilitary shock troops of the police attacked. A running battle ensued that lasted into the morning of the next day. The students built barricades of paving stones torn up from the streets. Their weapons were stones. The cops had clubs and tear gas and the more potent CS gas. The students threw some of the canisters back into the police lines.

People in surrounding apartment houses joined the battle, throwing whatever they

could at the police, including choice invective, and pouring warm water out of windows to disable the gas. They provided rags that the students used to cover their faces and shovels for digging up paving stones. They offered shelter.

The students suffered many casualties and were finally dispersed, with many arrested. But their determined fight at the barricades won broad sympathy among workers.

The leaders of the largest union federation, the General Confederation of Labor (Confédération générale du travail — CGT) were members of the Communist Party. The CP first came out against the students, but the mood of the workers forced them to relent. The CGT called a solidarity demonstration and one-day general strike for May 13.

One million workers and students marched, and the general strike turned out to be more than a one-day affair. Workers in Paris and throughout France continued the strike, and began to occupy their factories and other places of work. Soon two-thirds of France's 15,000,000 workers were on strike, and 2,000 establishments were occupied. Small farmers joined the action, blocking roads with tractors. It had become the greatest general strike in French history.

To report on the uprising, the Militant sent Joe Hansen, the editor of *Intercontinental Press*, and YSA National Secretary Mary-Alice Waters, who had studied at the Sorbonne and was fluent in French. They were joined by Helena Hermes and Brian Shannon, photographers who had taken many photos for *The Militant.*

For ten years, France had been under the authoritarian, centralized "Fifth Republic" of Charles DeGaulle. DeGaulle, however, was never able to decisively set aside bourgeois-democratic rights and procedures.

The pent-up demands of the working people, the wage workers and the farmers, which had been stifled under DeGaulle, exploded. The movement became more and more political and directed at the overthrow of Gaullism.

The student movement became a seething cauldron of open and non-stop political discussion and debate, as well as action — often in confrontation with the police. The JCR had won a leading role. JCR leader Alain Krivine was often among the leaders of the demonstrations, and a superb speaker at the rallies.

The JCR originated in a movement in the 1950s within the Communist Party's student organization. These students began to build solidarity with the Algerian revolution against French rule during the Algerian war, which was just as brutal and dirty as the American war against Vietnam. They also organized against the fascist Secret Army Organization in France (Organisation de l'Armée Secrète — OAS), formed as the extreme right wing of the French attempt to hold onto Algeria, which

had joined the military revolts that brought down the Fourth Republic and brought DeGaulle to power. Most of his far-right backers broke with DeGaulle and sought to topple him when he began negotiations with the Algerian rebels and later agreed to Algerian independence.

Support for Algeria brought the young revolutionists into conflict with the CP leadership, which was opposed to the Algerian revolution. The dissident CP youth became enthusiastic supporters of the Cuban revolution. Finally, they were expelled from the Communist Student Union when they opposed supporting a capitalist-party candidate, Francois Mitterand, for president in 1966. (Mitterand later became president as a social democrat, without much change in his pro-imperialist politics.) Those expelled were joined by other forces, and together they founded the JCR in April, 1966. Trotskyists were part of the JCR, but there were other tendencies as well. Thereafter, the CP became very weak in the student movement.

The JCR militants were experienced in defending themselves and others from the violence unleashed by the fascist OAS against solidarity actions with Algeria. This experience became useful in helping the student movement organize its own defense guards during the May-June events.

One of the students' most prominent and popular leaders was from Nanterre — Daniel Cohn-Bendit. He was not a member of the JCR and had anarchist sympathies. The JCR fought for non-exclusion, advocating that all tendencies in the student movement unite in action while freely debating differences.

The *London Observer* had reporters on the scene. They reported, "Cohn-Bendit's chief supporters are a small, highly organized and fanatically militant group called the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionaire (JCR) — a sort of Trotskyist political commando, led by Alain Krivine.…

"They want the students to set an example of militancy which the working class will follow. The irony is that these violent young men have struck a chord of idealism and morality."[1]

In the United States, we were excited, putting it mildly, by the historic mobilization of the working class in France and the role our comrades were playing. An issue of *Life* magazine featured a photo of JCR leader Pierre Rousset on the cover. Our French comrades were impressed that we had sent reporters to cover the uprising in detail for *The Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*. These two publications helped mobilize support for the French struggle in the United States and throughout the world. We were able to reach our international co-thinkers and other politically minded people. My main job was to get out *The Militant* every week with the best coverage of this historic development that we could obtain.

Ray Sparrow was the SWP representative to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, which was headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. Because of the general strike, it was difficult to get material published in France. So Ray worked with the Belgian comrades to help out. Our French comrades would bring their written materials to Belgium, where they would be printed. Then the leaflets, statements and other materials would be brought back across the border by the JCR members.

The JCR played the central role in politically orienting the student movement towards calling for the formation of strike committees in the factories and action committees in the neighborhoods. They pressed to continue the general strike to force DeGaulle's ouster and to form a workers' government based on the mass committees. Such committees began to form, and take over public functions.

The tri-color flag of capitalist France was torn down in the student quarters, and replaced with the red flag of socialist revolution. Their demonstrations were marked by the singing of "The Internationale" — the song of revolutionary international socialism. At the demonstration of workers and students on May 13 there was a sea of red flags, and the revolutionary symbol festooned the occupied factories.

The occupation of the factories by the workers posed the question: to whom do the factories belong — the capitalists or the workers? The general strike posed the question: who should hold political power — the old capitalist regime or the working people? The situation was moving in a revolutionary direction. The DeGaulle regime was in disarray. His premier called the situation "prerevolutionary."

The police were being demoralized by the continual battles with students and workers. The army, made up of conscript citizen soldiers, was open to appeals to join the movement. There was an exceptional opportunity for a relatively peaceful anti-capitalist revolution.

Why didn't this happen? In the aftermath, capitalist pundits around the world denied that a prerevolutionary situation had existed, as they collectively sighed with relief that the danger was over. The Stalinists and Social Democrats the world over echoed them.

In fact, all the preconditions for a socialist revolution were in place, except one. And that was the existence of a mass revolutionary socialist party that would resolutely lead the masses to victory.

The French Communist Party, with some 500,000 members and supporters in the working class, and which led the main trade union federation, was opposed to a revolutionary course, right from the beginning. They initially opposed the student rebellion. They castigated Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a German citizen studying in France, for being a German who had sullied the French flag. They vilified the "Trotskyites."

They called the May 13 demonstration because they were forced to by the sentiment of the workers. When the workers launched the general strike and factory occupations, the CP insisted that the workers had only economic demands, not political ones. They didn't come out against DeGaulle until major capitalist politicians began to raise the need for DeGaulle to step down, and a transitional government be put in place.

On May 29, the CP-led CGT called another demonstration in Paris, and this time the turnout was 800,000. The CP leadership had two goals in mind. One was to keep at the head of the masses. The other was to support a new capitalist coalition government, which they wanted to join, to counter the growing sentiment for a workers' government. But on this march the workers showed what they wanted by carrying red flags and singing "The Internationale." Joe Hansen reported from Paris, "The demonstration had an enthusiasm and a fervor that required little to transform it into the clinching action that would have brought down the regime and opened the socialist revolution in France."[2] But the CP ended the march by dispersing it without a rally.

DeGaulle then made his move. On May 30, he gave a speech dissolving the National Assembly; he called for new elections, declared he would not resign, and threatened civil war if the general strike was not ended. For the first time, the pro-Gaullist rightist forces raised their frightened heads and marched in the wealthy neighborhoods. This was bluster and bluff, but DeGaulle felt confident that the CP would bow to his threats with a sigh of relief and accept his terms.

The CGT leaders ended the general strike piecemeal, settling the strike at the different enterprises one by one. The workers did win some economic demands, but not their main one to reduce the workweek from 48 to 40 hours. The CP hailed this ignominious capitulation and betrayal as a great victory.

Hundreds of thousands of students and workers had been mobilized and revolutionized. When I visited Paris later that summer, the spirit of revolution was still in the air. By virtue of the exemplary role it played, the JCR grew by leaps and bounds, even though it was one of the revolutionary organizations that had been outlawed by DeGaulle. In the US, we went on a campaign in solidarity with the JCR and the other outlawed groups.

While the memory of these great events has been all but erased by bourgeois historians and the Stalinists, we who continue the true revolutionary tradition must keep it alive, for the new generations of revolutionists.

One of the many international demonstrations that were held in solidarity with the French workers and students was initiated by the YSA in Berkeley, California. The mayor ordered the cops to attack the demonstration; but the youthful crowd of 1,000 fought back. In the next five days, a "battle of Berkeley" erupted that ended with a

victory for the wider movement.

The central political leader of the students and youth in this conflict was Peter Camejo. We had sent Peter to Berkeley in 1966 to strengthen SWP and YSA units there. The campus of the University of California at Berkeley was a center of the antiwar movement and the youth radicalization. Peter was a terrific orator. He could explain political ideas in a way that had great appeal to students and youth. So he rapidly became a leader on the campus. He became part of the leading committee of the Vietnam Day Committee.

In the next two years Camejo was prominent in demonstrations and rallies against the Vietnam War, against attempts by the university to limit students' political rights, and in protesting the harassment and police violence against the Black Panther Party, headquartered in Oakland. Camejo was also the SWP candidate for mayor of Berkeley and for the US Senate from California.

In 1968 police attacks on the Black Panthers intensified across the country. In Oakland, Black Panther Party leader Huey Newton had been arrested and charged with the murder of a cop, after police had recognized Newton's car and stopped it. The cops shot Newton in the stomach, and one cop died in the altercation. A movement developed around the call to "Free Huey!" In April, in a police attack on the Black Panther headquarters, their treasurer Bobby Hutton was shot to death by the cops.

The rally in support of the workers and students of France was held on Telegraph Avenue near the campus. It was supported by the YSA, Black Panthers, Peace and Freedom Party, Independent Socialist Club and others. The organizers had appealed to the city council to allow them to hold the rally in the street, as a large crowd was expected. The council refused. To avoid a confrontation, the demonstrators stayed on the sidewalk, with a line of monitors between the rally and the cops.

The mayor declared the demonstration to be illegal and ordered the cops to end it. The demonstrators scattered but fought back. Some barricades were built for defense.

The next day a mass meeting was called on the campus to decide what to do next. All the decisions during the six days of struggle were taken by majority vote at such mass meetings.

At the meeting of 500, Camejo urged returning to Telegraph Ave. that evening to exercise the right to hold a meeting, a constitutional right which was under attack by the mayor and the police. This proposal passed overwhelmingly, and a rally of 2,000 took place. Police surrounded the rally, and barricades began to be built in case of a police attack. The mayor showed up, offering to debate Camejo about the constitutional issues if the demonstrators would move to a parking lot. Camejo reported the mayor's offer to the demonstration and a decisive majority voted to stay put.

The police opened a surprise attack, and a second night of fighting followed, shorter but more intense than on the first night. The police went after anyone, attacking passersby and charging into homes to beat people who had nothing to do with the rally. The police actions turned public opinion in favor of the demonstrators. The YSA headquarters served as a first aid station for the wounded.

The mayor declared a curfew for the next evening in the area where Telegraph Ave. ends at the campus. A delegation of representatives of groups supporting the fight, including Camejo, met with the mayor, but to no avail. They came back to a mass decision-meeting numbering 800. The meeting decided to march to city hall. There, it was decided to enter the curfew area. Many arrests were made, and Peter had to go into hiding. He called me from one of his hideouts, to explain the situation, and we mapped out coverage in *The Militant*. Betsey Stone was on hand in Berkeley to organize our coverage. Peter was also in contact with Tom Kerry, who provided tactical advice.

The protesters shifted tactics. All demonstrations were called off for three days, to concentrate on building a big rally on Telegraph on the fourth day, which also happened to be July 4, "independence day" commemorating the Declaration of Independence from British rule. This decision was made at a mass meeting of over 1,200 people. The police brutality and the curfew were galvanizing support for the demonstrators.

The protesters also decided to attend a meeting of the city council the following day. The mayor had been forced by the public outcry to agree to hold an open meeting where citizens could participate in the debate on the demands of the demonstrators. Over 1,000 people attended the meeting, and many spoke.

"It was a meeting," Peter Camejo was quoted in *The Militant*, "where people reassured themselves that they were completely right just by listening to each other, by each person getting up and giving their own personal experiences. Most people didn't know exactly what happened because everyone just witnessed one or another aspect of the events. As the general picture began to dawn on people, it became absolutely clear to everyone: We were completely right in our accusations."[3]

By a 5-4 vote, the council barred the July 4 rally. In the uproar that followed, a mass meeting was called for that night in the same hall that the city council met. This was a meeting of 2,000, the largest decision-making meeting in Berkeley up to that time (later, some antiwar meetings to debate strategy were larger).

Camejo stated that the July 4 event on Telegraph Avenue had become a symbol for the right of assembly and the right of people to fight for their beliefs. If the demonstrators stood strong and united, he added, it was not excluded that the city

council would capitulate. The proposal to go ahead with the July 4 rally come what may, was adopted by a huge majority. The next day the city council reversed its position, and in a 5-3 vote allowed the rally to proceed.

About 2,500 showed up July 4 for what became a victory rally on Telegraph, a united demonstration addressed by representatives of all the groups that had supported the struggle.

31. THE PRAGUE SPRING

The May-June events in France showed that the workers in an advanced capitalist country had the capacity and potential power to make a socialist revolution. The Tet offensive by the Vietnamese liberation movement powerfully confirmed that the workers and peasants in a semi-colonial country, even a poor and economically backward one, could take on the most powerful imperialist country.

Another important sector of the world, the Soviet bloc, where capitalism had been overthrown and bureaucratic Stalinist regimes seemed entrenched, also saw revolutionary developments in 1968.

Czechoslovakia, which had one of the most devloped economies in the bloc, was saddled with one of the most hidebound regimes.

In a nationalized and planned economy accurate statistics, openness, and the active participation of the working people in planning and innovation are necessary to continue to make progress, especially as the economy becomes more technologically advanced. The reactionary bureaucracy's stultifying control, marked by lies, suppression of independent and scientific thinking, and the repression of the masses, led to economic stagnation and falling living standards for the workers in this highly proletarian country.

The bureaucratized Communist Party became more and more isolated. A section of the party saw the need for changes, and began to oppose the old guard. This split spilled into the public, encouraging more open discussion, especially among students and intellectuals. For the first time since the Stalinist regime was set up in the late 1940s, there was a revival of political life. The "liberalizers" in the party and state bureaucracy found support in this public discussion. The result was the replacement of the old government headed by Novotny, with reformers headed by Alexander Dubcek.

At this point early in 1968, the pent up aspirations of the masses burst forth. Discussion blossomed, censorship was abandoned, repression went into abeyance, the political police were curbed. The new regime exposed many of the crimes of

Stalinism in Czechoslovakia. Most important, the working class began to mobilize and become politicized. In Prague, the arrival of spring saw rebirth of the earth and the nation.

In April, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued a statement, which we published in *The Militant*, on the events. The statement hailed the "students, intellectuals, and workers of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic who for months have been the driving force in a powerful movement for socialist democracy in their country."[1]

It wasn't easy in those days to balance coverage of the war in Vietnam and the US antiwar movement, the revolutionary developments in France, defense of the Black Panthers and other Black fighters, the Czechoslovak events — all this plus our own vigorous election campaign. What a year 1968 was!

Revolutionary documents circulated in Prague. One, titled the "Two Thousand Words" manifesto, demanded purging the reactionary Novotny forces from the Communist Party, and called for "public criticism, demonstrations, strikes and boycotts to bring down people who have misused power and caused public harm."[2] The Kremlin zeroed in on this document to denounce the movement and the direction events were taking, and threatened military intervention.

The Soviet leaders were encouraged in this by overtures from Washington. A *New York Times* dispatch from Warsaw which we reprinted said, "Diplomatic sources here say the current relaxation of tensions between Washington and Moscow may have persuaded the Soviet Union and some of its Eastern European allies that they can intervene militarily without fear of Western repercussions.... Some Western and Communist sources have been struck by the timing of the new understanding between the superpowers which has grown steadily since the Czechoslovak crisis began earlier this year."[3]

Discussion deepened in the country. There were open calls for workers' self-management in the factories and socialist democracy, and for the creation of "a genuinely *revolutionary* working class party."[4] A magazine published excerpts from a Fourth International manifesto that called for a "Government of Workers' Councils in Czechoslovakia." A Left Communist group was openly formed.

The *Daily World*, the renamed American Communist Party newspaper, featured *The Militant's* coverage of these developments as proof of a counter-revolutionary "conspiracy" and "plot" associated with "Trotskyites."

In August, Soviet troops were sent in to put down the unrest. The Soviet leaders under the gray, conservative, and corrupt Brezhnev feared an example of socialist democracy that could spread to other Eastern European countries and to the Soviet

Union itself. Washington, while shedding some crocodile tears, also wasn't too keen on the idea of a revolutionary, democratic and pro-socialist movement advancing in Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovakian government and party leadership denounced the invasion. But Dubcek was a liberal, not a Bolshevik. In the face of massive resistance in the streets and factories, Dubcek did not lead the struggle against the invasion but negotiated with the occupiers. He was arrested and it looked likely that he would be shot by the Soviet occupiers, as Nagy was in Hungary after the 1956 invasion. However, the Kremlin found that there was no force in the country they could rely on to form a government. The Novotny crowd was universally despised. The Soviet leaders were forced to bring Dubcek back, but with Soviet forces in control.

Without the Kremlin's invasion, the movement for socialist democracy would have continued to advance, and to give a great impetus to revolutionary forces throughout the globe.

Unlike what happened during the Hungarian revolution, when most Communist Parties around the world supported the Soviet invasion, this time there were big defections. The two biggest CPs in Europe, the French and the Italian, denounced the invasion. Similar positions were taken by the leaderships of the CPs in Sweden, Holland, Denmark, Austria, and Britain. This marked a new stage of independence of these parties from Moscow, but it was not a break to the left but towards social democracy.

The majority of the CP in the United States went along with Moscow. But even here there were repercussions, especially in southern California. There, long-time CP leader Dorothy Healey led a breakaway from the CP. But this too was a break toward social democracy and liberalism, not toward the revolutionary left.

32. TALKING TO THE GIS

As chairman of the YSA, member of the SWP Political Committee, and editor of *The Militant*, I had traveled to YSA chapters and SWP branches around the country, either on organizational trips or to speak publicly. I sometimes also visited Toronto or Vancouver, where Canadian comrades had branches. Aside from these excursions to the north, I had never been out of the US.

So when we decided that I would accompany SWP Presidential candidate Fred Halstead on a trip around the globe, I was pretty excited. Our main goal was to go to Vietnam and discuss our antiwar views with GIs and hear what they had to say about the war. My role was to be *The Militant*'s reporter as well as an aide to Fred.

At the beginning of the antiwar movement our position, that soldiers sent to Vietnam should be approached as fellow workers and fellow citizens with the right to speak and protest against the war, had been a minority one. Most activists thought of the troops as part of the problem — guilty, along with the government and the commanders, of the crimes being committed against the Vietnamese people. When they talked to potential draftees, the emphasis was on trying to get them to resist the draft. Soldiers were encouraged to desert or refuse to go to Vietnam.

The SWP was also opposed to the imperialist draft, and defended draft resistance and resistance in the military. An early sign of antiwar sentiment in the army was the emergence of soldiers who refused to go to Vietnam, and faced courts martial and jail terms. We were also in the forefront of defending these courageous soldiers.

In addition, we explained that the mass of soldiers were potential allies of the antiwar movement, and that the movement should try to find ways to reach them. Our position was that soldiers did not give up their civil rights when they were drafted, but had the right to oppose the war from within the armed forces. This concept of the "citizen soldier" was outrageous to the brass, and had to be fought for in a series of cases involving our members as well as other soldiers.

As far as our own members were concerned, we did not urge them to resist the draft, but to clearly let the authorities know their political affiliation, and their belief

that they retained their rights of free speech if drafted. This would help them if they faced repression for speaking against the war once inside the army.

In 1960, when I was called up, I explained that I was a member of the SWP. At that time, the armed forces didn't want radicals, and I was classified as "morally unfit" to serve. But later the authorities decided that rejecting those who said they were socialists only encouraged many more to take this ticket out. So young male SWP and YSA members started to be drafted.

When a member was drafted, we formally released him from the discipline of the YSA and/or the SWP. We did not want them to be open to charges that they had divided loyalties, or were expected to defy orders that contradicted our policies.

Pfc. Howard Petrick was the first to be targeted for his views. His immediate superiors considered him a model soldier, but he expressed his antiwar and socialist views, and distributed literature reflecting them to his fellow soldiers. The brass decided to court-martial him in 1966. Caroline Lund and Lew Jones went down to Fort Hood in Texas to interview Petrick and plan his defense.

We launched a campaign to defeat the prosecution, including in the antiwar movement. Caroline became head of the defense committee. The natural sympathy of antiwar fighters with this courageous soldier led to widening support and became a concrete example of how antiwar activity could be carried out among the troops.

Soon there were more soldiers who were threatened for opposition to the war. We spearheaded the setting up of the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee to fight for the right of soldiers to speak their minds, and to help organize their legal and political defense when they were threatened. This committee was led by Matilde Zimmerman. Michael Smith, a young lawyer who had joined the SWP, became counsel to the committee.

Some socialist antiwar soldiers formed discussion groups of soldiers and participated in demonstrations on bases. Courts martial frequently followed. The soldiers won broad support and were able to defeat the frame-ups.

As the war grew more unpopular, soldiers began to join antiwar actions, often in uniform. They stood in the front ranks of marches, as the movement began to understand the importance of reaching out to the GIs. The impact on the general population of seeing soldiers in uniform leading antiwar demonstrations drove the point home. There were frequent attempts to court-martial them, which failed as the growing antiwar movement came to their defense.

All of these cases concerned GIs stationed in the US. We wanted our trip to Vietnam to be an example to the antiwar movement of reaching soldiers in Vietnam itself.

33. A Trip Around the World

Our first stop, in June, was Japan. Fred had been invited to speak at a conference of Gensuiken, the movement against A and H bombs, and another conference of the Japan Peace for Vietnam Committee, Beheiran. We had also contacted our Japanese comrades, who were organizing another, more militant student antiwar conference, together with other members of Zengakuren, the student union.

We flew from New York to San Francisco, where we caught a plane to Tokyo with a stopover in Hawaii. So we were pretty tired when we arrived. Standing in the line for immigration and customs, we were pulled out and interrogated in the office of the chief immigration inspector. We were told that the Gensuiken and Beheiran conferences were OK, but the student conference was off limits. We signed a statement, with a protest, that we wouldn't go to that conference.

The Zengakuren conference organizers held a public protest and news conference including Halstead and me. We were not the only invited international guests, but we were the first to arrive. Others invited included representatives from SDS and SNCC from the US, the French Communist League (successor to the outlawed JCR), and the German SDS. (The German SDS, the German Socialist Students Union, had the same initials as the American SDS, but was socialist from its origin and wasn't connected to the American Students for a Democratic Society.) If all had been subjected to the treatment we got, a central purpose of the conference would have been thwarted. But the authorities backed down, and the international guests were allowed to participate.

This antiwar conference was held during a wave of student strikes for political rights at the universities and against the war. These had been given a big impetus by the April 26 international student strike called by the US Student Mobilization Committee. The response to the SMC call was greater in Japan than in any country outside the United States.

Various student factions at the conference were active in the strikes at universities. They were identified by the different colors of their hard-hats, which they wore as helmets in clashes with the cops, and sometimes with each other. Their weapons were

long stout sticks.

The supporters of the Fourth International were known as the Japan Revolutionary Communist League (IV). There were other factions with the same name, JRCL, without the "(IV)." We learned that there had been a series of splits from the JRCL since it played a big role in the student demonstrations of 1960. Some of the leaders of the other JRCLs met with Fred and me to seek our support against the others. We explained that we did not know the issues involved in these splits, and in any case, the SWP had learned over the years to be very wary of taking sides in internal struggles in other countries, unless the issues were clear-cut and of sufficient importance. We noted that as supporters of the Fourth International, we had a special relationship to the JRCL(IV).

At the conference I met a YSA member from Berkeley, Sharon Cabaniss, who was in Japan for the summer. She knew Peter Camejo. She later became head of *The Militant's* circulation department. Also participating was Jeanette Habel, the representative of the French CL, whom I had met briefly in New York at our headquarters the year before as she headed back to France from Cuba. Another delegate I met was Michel Rocard, from the French Unified Socialist Party (PSU). The PSU at the time, coming out of the May-June events, was to the left of both the Socialist and Communist parties. But over the years it moved to the right and finally dissolved into the SP, and Rocard became a minister in SP-led capitalist governments. Habel has remained a revolutionist.

Fred and I spoke to the meeting. My theme was the world revolution, using the examples of the Tet offensive, the French events and the Prague spring. We felt the wind in our sails in 1968, as these examples made our internationalist program more concrete and understandable.

We took a "bullet train" to Hiroshima to attend the Gensuiken conference. Two memories stand out. One was the annual commemoration of the August 6, 1945 atom bombing of Hiroshima. Over 100,000 people gathered at the Memorial monument. This vast crowd was completely silent as they waited for 8:06 a.m. to arrive, the exact time the bomb was detonated. The striking of a huge gong signaled the moment. Tears were running down my cheeks in solidarity with these silent survivors of the awful event, and a deep hatred swelled in my heart against the US rulers who still celebrate this murderous deed.

It is an August tradition in Japan to memorialize those who died the previous year with bonfires. In Hiroshima, this ceremony was held August 6, a few days early, after sunset. Instead of bonfires, small paper boats, each with a burning candle, are floated on Hiroshima's many streams (the city is on a delta). Each boat represented the soul of one of the hundreds of thousands who perished in the atomic atrocity.

The Beheiren conference, the broadest of the three meetings, was held in the ancient capital city of Kyoto. All three conferences supported a call we brought from the US antiwar movement for actions in October.

Back in Tokyo, we were introduced to the leader of farmers who were protesting flights of US bombers from an airfield that abutted the farmers' land. We visited him in his house, which was quite a contrast to the tiny and crowded apartments in the city. It was built from wood and paper. As was usual in Japan, it was spotlessly clean. The wood beams and floors were highly polished and very beautiful. US bombers roared over the house a few hundred feet above, as they took off on their way to wreak havoc on Vietnam. The farmers erected very tall poles at the airfield's edge to make the take-offs more difficult.

In Japan, at least at that time, white people tended to stand out. On the famous overcrowded Tokyo subway, both Fred and I were much taller than the other passengers. Fred was a big man, and really loomed large, while I am of average height for an American. I began to be conscious of our large reddish noses, compared to the more delicate features of the Japanese. Once, going into an apartment Fred banged his head going through a doorway. Another time, Fred forgot to remove his shoes before entering a comrade's apartment, and the young people present had to hide their smiles at the uncouth act.

We got lost in Tokyo. We wanted to go to Czechoslovakia on the European leg of our trip, but hadn't gotten visas. We were staying at the YMCA, and the clerk wrote out the address of the Czech embassy for us in Japanese. We took a taxi. After we got our visas stamped on our passports, we realized that we had neglected to have the address of the YMCA written down in Japanese. And the embassy was far from the city center. A taxi driver we hired didn't understand any English or our repeating the initials, "YMCA." He was resourceful, however, and stopped to talk to a European-looking woman who spoke both English and Japanese, and we made it back. But the Soviet invasion in August aborted our plans to visit Czechoslovakia.

Japanese food was new to both of us. So much fish! And cooked in every way imaginable — boiled, fried, baked, grilled and raw. Unlike Chinese food, Japanese food doesn't use much oil. I really started to like sushi and sashimi (raw fish with various sauces). But the average serving size was too small for Fred, who lost about 15 pounds during the three weeks we were in Japan. Near the end of our stay, he ordered four complete meals at one sitting.

Our next stop was Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). As our plane approached Tan Son Nhut airport outside the city we noticed the countryside was pockmarked with what looked like circular lakes. We soon figured out these were rain-filled bomb and

artillery craters. Tan Son Nhut was a military and civilian airport, and we saw a US jet fighter take off as we taxied in.

We didn't know what to expect as we got in line to have our passports checked. Our passports had visas for Czechoslovakia, a "commie" country, but the official let us through since we were Americans. Outside, we found an American reporter (from AP or UPI, I don't remember which) waiting for us. We went to his hotel room.

We asked him why the South Vietnamese authorities had let us in, as our trip and its purpose were publicized in the US. He scowled in disgust and sarcastically said that the Saigon government wasn't equal to such a difficult operation as stopping us. He later wrote a dispatch about our visit. He was young enough to be draft bait. He swore he wouldn't be drafted. If he was called up, he would threaten to tell all he knew about the war and the corruption of the Saigon government, he told us.

Coming into Saigon from the airport by taxi, we saw US troops and barbed wire everywhere. The US embassy was especially heavily guarded, with troops behind sandbag bunkers, and barbed wire keeping people a couple of hundred feet away. This was six months after Tet.

We stayed at one of the two big hotels that the French colonialists had built. We didn't get to taste much Vietnamese food, since the hotel served only French style cooking (but not real French, as we would soon find out in Paris).

Our first night we heard the low ominous rumble of US bombs. They were targeting the countryside around Saigon, about 20 miles from us, and our blinds were shaking from the blasts. Each B-52 bomber dropped a long string of bombs (30 or 40 at a time, if I remember right) that would go off one after the other in a boom-boom-boom-boom of rapidly repeating explosions. This bombing was supposed to clear the area around Saigon of the NLF. After the war was over, it was learned that the NLF had dug a very deep network of tunnels to be safe from this terrific bombardment.

We spoke with GIs wherever we could find them, at the USO, in bars, and at the Long Binh army base outside Saigon. We had many copies of an antiwar brochure for GIs that Fred had written. I remember it had a photo of a soldier eating his rations with a "Bring the troops home" sticker on his helmet. He had crossed out "the troops" and wrote "me" in and added "alive." We passed out a lot of those.

We found that the GIs in Saigon were about evenly split on the war, about half supporting it and half not. We met no hostility from soldiers, including among those who said they supported the war. Our conversations were cordial and reasoned. Many years later we learned from secret government documents that the army had tried to organize soldiers to beat us up, but this didn't happen.

The most common argument soldiers had for supporting the war was that so many

Americans had already died that the war just *had* to be OK. This was not a very powerful prowar stand. Soldiers in Saigon were mostly involved in supply and other support work for the front line troops.

Many told us that soldiers who had seen fighting tended to be more opposed to the war, and we could meet some at the Long Binh army base. We took a taxi about 20 miles out to Long Binh, and walked onto the base. No one challenged us or asked for identification. We walked past a stockade, where GIs were incarcerated for one infraction or another**.** The soldiers called it "LBJ" for both "Long Binh Jail" and President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

We found out where the PX was, and came upon a group of GIs sitting and talking. We explained who we were, and why we were interested in hearing their views. "You want to talk about the war? Sure! Sit down," said one soldier.

We started our tape recorder. "Most of us are under 21," said this same soldier. "We're over here fighting a war for the Vietnamese, and half of them don't appreciate it. Back home there are demonstrations, big people getting shot. We don't belong here in this country; we should be back in our own country. We should be helping to build our own country." He had been in one firefight, "and as far as I am concerned, that's enough for me." Others expressed frustrations about being in Vietnam, and complaints about the army.

It was the monsoon season. Suddenly a terrific rainstorm began, creating a red mud morass, which set off more complaining about being in Vietnam. Some said they had no opinion about the war. We passed out Fred's brochure, and explained that we thought the war was wrong and that the troops should be brought home immediately.

Another soldier, who had been quiet up to then said, "I suppose all GIs in all wars have complaints like we have been telling you, and they don't want to go. This was probably true in the Second World War. But the difference here is that there is no *cause* here worth fighting for. If the US was under attack, it would be different."

"This is no place for none of us," another soldier said, and all nodded in agreement.

Another said that there was only one thing that would make him sign up for another tour of duty, and that was if his little brother was drafted and was in danger of being sent to Vietnam, because he wouldn't have to come if his older brother stayed in Vietnam.

Then the GIs began to talk among themselves about what the war was about. One said he thought it was a "political" war. "If they didn't have this war there would be a depression back home. You know that it is easier to get a job now in the US. That's because of this war."

A Black soldier interjected, "But goddamn it, lives are more important than jobs!"

I asked each of them if they thought the objectives the US was fighting for were worth GI lives. Each said "No."

We repeated that we believed the GIs should be brought home immediately before any more got killed. They grinned and said, "We're for that!" We shook hands and wished them well, and walked back through the red mud to our taxi.[1]

Back in Saigon, we took a walk one evening into a neighborhood where there were only Vietnamese, no US troops. We suddenly realized that no one was smiling at us, unlike the Vietnamese who were trying to sell you something on the main thoroughfares. There were cold and hostile stares. These people couldn't know we were on their side — they just saw two Americans, and the Americans had mercilessly bombarded Saigon just months before. We decided to get out of there quickly, especially since we spoke no Vietnamese.

Our only dicey situation occurred in a Saigon bar, where GIs who worked in a nearby depot came to drink. A group of Black and white GIs, came in, some with automatic rifles. I started talking to a tall Black man, who said his situation wasn't so bad, since he was far from the fighting and had a girlfriend in Saigon. Another Black GI heard our conversation and came over to say he didn't like the war and he didn't like Vietnam. He had been in combat on a previous tour in Vietnam, and then stationed in the US. He was convinced he got sent back to Vietnam because he participated in the uprising in Washington, D.C., when Dr. King was assassinated.

Then a big white guy leaned over to ask me in a low voice, "What's wrong with the niggers back home?" He was referring, I guess, to the ghetto rebellions. No sooner had he gotten those words out, when the tall Black smashed him in the face, knocking him off the bar stool. I still don't know how he did that without even grazing me. A fight between Black and white soldiers ensued, and Fred and I beat it to a back room where the bar girls had fled. We were thankful that none of the automatic rifles came into play, and soon made our escape.

Our next stop was Bombay (now Mumbai), India. We had a layover for one night in Bangkok, Thailand. On the way through Thai customs, a pretty Vietnamese woman who had been on our flight asked Fred if he wouldn't mind carrying a small bag of hers through customs. Fred foolishly agreed. He wasn't searched, however, probably because he was an American, something the woman no doubt counted on. But after he gave the bag back to the woman, he quietly told me that the little bag was very heavy, and he doubted it contained lead. Richer Vietnamese were smuggling gold out of the country, an indication of how they thought the war was going.

We arrived in Bombay at night, very tired. A group of members of the Socialist Workers Party of India met us at the airport with flower wreaths they hung around our

necks. We stayed at a hotel. It was the monsoon season in India, too, and it rained a lot in torrential downpours. The heat and humidity were high. Comrades told us not to drink water that wasn't boiled, and we mostly drank sodas. It was hard for Fred to get enough sodas to quench his thirst, as he suffered greatly in the hot wet weather.

The next day we had an interview for *The Militant* with S.B. Kolpe, the general secretary of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists. The journalists had been on strike for a month, the first such action by this union since independence from Britain. Kolpe was a leader of the Indian SWP and a member of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

The SWP had set up meetings at a garment factory and a chemical plant where SWP members were union leaders. Fred spoke to street meetings of a few hundred on these occasions, with translation. The educated in India spoke English, but the workers spoke only the language of the state of Maharastra where Bombay is located. We learned that there were 14 major languages in India, from three language roots (only one of which is Indo-European), and 60 dialects, and 12 different alphabets.

Fred also spoke at a public meeting of 300 people. We both spoke to meetings of students at Bombay University. At these meetings, people understood English. We talked mainly about the antiwar movement in the US.

It is impossible to describe the impact on me of the poverty, the stench, and the terrible conditions most Bombay people lived in. We had a meal at the home of a comrade who was an official in a bank, and was considered middle class. He drove an old car from the 1930s, which he switched off at every stoplight to save gas. He lived in a tenement that reminded me of slums in Harlem, but was considered a relatively good apartment by Indian standards.

What the Indian comrades called slums was something else altogether. These were small shacks made of grass, canvas, tar paper or pieces of corrugated iron, by people who couldn't afford housing. They were all over Bombay, next to apartment buildings, on vacant lots and even near the airport runways. We visited one large encampment where there were no sanitary facilities, and only one water pipe for every few hundred people. These people were mainly from the countryside, ruined peasants forced into the city to try to survive.

Below the slum dwellers were those who lived on the sidewalks. Families would stake out a section of sidewalk by laying out small stones that defined their area. I remember a heartbreaking scene of a very small girl sleeping on the sidewalk, her face pressed against the pavement. The toll that British imperialism inflicted on India for centuries was made sharply obvious.

The people were very friendly towards us, sometimes too much so, as old habits

of groveling before whites were still evident. We got to know the people in our hotel, and one time when Fred was getting ready to down another coke, a hotel worker ran up to him and insisted that he must open the bottle, and not Fred. Fred explained (the worker spoke English) that workers in the US by and large didn't have servants, and weren't used to such treatment, but that we understood he was only trying to do his job, and we would put in a good word for him with the boss.

We ate mostly at our hotel, where we got to taste Indian food. For me, it was the first time. I remember one vindaloo dish that was so hot that Fred, who would eat jalapeno peppers straight without anything else, was sweating and eating bread and salt to put the fire out.

Our next stop was Cairo. We went there because we had heard of a Palestinian movement based in Egypt that had become more prominent after the 1967 war, called Fatah. We went to the major newspaper in Cairo, explained who we were, and asked if they could set up an interview with the Palestinians.

We waited a few days, but according to our schedule, we had to fly to Rome to meet the Italian comrades. We decided that Fred would fly on to Rome, and I would stay one more day. I wasn't feeling too well, and needed a day of rest. That day, there was a knock on the hotel door, and there was a representative of the information bureau of Fatah, which was the leading organization of what became known as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

He gave me a long interview. Their movement began in 1958, but started to grow in the period from 1965 to the June 1967 war, and especially after the war. He explained the goal of Al Fatah was the liberation of Palestine from Zionist control through armed struggle. "But we must make it clear that there is a difference between Zionism and Judaism. Our aim is not to eliminate the Jewish people. Before 1948 we lived in peace with the Jewish people, and they will have equal rights without discrimination in a liberated Palestine." This idea was later concretized in the PLO slogan, "for a democratic, secular Palestine."

When this interview appeared in *The Militant*, signed by both Fred and myself, I believe it was the first time anyone in the United States had explained the Al Fatah position.[2]

I had wanted to visit the great pyramids, but was too sick. I left for Italy the next day. At the Rome airport, I telephoned the number we had been given as a contact. A woman answered, but she spoke no English. I was able to catch enough of her meaning to understand that no one was home who could speak to me in English. Throughout the trip, we would use the offices of American Express around the world as mail drops where we would get letters from home. I went to the American Express office,

and there was a plaintive note from Fred, along with my other mail, saying he could reach no one and would be staying in his hotel room until I contacted him.

What we had run into was the vacation period in August, when most Italian workers are gone for weeks. As Americans, we had never heard of such a luxury. So we looked around Rome a bit, at the Coliseum and so forth, visited a beach and ate Italian food that was much better than that served in most "Italian" restaurants in the US. Finally, at our contact number, a man we knew as Sirio, who spoke good English, arrived home from his vacation, and we arranged to meet him. He was a leader of the Italian group, and a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

We were scheduled to go to Paris next, but we had heard of big student demonstrations that June in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. We decided that Fred would go on to Paris and I would go to Belgrade to see what I could find out about the student movement there.

I took a Yugoslav airlines flight and was surprised to see male "stewardesses" on the plane, something that was never seen on US airlines at the time. I took a taxi from the airport, and later learned that the driver charged me much more than what an average worker made in a day. There were other indications of growing inequality.

The next day I went to the University of Belgrade's department of philosophy, which I had heard was the center of the student movement. Classes hadn't started, so there were few students. I came across a student leader. He spoke English. He gathered a group of activists, including a woman who spoke English, and we went to a student lounge for a discussion over thick, sweet, black Turkish coffee and plum brandy.

I found out that the student movement had begun in December 1966 over the issue that was propelling student activism worldwide — Vietnam. A demonstration was planned to march from the campus to the US library. But the cops intervened, and there was a battle. "This was the first time we realized what the true nature of the police is," one of the students said. "We saw that our police is not a true militia, the armed people, but a repressive force."

"And," said the woman, "we saw them protecting American imperialism."

There were other student actions in 1967 and early 1968, in solidarity with West German students and with Polish students demanding democracy. In June, cops attacked thousands of students trying to get into an outdoor show, and many were hurt. The students regrouped the next day, and decided to occupy the university.

Some 24,000 participated. Action Committees to organize the occupation were elected in each department, as well as a Central Action Committee. The demands of the students soon escalated to take up social questions the country faced. Meeting in an assembly, the students renamed the university the "Red University of Karl Marx"

and put forward the slogan of "down with the red bourgeoisie!" By the latter the students were referring to the privileged bureaucracy that ruled the country, although not as brutally as in the other East European countries.

They called for the reduction of the growing inequality, and the end of special privileges. Capitalist enterprises, which were growing in number, should be nationalized. They called for replacing bureaucratic structures by self-management at all levels of society. All social and political organizations, including the Yugoslav League of Communists, should immediately adopt internal democratic reforms, and there should be democratization of the public means of communication. Decisive steps must be taken, they said, to prevent or roll back the tendency for social property to become the property of stockholders.

A student summed up, "What we are for is self-management of the whole economy, a centrally planned, socialist society with the whole working class participating in planning the economy through a 'parliament of workers' representatives.'

"The state apparatus would be subordinate to this workers' parliament, and this is how the state would begin to wither away."[3]

The idea of the "Red University," in which students fight to turn the universities into centers for political action in the society as a whole, began with these Belgrade students and the French students. This concept was to arise in many student struggles throughout the world, including in the United States in the great student strike against the war in 1970.

The publication of this interview in *The Militant* was another coup for us.

When I flew back to Paris, I called Ray Sparrow, the SWP representative to the United Secretariat, who was in Brussels, Belgium, and he told me how to get in touch with Fred. Fred took me to a restaurant he had found, and introduced me to the "greatest beef dish you have ever eaten," *boeuf bourguignon*, or beef burgundy. I later learned how to cook it from Julia Child's book.

Most of the French comrades were also on vacation, and we didn't have much to do in Paris. Pierre Frank, one of the leaders of the French Trotskyists and of the Fourth International, along with his wife and others, took us out for a real French meal, a many-course affair. I became hooked on French food.

We then went to Brussels to meet Ray Sparrow and his wife Gloria. They lived just off the *Grand Place*, a spectacular square surrounded by the old feudal guild houses and a palace, all with gold leaf on their ornaments, illuminated at night. Jeanette Habel, who had come back from Japan and was in Brussels on JCR business with Ray, took me to another great French restaurant near the *Grand Place*. It was magnificent. I was becoming aware of what an American hick I was.

We gave a report on our trip to a meeting of the United Secretariat, held in a small dank apartment in Brussels, and then flew to Frankfurt, West Germany, to attend a conference of the SDS, the German Socialist Student Union. The conference was held at Goethe University, and there were hundreds in attendance.

Fred got to speak to the conference. I wrote, "Halstead explained to the conference that the central purpose of our world trip was to go to Saigon to talk to US soldiers there about the Socialist Workers antiwar campaign. He pointed to the importance of spreading revolutionary and antiwar ideas within the US Army, and called upon the German socialist students to aid in this effort among the US troops stationed in Germany.

"Strong applause greeted Halstead's appeal to the students to help promote antiwar sentiment in the US Army rather than simply urging individual soldiers to desert, indicating a shift in opinion among many of the German students, who have been engaged in the desertion campaign."[4]

We also met some GIs who came to the conference. They told me about a rock concert that was to be held the next night, that a lot of US soldiers would go to. I went with them to that concert, and all of us passed out Fred's brochure addressed to the soldiers.

We also met Lothar Boepel, who was the main leader of the German FI group at that time. He was a young man, full of energy, who put out the group's paper *Was Tun?* (What Is To Be Done?) and distributed it to the various cities himself. I invited him to come to the YSA convention scheduled for later that fall, which he did. I also talked to him about the need to build a team of leaders so that everything wouldn't fall on his shoulders.

Before we flew back to the US we stopped off in London, where Halstead spoke to a public meeting organized by the International Marxist Group. There we met Ernest Tate and Jess Mackenzie. Ernie was a Canadian, originally from Ireland, who had worked with the early YSA in New York. Jess had originally come from Scotland. They had been "loaned" to the IMG by the Canadian section of the FI to help strengthen the British group.

We also met an old former SWP leader, Sam Gordon, who had been in Europe in the 1940s to work with the Fourth International. Sam fell in love with an English woman, Millie, and they got married. She and Sam stayed in London. He used to write a column for *The Militant* called "Letter from London." Asher and Ruth Harer, SWP members from San Francisco, also were in London, and joined us for a time.

When we arrived back at Kennedy airport in New York, a customs official found revolutionary literature we had picked up on our trip in my luggage. One thing

especially caught his eye, copies of *Was Tun?* with a front-page drawing of Lenin. This was a reproduction of a poster popular in Prague after the Soviet invasion, showing Lenin with tears running out of his eyes — a comment on the anti-socialist character of that invasion. The official saw only that it was of Lenin. We were taken to a room, and held for some time as the officials photocopied everything we had, before they finally let us back into the good ol' USA, the center of the "Free World." This was the first of many problems I had with US immigration and customs over the years.

Shortly after Fred and I got back from our trip, there was another important international development. Hundreds of students in Mexico City's "Plaza of Three Cultures" were massacred on October 2. Students had been on strike since July 26, and there had been clashes with the military security police and the army. The military had occupied the university but the students were winning popular support.

On that day, without warning, armed men opened up with automatic gunfire from all sides on the peaceful rally of thousands of students. It was clear that the central government of President Díaz Ordaz had ordered the attack in order to suppress the students before the Olympics, which were to be held in Mexico City.

It wasn't until years later that the full truth about the massacre became known. But while the attack was a severe blow to the student and popular movement, it also reverberated back on the government, discrediting it in the eyes of many, and was the beginning of the weakening of the dictatorial one-party regime in Mexico.

At the Olympics, two American Black athletes echoed Muhammad Ali's stand. They had won medals, and at the award ceremony gave the Black power salute, raised fists, as the "Star Spangled Banner" was playing. This was televised internationally, much to the displeasure of Washington and racists in the United States.

While Fred and I had been on our trip, a police riot took place at the Democratic Party convention in Chicago in August, 1968, ordered by the corrupt and notoriously racist Democratic Mayor Richard Daley. Thousands had gathered outside the convention. Some were there to protest the war. Others, especially from the disintegrating SDS, thought they could provoke an uprising. Some wanted the Democrats to nominate a "peace" candidate. The SWP and YSA participated with antiwar banners.

The police attack was televised throughout the world. The police violence was answered by a massive march of 25,000 Chicagoans on September 28, the broadest antiwar rally yet held in that city. A pro-Daley march the next day had only 78 people marching to a rally of some 300.

The Democrats rebuffed their "dove" wing and nominated Johnson's Vice President, Hubert Humphrey, who was staunchly for the war.

Meanwhile SDS was collapsing, splitting into warring groups. One group, the Weathermen, called for a street battle with the cops on October 11, 1968, in Chicago. They were very open about the character of what they were planning. They said they didn't want too many people to show up, only those who were specially trained and committed to the action. "SDS is recruiting an army right now, man," its call said, "a *peoples* army, under black leadership, that's gonna fight against the pigs and *win!!*" A poster they put out showed a drawing of a grimacing young man with his booted foot raised and aimed at the viewer, with the slogan "Up against the wall, ruling class!" Another slogan was, "Kick the ass of the ruling class!"[5] On the fateful day, they were brutally smashed by the cops. Later they would go underground, and carry out some bombings.

Clashes between the Black community and the police continued throughout the country. There was a reactionary teachers' strike in Brooklyn, New York, against demands by Black parents for control over the schools in their communities. Some teachers opposed the racist strike, including teachers who were supporters of the SWP, who crossed the racist picket lines**.** Jeff Mackler, an SWP member, emerged as an important leader of the left wing in the teachers' union in this struggle.

Student strikes took place throughout the year, often led by Black students, with the most important being at Columbia University in New York and at San Francisco State in California.

34. Farrell Dobbs and the Political Committee

I'm not sure if it was before or just after the world trip that the PC made the decision that Caroline Lund and I would go to Brussels, and I would replace Ray Sparrow as the SWP representative to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. I remained a member of the Political Committee while in Brussels, although no longer involved in the day to day work of the committee.

Before I begin to discuss my work in these new circumstances, it would be useful to step back and explain what the Political Committee and National Committee were like from 1962 to 1968. I was a member of both bodies, first as the YSA representative and then as a regular member. The central leader was Farrell Dobbs, who was the National Secretary.

He became National Secretary after James P. Cannon, the founding central leader of the current that became the SWP, retired from the post and moved to Los Angeles in 1953. Cannon then became the party's National Chairman, and remained on the NC.

Around this time Murry and Myra Weiss had moved from Los Angeles, where they had been party leaders in the branch, to New York, and Tom Kerry became the Los Angeles branch organizer. Murry and Myra were on the PC and NC when I was first elected to it by the YSA National Executive Committee.

Tom Kerry later was brought into New York to be on the PC, and was still a member of it in 1962. Bringing Tom to the center was Farrell's idea, as he gradually put together a stronger team. Tom became the party's National Organization Secretary, and he and Farrell, as the two national officers in New York, made a division of labor. Farrell concentrated on overall leadership of the party and Tom on the party's orientation to the labor movement and other tasks.

Joe Hansen, the editor of *The Militant*, was also on the PC when I was first on it. He and Reba Hansen soon undertook to lead the effort to reunify the Fourth

International. They took a trip through Latin America, and talked to comrades there, encouraging them to join the reunification. They left for Europe after the 1963 convention to work on the new United Secretariat. They produced a mimeographed news bulletin called *World Outlook* that contained official statements of the International and articles by leaders of the International that the sections could use in their own publications.

Joe became very ill in 1965, and had to come back to the US. He told Caroline and I that he was on a stretcher in the airplane, and was surprised to see a lot of press when he was carried off after landing. It turned out the French actress Brigitte Bardot was also on the plane.

When he recovered, Joe and Reba started publishing *World Outlook* in New York, and mailing it to the sections of the FI from there. A church group, unbeknownst to us, had been putting out a publication by that name. They threatened to sue, so the name was changed to *Intercontinental Press*. The IP staff grew in the years ahead, including comrades from other sections who would stay for six months or longer. Working on IP meant learning a lot about revolutionary journalism from Joe, who was a great teacher.

Ray Sparrow replaced Joe on the United Secretariat. Ray was quite a character and a very friendly, witty and insightful conversationalist. He had been part of the SWP fraction in the seamen's union before the government took away his seaman's papers during the witch-hunt. He had various jobs on ship, including bos'n and ship's carpenter.

When the architect Frank Lloyd Wright was building the Guggenheim museum in New York, he was looking for someone to lead the carpenters in building wood molds for the reinforced concrete that made up the building's structure. The Guggenheim has no right angles, and is a long spiral that gets wider at the top.

Wright couldn't find anyone willing to take the job. Ray applied, although his only credentials were that he had been a ship's carpenter. Ray had the gift of gab, and convinced Wright to hire him. He was highly intelligent and skilled and figured out how to do the job. Ray was one of the older working class comrades I always felt close to.

Murry and Myra, whose role I have described in earlier chapters, dropped away from SWP activity in 1965.

George Weissman, who became the acting *Militant* editor in Joe's absence, was on the PC, too, as was Ed Shaw, who replaced Tom Kerry as National Organization Secretary in 1962. Clifton DeBerry, who became the party's Presidential candidate in 1964, was added. Farrell also asked George Novack, the party's leading intellectual,

who was living in Los Angeles, to come to New York to strengthen the team. Farrell took me for a ride on the Fifth Avenue bus to explain to me the importance of bringing George to New York. Two important later additions were George Breitman and Frank Lovell, who came in from Detroit. Fred Halstead was also added, as was Nat Weinstein before he moved to San Francisco to take part in the militant Local Four of the painters' union, and Harry Ring and Carl Feingold for a time.

While the central team was being built up by including these older comrades, younger leaders were being brought onto the National Committee and the PC. I was joined on the PC by Jack Barnes when he became National Chairman of the YSA in 1964. Together with Peter Camejo and Betsey Stone, we were the first layer of young people to come onto the party's leading committees.

In 1968, Lew Jones, who had been the YSA National Chairman, graduated from the youth group, and was elected to the NC and PC. By 1970, Mary-Alice Waters, Gus Horowitz, Doug Jenness, Larry Seigle, Charlie Bolduc and Joel Britton were added. These eleven people were the core of the leadership of the younger generation in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The younger generation was playing the central leadership role in the party branches by the end of the 1960s. Election of younger comrades to the National Committee lagged behind the real leadership the young members were playing in the branches. One reason for this was that there was resistance among some of the older comrades on the NC against stepping back to make room for the younger leaders.

Throughout this period Farrell was the central force in carrying through the leadership transition to the younger generation. One problem was that James P. Cannon felt he was still needed on the NC. With Cannon balking, it was harder for Dobbs to convince other long-time leaders to step down. Cannon did indeed have a range of historical experience — from the Wobblies and Socialist Party, through the Russian revolution, Communist International, the fight against Stalinism and so on — that was absolutely unique. But it was time for him to lead the way for other veterans in the transition to leadership by a much younger generation. Eventually Cannon agreed to leave the NC and become National Chairman Emeritus.

Farrell liked to quote Engels to the effect that a Marxist revolutionist had to strive to become a citizen of the world and a citizen of time. The latter, he would say, included recognizing that you were born into the time you were born into, and that couldn't be changed. It was also a fact that you were going to die. What this means for a revolutionary party which seeks to maintain itself over a period of time is the inescapable necessity of a transition in leadership to a new generation.

The youth radicalization, and the consequent recruitment of a layer of younger

leaders, made this necessity actually realizable. Without this development, there is no question but that the SWP would have died out.

The other side of the coin, Farrell would point out, is that it would be best if this transition were carried out while the older generation were still around. Then the younger generation could be trained working with the older, and not have to reinvent the wheel. A smooth transition would prevent a Young Turks rebellion that could have wreaked havoc in our small organization.

By a "citizen of time," Farrell meant more than realizing your own mortality. He meant placing yourself in the great movement of humanity revealed by history, and by anthropology, especially the history of capitalism and the workers' movement that capitalism generates. Knowing your own place in that history helps make you more realistic in intervening in the present. Knowing the historic aim of the workers' movement — socialist revolution — makes more meaningful your day to day work that is preparatory to achieving that goal. This vision has guided my own life.The Weiss group held the opinion that Farrell was not too bright, a bit of a plodder. I've heard the same view from various quarters over the years. It is true that Farrell was not the main writer of documents that presented our positions on new developments like the Cuban revolution, the rise of Black nationalism, the antiwar movement and new youth radicalization. But he played a central role in the collective thinking through of these new developments.

Farrell went to Cuba with Joe in 1960, and they came to agreement that the revolution and the Castro leadership were the genuine article, even if they developed in a way different than our theory had predicted. Joe then thought through the Cuban question in greater detail.

While Joe was our point man in the International, Farrell paid close attention to this area, too.

George Breitman and Robert DesVerney did most of the work on developing our views on the rise of Black nationalism, but it was in conjunction with the whole of the NC and PC, and in consultation with Farrell. Similarly, Tom Kerry helped develop our tactics in the antiwar movement, but Farrell was at the center of that development, too, together with the younger leaders, especially Jack Barnes and myself. Frank Lovell helped extend and deepen our work in the unions, an area where Farrell was also quite knowledgeable, to say the least.

Farrell drafted the resolutions on the political situation in the United States which were discussed in the Political Committee, and subsequently presented to the National Committee and the party's conventions in this period. Thinking through and writing such draft resolutions is not a task that can just be tossed off, as I began to learn as the

YSA National Chairman, when I took on this task for the YSA, and in subsequent years when I did this for the SWP.

The drafter of such resolutions had the benefit of all the discussions in the Political Committee and National Committee for the past period and political articles in the party press. But it also takes stepping back from day to day work, and trying to understand the domestic political situation as a whole in the international political context.

In these and subsequent years George Novack blossomed as a writer of important philosophical books. One was *The Origins of Materialism* in ancient Greece, which I wrote a long review of in *The Militant*. Other books of his defended Marxism against competing humanist philosophies, such as pragmatism and existentialism.

Fred Halstead was our main person in the antiwar movement. Harry Ring played an important role in this work in the late 1960s.

The generation represented by Halstead, Shaw and DeBerry was younger than Dobbs' but older than mine. For a period in the middle to late 1960s, these three were brought into the work of leading the party, and Dobbs consciously began to step back. He moved into *The Militant's* editorial office where I worked, while Ed Shaw worked in the national office, and together with DeBerry and Halstead formed an administrative committee of the PC.

Farrell's main strength was shown in assembling a team. This team worked together, and no one was a star. Farrell had authority earned through his leadership, but neither he nor anyone else on the PC or NC dominated discussion. Leadership discussions were discussions among people with different strengths and weaknesses, but discussions among equals. No one was humiliated or put down. The rule was to encourage everyone to do the best they could, not to discourage. Farrell also was a kind of watchdog over our program, together with Tom. This helped us keep our Marxist bearings as we navigated new waters.

It was under the Dobbs-Kerry leadership that we not only made new political conquests, but built the YSA into the strongest socialist youth organization in the country, and brought a whole new levy of youth into the SWP.

Farrell was able to play this role because of his political and moral leadership. He was absolutely incorruptible. He never had an exaggerated view of himself, and was able to learn from others and encourage them to make contributions. He wasn't jealous of Joe Hansen or George Breitman or George Novack for making the contributions they did — he was proud to be their supporter and collaborator. He didn't seethe with resentment when something didn't go his way.

Bringing this team together and making it function as a thinking machine was no

small task. These were all very independent-minded people. Someone like George Breitman could be downright cantankerous. On the NC were other similar strong-willed people, like Larry Trainor in Boston and Nat Weinstein in San Francisco. This team was not a collection of friends or a mutual admiration society. They were not hand raisers or blind followers.

Farrell Dobbs, together with James Cannon, Tom Kerry and the other party leaders of Farrell's generation, including Larry Trainor who was especially important in my life, kept the party together through the difficult days of the witch-hunt. The Dobbs team was able to recruit a new layer of young people as that became possible beginning in the mid-1950s, and especially in the 1960s. They were able to educate us, and give us room to develop and demonstrate our own leadership capabilities, and to gradually take over the reins. The transition in leadership became complete in the early 1970s.[§]

[§] There are lessons in the way Farrell handled the Weiss group. This grouping, which had a considerable following in the party, was contemptuous of the Dobbs-Kerry team. A real mutual admiration society, they thought they could do better. Of course many of them had important talents, beginning with Myra and Murry. Some were not so talented but thought they were, and found solace in the group.

Dobbs welcomed every contribution any of them made. When Murry and Myra came to New York, he asked Murry to become editor of *The Militant* and Myra to become a writer on the paper. When Murry and Myra left, those of their group who decided to stay and contribute were encouraged. An example was Fred Halstead, who played a major role for the party.

I had my own experiences with Farrell's attitude. One I've already recalled in Chapter Five, concerning the Weiss people on the YSA National Executive Committee, after I was elected YSA National Chairman in 1962. Another was how Farrell advised me to relate to Murry while I was in the YSA. Murry had had a severe stroke in 1960. He made a supreme effort to recover and regain his faculties. When he recovered enough, Farrell and Murry had a long discussion about collaboration, according to notes by Dobbs for a book he intended to write.

I had always enjoyed Farrell's willingness to sit down with me to discuss YSA problems when I was its National Chairman. From time to time, Farrell would have to go out of town, and after Murry had sufficiently recovered, on those occasions he asked Murry to become acting National Secretary. He told me to deal with Murry exactly as I had done with him, which I did, and I found Murry to be helpful and thoughtful.

Some in the party didn't agree with Farrell's approach to the Weiss grouping, as I indicated in Chapter Five. But there is no doubt in my mind that Farrell was right. He put the interests of the party above his personal interests as the target of the Weiss group's scorn. This was an important lesson for me, which I tried to live up to.

Another aspect of the Weiss group was that they tried to cover themselves with the mantle of Cannon, taking advantage of conflicts between Cannon and Dobbs that developed during the 1950s. Notes by Dobbs for the book he was planning on the history of the SWP indicate there were some differences between the two leaders in the early 1950s, not mainly over basic

political line, but organizational questions. Dobbs never wrote this book before he died, which is a pity, because if he had, important gaps in the party's history would have been filled. In Volume Two I will go into why he did not write this book.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Cannon and Dobbs were the most respected leaders of the party. Cannon had been a prominent figure in the IWW and the Socialist Party of Debs. When the Socialist Party split after the Russian revolution, he helped the left wing through some difficult days, and helped found the Communist Party. He was a leader of the new CP, and was a delegate to the Communist International.

Cannon had been the founding leader of the movement when he and a handful of others were expelled from the Communist Party for "Trotskyism" in 1928. He was the central leader of the party subsequently until 1953.

The respect for Dobbs grew out of his leadership role as a young man in the Minneapolis Teamster battles in 1934, and his subsequent leading role in the drive to organize the over-the-road truck drivers into the Teamsters, transforming it into a powerful union. After the approach of the Second World War made it impossible for Dobbs to continue his leadership role in the Teamsters, he became part of the national party leadership as National Labor Secretary.

Dobbs became the party's first Presidential candidate in 1948. In recognition of his leadership accomplishments, the party elected him to be National Chairman, while Cannon was National Secretary. In 1953, the two switched titles, with Farrell taking over the central executive post in New York, and Cannon moving to Los Angeles.

Cannon had not retired when he left New York for Los Angeles in 1953. And of course, he was under no obligation to "retire." But he did not give Farrell the support I am convinced Farrell richly earned in his job as chief executive officer of the party. Cannon supported some of the Weiss group's criticisms.

Cannon had been the main leader of the party through the struggle and split in 1953, especially on its international aspects. He subsequently played an important role in the reunification process in the Fourth International. He also was key to the regroupment process following the crisis in the CP in 1956. It was in 1959-60 that Joe Hansen became the party's main person in international work, and the real transition from the Cannon-Dobbs leadership

to the Dobbs-Kerry leadership took place.

Carl Feingold was a member of the Weiss group, but his main allegiance was to Cannon. Cannon wanted Feingold to become the next National Organization Secretary, according to Dobbs' notes. The reader will recall Feingold's maneuver at the 1961-62 YSA convention to try to get Jack Barnes elected YSA National Chairman instead of myself, when the Weiss group's choice, Arthur Felberbaum, was disqualified because of age. Jack rejected the proposal.

What Feingold was trying to do was put someone in the post he thought he could influence because of his past connection with Jack at Carleton College. Similarly, Cannon was trying to get someone in the post of party National Organization Secretary whom he thought he could influence, as a stepping stone to Feingold replacing Dobbs as National Secretary when it became time for Farrell to step down from the post.

But the June 1962 meeting of the National Committee, which I attended, elected Ed Shaw National Organization Secretary.

Ed Shaw was an unassuming but very intelligent person. He was recruited as a sailor, and worked in other industrial jobs. He became a leader of the party's work in the Midwest in support of the Cuban Revolution. He used to fly from city to city in a small airplane he piloted, to speak and help organize this work. He was hauled before the witch-hunting House Un-American Activities Committee, but they got nowhere with him as he made them look foolish with his sharp wit.

What I experienced in the early 1960s were attempts by Cannon to establish what amounted to a dual center in Los Angeles that challenged the authority of the Political Committee in New York.

One aspect of this was holding frequent meetings of the NC members residing in L. A. to discuss and adopt positions on national political questions and then using this leverage in the party as a whole. Later, these meetings included NC members from the San Francisco Bay Area as well.

What was involved was not comrades with opposing political views to the majority of the party getting together in a tendency or a faction, based on a common political position. Such political formations can be helpful in clarifying political debates.

But the meetings in L.A. had no political basis. Sometimes their proposals were helpful, sometimes not, but that was not the point. These meetings undercut the authority of the center in New York and cast doubts on its capabilities.

Farrell told me, probably in 1963, that Cannon "wouldn't get his dead hand off the steering wheel." After Peter Camejo moved to Berkeley, he was invited as a member of the NC to one of these meetings in Los Angeles.

Peter told the meeting why he didn't think it was right to have these meetings of a geographical subset of the National Committee. He said he was leaving the meeting, and wouldn't attend future ones. This put a stop to the practice.

35. BRUSSELS

After the September 1968 party convention I moved to Brussels to be the SWP's representative to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. I left on Thanksgiving evening on Icelandic airlines, the cheapest way to get to Europe. The airline didn't yet have jets, but jet-driven propeller engines. We stopped in Keflavik airport outside of Iceland's capital city of Reykjavik. The airplane was packed, as usual, and the passengers sat crammed into narrow seats. So it was a long and arduous journey. But it was a typical route to Europe in those days for budget travellers like us.

We were supposed to go on to Luxembourg, where I would catch a train to Brussels, but Luxembourg was fogged in, so we went to Cologne, Germany, instead. Lugging a huge suitcase and another large bag with suits, jackets and coats, I made my way to the train station, where I caught the next train to Brussels. I walked from Central Station to Ray and Gloria Sparrow's apartment near the center of the city. I was exhausted and hungry. The trip had taken 24 hours from the time I left my parents' house in New Jersey. Ray took me around the corner to Chez Leon, a famous Brussels restaurant, for a big pot of mussels steamed in white wine and vegetables.

My companion Caroline Lund had been financial director of the SWP Presidential campaign, and had to stay behind to finish up financial reports to the government. She arrived a few weeks later.

Ray and Gloria had a son, David, who was five years old. I was amazed that he was becoming bilingual, learning French at school and from his playmates, as well as English at home. Childhood is the best time to learn languages, and I remember his excellent French accent. Twenty years later I knew him in the San Francisco Bay Area, and he had forgotten all his French, even the memory that he was once learning it.

Ray had come to Europe to replace Joe Hansen after Joe had gotten sick in 1965. But Ray had agreed to stay for only for a few years. He and Gloria were anxious to get back, and I wasn't given much time for a transition. Their apartment, which would

soon become ours, was right above that of Jean and Doudou Nuyens, who were members of the Belgian section of the Fourth International. They owned the apartment that Caroline and I would be staying in.

The next morning Ray and I embarked on a long journey — to nearby England — again by the budget route. First we took a train to Belgium, and then a ferry to Dover, England. From there we took a train to London. One of Ray's main assignments on the United Secretariat was to keep in touch with the British group.

At the time of the reunification of the Fourth International in 1963, the Socialist Labour League led by Gerry Healy, was the largest of the Trotskyist groups in Britain. Since the SLL rejected the reunification, the new United Secretariat worked with two small groups that had supported the International Secretariat at the time of the 1953 split.

One of these, led by Ted Grant, would become the Militant Group, after the name of its publication. Years later it grew quite a bit, but it had moved away from the International. The other group became the International Marxist Group, with ties to the Fourth International. It was the IMG that Ernie Tate and Jess Mackenzie joined and helped build, and that Ray worked with. I got to meet some of the main leaders of the IMG on this trip.

In October, before I arrived, the Vietnam Solidarity Committee, which was a broad-based antiwar group, had organized a demonstration of 100,000 against the war in London, the largest demonstration in the history of Britain up to that time. The VSC had been set up with the help of the IMG and the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. This Foundation also organized a war crimes trial of the US.

The most well-known leader of the VSC from the IMG was Tariq Ali. Tariq was from a prosperous family in Pakistan, and became well-known as a student at Oxford University where he was president of the debating society. He had once spoken with Malcolm X at Oxford during one of Malcolm's international trips.

A few days before the huge demonstration one of the major British daily newspapers tried, to no avail, to put the kibosh on the action by printing pictures of three "reds" on the front page. The three evil subversives behind the VSC were members of the IMG, including Tariq. The great actress Vanessa Redgrave also supported the march. (Later, however, she rejected the IMG and joined the Socialist Labour League.)

Soon after our return from London Ray, Gloria and David went home to the Bay Area. So I was on my own. One of my first political activities was to debate a representative of the US embassy in Belgium at the university in Ghent. At the time, the Belgian section was part of a left split-off from the Socialist Party. The youth section of the SP, called the Young Socialist Guards, had been won over to the

Trotskyists. It was they who had set up the debate at the university, together with other groups.

Ghent is in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium. Flemish is a dialect of Dutch. I found the Flemish-speakers, especially students, generally fluent in English, in contrast to those in the French-speaking part of Belgium. We debated in English, without translation. There were hundreds of students present. Most were against the war, and the rationalizations of the embassy spokesman, who was about my age, sounded as false to them as they did to American students at the teach-ins three years before.

Caroline soon came over, and we set up our household. We became friends with Jean and Doudou Nuyens, our downstairs landlords. However, it was difficult to become socially involved with other members of the Belgian group. For security reasons, we did not join the group, as we didn't want the authorities to accuse us of interfering in Belgian affairs and deport us. Thus we had no direct contact with the Belgian group. We were somewhat isolated.

Another depressing aspect about our first months in Brussels was that the sun didn't come out even once from the time I arrived in late November until March. That is how I remember it, at least.

Both Flemish and French were official languages in Belgium — Flemish in the region known as Flanders, and French in Walloon. Brussels was considered a special third area, with both languages in use. Actually, however, most transactions in Brussels were conducted in French.

I knew no French at all. Caroline had learned some by reading her sister's French textbook in high school. So we started going to Berlitz to learn French. Caroline made swift progress, but I found it more difficult. We had to learn the numbers first, in order to shop.

We were living in the center of town and there were a lot of good restaurants, although we usually ate at home. Having some time on my hands, I started to learn French cooking, using the famous book by Julia Child. The food stores were excellent. We found a good wine shop, and a bakery that sold some of the best bread I've ever had. My friends have told me that I became a good cook.

We were near the *Grand Place*, and could see some of the gold-leafed decorations of its buildings from our windows which overlooked surrounding roofs. Nearby and visible below from one of our windows was the dance studio of Maurice Bejart, Belgium's most famous choreographer. We could hear the music as the dancers practiced. Once during our stay there we heard the strains of Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring," and the tramp of the dancers' feet in some of the most rhythmical parts. We bought tickets to the performance.

Jean and Doudou had become close to Ray and Gloria, so it was natural for us to get to know them. Doudou was the editor of *La Gauche* (The Left), the paper of the left socialist party, and she and Jean worked hard to put it out. They both spoke English. They were quite angry with the section, explaining that the left socialists had dwindled to a shell, little more than the section. They thought that the section should have fought harder to win them over to the full revolutionary socialist program immediately after the split with the SP, and thought they could have won many people if they did. We got the impression that Ray had encouraged them in this view, which did indeed reflect the views of the American SWP.

We had little social contact with Ernest and Gisela Mandel, although I would meet with Ernest and Pierre Frank once a month as part of my assignment. An exception was a New Years Eve party at the Mandels' house, with Jean and Doudou.

The once a month meetings with Ernest and Pierre were meetings of a subcommittee of the United Secretariat called the Bureau, which would help prepare the agendas for the meetings of the United Secretariat. Livio Maitan, from Italy, would also attend some of these meetings of the Bureau.

The SWP wasn't formally a member of the Fourth International, because of witch-hunting laws in the US. So, we did not pay dues to the FI. We did, however, contribute substantially to the work of the International in various ways. All of the costs of SWP members in carrying out work with the International, including travel and living expenses were picked up by the SWP. We also paid for the production of *Intercontinental Press*, which Joe Hansen edited in New York. We also helped Ernest Mandel and other individuals who needed assistance.

Every month Caroline and I would travel to Paris to visit Peng Shu-tse and Chen Pi-lan. Shu-tse had been a founding member and central leader of the new Chinese Communist Party after the Russian revolution. Pi-lan was a leader of the CP's work among women. They would enthrall us with their stories of the tumultuous development of the class struggle in the 1920s, which culminated in the defeated revolution of 1925-27.

The defeat was not inevitable. The Communist International under Stalin had proposed and foisted on the relatively young Chinese party a disastrous policy of subordination to the Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek. As a result, the party was not prepared when the Nationalists turned on them. The Nationalists were able to crush the revolution in blood, killing millions of workers. Trotsky had fought against Stalin's course, and when the leaders of the Chinese party learned of Trotsky's position, many of them became supporters of Trotsky, including Peng Shu-tse and Chen Pi-lan. The Chinese Trotskyists were able to survive in the cities as underground workers'

organizers.

When Mao Zedong's peasant armies defeated the Nationalists in 1959 and opened the Chinese revolution, Shu-tse and Pi-lan were in great danger from the Maoists, because they were well-known supporters of Trotsky. They were forced to flee.

They eventually found their way to Europe. They suffered a great deal, surviving by taking in laundry and sewing. It was a scandal that none of the Trotskyist groups came to their aid. One reason Caroline and I would make sure to visit them each month was to help them out. Another young member of the SWP, David, was living in Paris learning French at the time, and he was a great help to the Chinese couple. A big treat for Caroline and me during our visits were the wonderful meals Pi-lan would cook. This was real Chinese food.

Shu-tse and Pi-lan spoke English with heavy accents. We soon learned to understand them, however, and this skill in listening for the words under unfamiliar accents helped me many times in the ensuing years as I met people from many different countries who spoke English with strong accents.

In December 1968 or January 1969, Caroline and I drove down to Paris with Gisela Mandel to attend a meeting of the young French leadership. After the JCR was outlawed, they took on a new name for legal reasons, the Communist League. But more was involved than a simple change in the name. The section of the Fourth International was called the Internationalist Communist Party, or PCI for its French initials. It had about 150 members, and had been eclipsed by the JCR in the May-June events.

Some of the young leaders of the JCR who were also becoming leaders of the PCI were highly critical of the PCI membership, accusing them of "not showing up" during the upheaval. Some were even hard on the old-timer Pierre Frank. Ray Sparrow tried to calm down these Young Turks, and largely succeeded.

However, the JCR had grown in size and reputation, and would soon surpass 2,000 members. So the PCI and JCR decided to merge to form the Communist League. The subject of the discussion we attended was whether the CL would become the new section of the FI. I remember that Daniel Bensaïd, who did not come from the Trotskyist tradition but was a central leader of the CL, had strong doubts about the usefulness of taking this step. But the CL did decide to join the FI a short time later.

After the meeting, which went late into the night, a group of young leaders of the CL, including Jeanette Habel, took Caroline and me out for a late-night meal and conversation in the famous market area known as *Les Halles*. There we had French onion soup for the first time, at three in the morning, with cheese, bread and wine. Unfortunately, the *Les Halles* market no longer exists.

Driving with Gisela was wild. She had a tiny car, I believe it was a memorable Citroen 2CV ("deux chevaux"), but she went quite fast on the winding back roads, in spite of the winter ice. I was terrified.

On the trip she also told us something of her life. She was German, and remembered the fire-bombing of Dresden during World War II (another war crime committed by the US and its allies). The bombing created a fire-storm that engulfed the whole city, killing tens of thousands. Gisela was ten years old. She and her parents were in a train that happened to pull into the Dresden station when the bombing began. Panic ensued as the passengers realized that the train station was a likely target, and she became separated from her parents.

She survived, and was brought up in East Germany. Somehow she made contact with the SDS in West Germany, and met Ernest Mandel when he spoke at an SDS meeting.

Our relations with the French comrades had become much closer as a result of the enthusiastic support we gave them during the May-June events. But these relations cooled as the result of a dispute that soon broke out in the International.

36. THE 1969 WORLD CONGRESS

As I flew over to Brussels in late November, I carried an article by Joe Hansen for the International discussion bulletin. Joe's article presented the position of the SWP leadership on a resolution that was being proposed for adoption by the International at its next World Congress, scheduled for the spring of 1969.

The resolution was drafted by the European leaders and Bolivian and Argentine Trotskyists. It proposed that groups supporting the Fourth International in Latin America begin preparing for, or begin engaging in, rural guerrilla war throughout the continent for an extended period.

This strategy was derived from an analysis of the explosive situation in Latin America following the victory of the Cuban revolution. It predicted that most of the countries of the continent, under ruthless military dictatorships, would be able to effectively outlaw dissent, except for protests directly backed by armed guerrillas. The rise of what was termed a "classical" mass movement, successfully challenging a dictatorial regime on the streets, in the rural areas, and in the factories was all but precluded. Any such movement, the resolution said, was sure to be mercilessly suppressed from the start. It also indicated that Latin American peasants now had socialist consciousness as a result of the Cuban revolution. (This was not true even of the workers, much less the land-starved peasants.)

In this situation, it concluded, the only way to fight back and win was to launch rural guerrilla warfare, even if only a handful of fighters were available for this task. The technical preparation for or opening of guerrilla fronts was the central task that lay before Trotskyists in Latin America.

Part of the pressure to adopt this course came from young revolutionists in Latin America who wanted to emulate the Cuban victory. Identification with armed struggles in Latin America ran high among youth who had been won to the Fourth International in the course of the worldwide youth radicalization, particularly reinforced by street battles with the cops in France, Italy, and Germany. Many of these young people, buoyed by the great success of the French comrades in the 1968 upsurge, were impatient

for the International to make a breakthrough and take power in some country, or at least be seen as leading a major guerrilla force, which could demonstrate the leadership and combat capacities of the Fourth International to revolutionary youth in Europe and elsewhere.

This hope was most clearly expressed in a separate article by Livio Maitan, one of the main leaders of this turn. He claimed that the country where the breakthrough for the Fourth International would be made was Bolivia.

This line of starting guerrilla warfare in Latin America with even very small forces had been promoted by the Cuban leadership for a decade. They differentiated themselves from the reformist positions of the Latin American CPs that followed Moscow by counterposing "armed struggle," by which they meant guerrilla war, to peaceful coexistence and the election of liberal or mildly reformist governments.

This was an oversimplification of the Cuban revolution itself. Guerrilla war had played a key role in the Cuban victory, but the July 26 movement was much more than the guerrillas. It had underground organizations in the cities. It had grown out of a political struggle that gained mass support against the dictatorship. And after the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship, it was the mobilization of the masses in the cities and countryside that overthrew landlordism, imperialist domination, and capitalism and established a workers' state.

The Cubans campaigned to win over the Stalinized Communist Parties in Latin America, which they gambled would come over to the side of the revolution once the "armed struggle" was launched. This ignored the complexities of winning over the mass base of these parties through united front tactics of struggle, and underestimated the treachery of most of the leaderships.

Throughout the 1960s, idealistic and heroic young people in many countries in Latin America sought to carry out this strategy. In the battle between the Stalinists and the Castroists, we supported the revolutionary line of armed struggle. But the fight with the CPs went far deeper. In this fight, the Stalinists took the position — opportunistically, it is true — that a Leninist party had to be built with the support of the masses. But what they said on the surface made sense to many, especially as the guerrilla efforts made little progress and put down few roots in most countries. The Castroists were pushed into small minorities. The result was defeat after defeat in the attempt to wage guerrilla war.

A key defeat was the attempt by Che Guevera in Bolivia to import a small force from the outside and simply start a guerrilla campaign without sufficient preparation and close enough attention to the complex political situation in the country. A brutal rightist dictatorship was in power, but the situation was alive with developing, but

still modest at that point, revolutionary possibilities. An element in Che's defeat was the betrayal of his guerrilla force by the much larger Bolivian CP, which turned its back on Che and his band, ensuring their isolation. Those in the CP who supported Che had to break away as a small minority.

Che was a great revolutionist, a superb human being, and made real contributions to Marxism in word and deed. He was also a proven master of guerrilla war. So his defeat in 1967 was an important test of the Cuban line. After 1967, the Cubans began to reduce their emphasis on guerrilla warfare. But the Fourth International headed in the opposite direction.

Hansen's article did not reject guerrilla war at all times and in all places. He acknowledged that history had shown that guerrilla warfare as part of a peasant movement against a repressive regime could be a useful tactic if the conditions were right, as part of an overall strategy of building up a revolutionary party with roots in the working class. (Later, guerrilla warfare forged the leadership of the Nicaraguan revolution, while an urban insurrection brought a revolutionary victory on the Caribbean island of Grenada.) But the attempt to impose the strategic orientation of rural guerrilla war on a continental scale for an extended period meant ignoring the crucial problem of tactics geared to the specific stage of the class struggle in a each country, the size of the forces available and their degree of implantation in the workers and peasants movements.

This dispute in the International over Latin America became intertwined with other differences**.**

The SWP leadership had been asked to write draft resolutions for the World Congress on the Cultural Revolution in China and the worldwide radicalization of the youth. On China, the majority of the European leaders in the United Secretariat now agreed with us that a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucratic regime would be necessary, an idea they had formerly opposed. Livio Maitan joked that Mao himself had come to this position in the Cultural Revolution. Livio's joke — which assumed that Mao's call for an army-backed "revolution" against rival factions in the bureaucracy, meant that Mao was now an advocate of antibureaucratic political revolution — was a harbinger. We really didn't have much agreement. Our draft was amended by the majority to the point where the draft and the edited version were really counterposed resolutions.

We did have agreement in the United Secretariat on the document about the youth radicalization. It projected that the sections of the International should in the next period sink deeper roots in the massive layer of radicalizing youth, which many sections had already begun, especially in France and the United States.

In the discussions leading up to the World Congress, I represented the positions of the SWP leadership in the United Secretariat. We had requested that Caroline Lund, a member of the YSA National Committee, be seated as an observer at the United Secretariat meetings, as a representative of the YSA. There were objections raised to this, so we didn't push the point, although that meant Caroline was even more isolated. When I came back from these meetings I would give her a blow-by-blow description.

The World Congress itself was held in Rimini, Italy, on the Adriatic Sea. In the summer, Rimini became a vacation beach city, but since we were there in early spring, the Congress delegates were pretty much alone.

Caroline drove to the World Congress with Ernest and Gisela, across the Alps. Joe Hansen came over to Brussels early to meet with Hugo Moreno, one of the principal leaders of the Argentine Party, called the Revolutionary Workers Party, or PRT in its Spanish initials. The PRT had recently split. The two groups continued to call themselves the PRT, but they were distinguished by the names of their respective newspapers. One was the PRT(Combatiente) (Fighter) and the other the PRT(Verdad) (Truth). It turned out, once the dust settled, that the issue that caused the split was guerrilla war. Moreno, who led the PRT(Verdad) had been for the guerrilla war orientation as a way of joining in what had looked like a major effort of the Cubans beginning with the 1967 conference of the Organization of Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) in Havana. Unfortunately, OLAS never became a real international organization and, as this became clear, Moreno began to pull back and the organization split.

Hansen showed Moreno his article critical of the turn to guerrilla war proposed by the United Secretariat majority. The three of us met in the kitchen of our apartment. Joe and Hugo did most of the talking. Hugo supported our position. We three went by train to Italy.

At the World Congress itself, a tendency was observable to transform the turn toward guerrilla war in Latin America into a deeper ultraleft turn that affected many sections in the International. The promise of a "breakthough" in Bolivia was heady stuff for many of the young delegates, especially the French. The young French leaders, together with Livio Maitan, Hugo Moscoso of the Bolivian group and Daniel Pereyra of the Argentine PRT(Combatiente) led the charge. Even some younger delegates who had come to the conference supporting our position, including from the British International Marxist Group, were won over to the guerrilla war line.

One of those who supported our position was Peng Shu-tse. He spoke in his heavily accented English, and I translated for him into a more understandable English.

The atmosphere was such that when the discussion on the youth radicalization took place, where we thought we had agreement, the French delegates began to speak against the resolution. The majority leaders on the United Secretariat who had previously supported it, backed off. We had hoped that in the framework of a united, decisive turn to the radicalizing youth, the debate on Latin America could remain a secondary issue and be overcome in part by common work in other areas. But by the end of the Congress, it was clear that the opposite had happened: the line on Latin America shaped the orientation for the work of the International throughout the world.

37. Another World Trip

Soon after the 1969 World Congress, the French Communist League launched an election campaign, with Alain Krivine as its candidate for president. I went down from Brussels to Paris to cover the windup campaign event, a meeting of 10,000 people. The spirit of the May-June 1968 events was still evident in the huge arena where the rally was held. The talks were repeatedly interrupted by revolutionary chants. A number of times the crowd would spontaneously break out singing the International, the revolutionary anthem of socialism. The highlight was the speech by Krivine, who had superb delivery and cadence, so I could understand him better than other French speakers, although I couldn't understand it all.

But my personal relations with the younger French leaders had cooled as a result of the political division that opened at the World Congress. They did arrange accommodations for me — a tiny room in a garret — but there was no social contact. Krivine did assent to an interview, and I wrote up a story on the election campaign for *The Militant*.

The SWP leadership decided that I would make another circuit around the globe, in the summer of 1969, to give our views on the World Congress to Fourth Internationalists in Asia. Caroline flew back to New York while I was on this trip.

My first stop was Bombay, India. Kolpe, whom I had met with Fred the year before, met me and I was able to talk to the leaders of the small Indian section of the FI. Kolpe, who had been at the World Congress, and the others were sympathetic to our views. But they had great respect for Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank and Livio Maitan, leaders of the turn to guerrilla warfare. They were nervous about the possibility of a split.

In Calcutta in Bengal on the east coast of India, there was even more poverty and worse living conditions than in Bombay. I met Silan Banerjee, the leader of the group there, and we traveled around the city by taxi. I was astounded when we went around a huge traffic circle around a park, the centerpiece of which was a statue of Queen Victoria seated on her throne. There she was in all her regal splendor in the midst of

so much squalor for which the British were responsible.

Banerjee had arranged for me to speak in a small town some 40 miles from Calcutta, and we took a train. At the train station I saw people who lived on the platforms next to the tracks. The engines were steam powered, and were filled with water from overhead spouts, so there were puddles of water between the tracks. I saw people washing clothes and themselves in these puddles.

Silan insisted that I go first class, while he went third class. In dollar terms there wasn't much of a difference and the price was low. I went into third class with him, but there was no room to sit. People were packed in, many jammed together, sitting on the floor with goats and chickens. I convinced him to come into first class with me.

Along the way, at each station there would be people selling milky sweet tea in cups made of thin red clay, which were designed to be disposable.

We arrived at Shantipur station in a rural area that seemed to me like part of the Bengal jungle. It brought back memories of reading as a child about "man-eating tigers" of Bengal. I was told on our way from the train station to the town, a trip of about a mile on a road through the jungle, that indeed there were tigers there. When I got back to my hotel in Calcutta, I read in an English-language newspaper that a number of people had been killed by tigers so far that year. Most were workers on rubber tree plantations.

In the center of the town of Shantipur, there was a small city hall. As an honored guest, I signed a registration book. An old man came up to me, and greeted me as "Comrade Sheppard" in a perfect Oxford English accent. I was slowly learning some of the history of the Indian SWP, which explained the political background of this person and others I was to meet.

This history is linked to the island country of Sri Lanka (called Ceylon by the British and at this time as well), off the southern tip of India. Ceylon had also been a British colony. In the 1930s, a Trotskyist party developed in Ceylon, which became stronger than the Stalinist party. It was called the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) which roughly translates as Lanka Socialist Equality Party. The LSSP founded the union movement in Ceylon.

When World War II broke out, the LSSP, unlike the Stalinists, refused to give up the struggle for independence from Britain. The British arrested LSSP leaders, and imprisoned them in India, as they were too popular in Ceylon. But they escaped, and began to organize a Trotskyist party underground in India.

The Indian CP called off the struggle for independence for the duration of the war, but the Bolshevik-Leninists, as the Trotskyists called themselves, continued the independence struggle. They attracted militants who wouldn't go along with the CP's

stand.

They emerged from the war as an important group. In 1953, they followed the orientation of the International Secretariat wing of the Fourth International favoring entry into broader reformist parties, with the intention of remaining in them for an extended period. This orientation was one of the issues involved in the 1953 split in the Interational, with the International Committee being opposed to entryism *sui generis* (of a special type) that was championed by the International Secretariat.§

The "deep entry" strategy was a disaster in India. The old man I met in Shantipur was one of the casualties. I met others in Bombay, some still "deep-entered" in various small socialist parties. The Indian SWP was trying to salvage something from this debacle.

About 40 people from this small town attended the meeting I addressed. I gave,

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§ A word is in order on entryism *sui generis*. Back in the early 1950s, there was real danger of war breaking out between the Western bloc of imperialist countries and the Soviet bloc, which included China at that time. The majority in the International Secretariat thought that this was inevitable.

With the outbreak of war assumed, they then theorized that the result would be that the Stalinist parties in the capitalist world would be forced to adopt a line of struggle against their own capitalist governments, in order to defend the Soviet bloc. This turn to the left would pressure the social democratic parties to turn left as well.

Since our forces were held to be too small to affect this situation, the conclusion was that we should join Stalinist or social democratic parties (depending on the concrete situation in each country) in order to prepare for this left turn, and to influence the masses who would join these parties under the conditions of war.

This orientation was also called "deep entry," which meant that the entry would be a long-term one. In most cases, the Trotskyists would have to be virtually underground to avoid being expelled, and often there would be no public Trotskyist organization or activity. A few leaders kept up a public face through publishing magazines.

When neither the war nor the expected left turns occurred, other reasons were found to maintain the deep entryism policy. Some members were won over to the Stalinist or social-democratic parties. Others became demoralized and dropped away. As a result, instead of influencing radicalizing masses as was projected, the sections who followed this course were weakened.

Entryism in a larger party with a promising left wing has sometimes been a valid tactic, as the Trotskyists' entry into the American Socialist Party in the 1930s showed. But it is dangerous, if the leadership is not strong enough politically to hold the cadres together or if the entry is carried on too long after the conditions which gave rise to the tactic no longer exist.

The method used to justify deep entryism was similar to the one used to justify the guerrilla turn at the Ninth World Congress. A schema of what *must* necessarily happen is created, then a general strategy is deduced from that schema, which rigidly imposes the same tactic in many countries, regardless of the actual, changing situation in each country.

with translation, a general talk about capitalism and socialism, the Vietnam war, and the situation in the United States. There was great interest and incredulity when I explained that the income gap between workers and the big capitalists in the US was greater than the same gap in India, even though the workers and peasants in India were much poorer.

The main industry in Shantipur was the mining of a very pure red clay, and using it to produce ceramics. The people at the meeting gave me a clay sculpture as a token of appreciation.

I had picked up an intestinal ailment in Bombay. (Most of the comrades there had it also). A young man in Shantipur told me to drink some coconut milk. He cut the top off a large coconut with a whack of his machete and I drank the liquid inside. This was not the ordinary type of coconut I was used to with a hard spherical shell surrounding the milk and meat, but seemed to contain liquid only.

But I was still sick when I flew south to Sri Lanka. I was met at the Colombo airport by Bala Tampoe, the leader of the section there, who whisked me through customs. He was the head of the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), which organized the customs workers, among many others, in the port and airport. I stayed at a kind of cabana, where I had a cabin to myself. Bala got me some antibiotics, which, along with a diet of tea, toast and scrambled eggs, cured me.

The old LSSP group, which had the leadership of much of the labor movement, had been expelled from the FI in the early 1960s. Their parliamentary group (they were strong electorally as well as in the labor movement) voted to support a left-capitalist government, and joined it as junior partners. This placed them in the position of having to justify anti-working class measures that every capitalist government must carry out.

Reversing a proud tradition they had of defending the Tamils, an oppressed minority on the island, they began to adapt to the chauvinism of their coalition partners. The dominant nationality were the Sinhalese, who were Buddhist. The Tamils, who were mainly Hindu, were from two groups. Some had settled in Sri Lanka from Tamil-Nadu in southern India centuries ago. The others were imported by the British to work the tea plantations the British established on the island. The British were having difficulty forcing Sinhalese peasants off the land and into the proletariat. The Tamils were treated as second-class citizens by the British and Sinhalese upper classes alike.

The old LSSP defended the rights of the Tamils, and organized them into unions on the tea plantations or into mixed-workforce unions elsewhere. Bala Tampoe is a Tamil.

But the LSSP swiftly moved to the right, as the logic of joining a capitalist

government dictated.

Bala Tampoe and a few others resisted the LSSP's course, and left it when it joined the government.

I attended an executive committee meeting of the CMU. When I asked if I could go to a meeting of the section, I was informed that I already had done that. It turned out that the "party" was the union executive committee! This explained a great deal about how the LSSP had been organized. It had only a few thousand members, but led the major trade unions and had a big enough electoral following to have a strong presence in the parliament. The leaders did not build the party among the rank-and-file workers it led, and Bala was carrying on that tradition.

The LSSP leaders came from the educated classes, and some from the capitalist class itself. This isn't unusual among left groups in the exploited countries of the "third world." Many of them lived lives far removed from the workers and peasants. Pierre Frank told me that once when he was visiting Sri Lanka, he was given a sumptuous dinner in a palatial house of an LSSP leader. The dinner was served on gold plates!

A strong worker base could have resisted the LSSP's derailment more effectively, or the working class cadres could have rebuilt the party. But Bala Tampoe, the recognized leader of tens of thousands of workers, with revolutionary socialist and Marxist politics, didn't have a clue about utilizing his prestige to build a real workers' party. Bala lived in a small but nice house on a small lot — better off than most, but not luxurious.

Bala had been at the World Congress, and sided with the majority largely because of loyalty to Ernest Mandel. He wasn't following the majority line in Sri Lanka, however, (i.e., moving toward organizing guerrilla warfare) and really didn't want to discuss the matter.

Bala invited me to his house for dinner, which was a very hot coconut-based curry. We were sitting in his backyard at nearly sunset, when a giant bat flew across the sky. I wondered if I was dreaming, as it looked like a Doberman Pincher dog with wings. Amused at my shock, Bala told me it was a fruit-eating bat.

Sri Lanka is very near the equator. That means the sun rises and sets all year long on nearly a twelve-hour day, twelve-hour night schedule. And when it rises it comes straight up the sky and is quite strong in an hour or two. At night it goes straight down and darkness comes quickly.

The island has a central plateau which is at a much higher altitude than the coast. Bala and I drove from Colombo, which is on the coast and tropical, up the slopes leading to the plateau. The British built their tea plantations on these slopes. The air

gradually got cooler as we climbed. On the way we stopped for some fresh bananas. I had never tasted bananas picked when they were ripe before, and they were delicious. There are many kinds of bananas on the island and before I left I sampled as many types as I could.

We passed a number of union headquarters on this drive, mostly small shacks. I was startled to see painted on them the hammer and sickle with a "4" — the symbol of the Fourth International. The LSSP-led unions kept their old symbol.

As we drove we also saw elephants picking up logs and loading them on trucks. Our destination was Kandy, the ancient capital city, up on the plateau. There the climate was a temperate summer all year round.

We went to the university in Kandy, where we met a professor who had been in the LSSP. Bala wanted me to meet this person, I believe, to help recruit him. Bala knew that he himself wasn't much of a party-builder, and hoped people like this fellow could help put out a publication that could attract people to help build a real group. I don't know if anything ever came of these efforts.

I flew from Colombo to Hong Kong. I had telephone numbers that Shu-tse and Pi-lan had furnished me for the comrades there. Those Trotskyists who remained in China fled to Hong Kong after the Maoist victory fearing repression. They were underground, as they were also illegal under British colonial rule of Hong Kong.

Many years later when Britain agreed to give back Hong Kong to China, the capitalist press gushed about how democratic the British rule was in Hong Kong. Actually, the British introduced a few trappings of democracy only a few years before the turnover. In 1969 the situation was different. There were no elections, no civil rights.

The British policy was to turn over Trotskyists they thought were troublesome to Peking, resulting in imprisonment or execution. Two Trotskyist leaders in Hong Kong were saved from this fate only by a local campaign, but they were deported to Macao, a small enclave held by Portugal on the south China coast not too far from Hong Kong. I took a hydrofoil speedboat from Hong Kong to Macao to visit them.

As Peng Shu-tse told me before I left, Hong Kong had all the different cuisines of China. And having Chinese comrades take me to some restaurants away from the tourist traps was a treat.

We held political discussions in places the comrades felt were secure. They generally agreed with the SWP about the discussion in the International, as they were influenced by Peng. Once, we went for a swim in the ocean and talked in the water, out from the beach so as not to be overheard. But I learned some years later that one of the comrades out in the water with me was a Maoist agent. When he got very sick

with liver cancer, he went back to China for treatment.

In Japan, the comrades were friendly, but decidedly for the majority line, with the exception of two older comrades, whom I knew as Nishi and Okatani. Like most of the far left in Japan, the younger cadres had come out of the student movement, and proved their militancy in street fighting with the police. In the next few years, they carried out more and more ultraleft actions, which resulted in many of their members being imprisoned for long terms.

The main leader of the group was known as Sakai. We became friends despite our differences, and we would go out with other comrades to different types of restaurants where we would discuss. He introduced me at a tempura shop to an older man who was the first Trotskyist in Japan, Eishi Yamaneshi, a very cultured person who spoke excellent English.

Yamanishi had been in London in 1932-33 during the fascist drive to power in Germany. He was radicalized by this experience, and got hold of issues of *The Militant*. The paper was coming out twice a week campaigning against the fascist danger, with articles by Trotsky calling on the leaders of the German CP to form a fighting united front with the social democrats to smash the fascist threat in the streets. This is what won Yamanishi to Trotskyism.

He returned to Japan where he kept his mouth shut under the military regime. After the war, he was the first to translate Trotsky's works from English to Japanese, and had them published. He became well-known as the translator of the works of Norman Mailer, which gave him a living.

Yamanishi introduced me to a young man who was the president of Zengakuren during the big 1960 struggles, and was a leader of the Trotskyist group at the time, the Japan Revolutionary Communist League. He became disillusioned when the JRCL subsequently split into warring groups. We had an interesting discussion, and then played a game of Go. He wiped the board with me, even though he gave me the maximum handicap.

My next stop was Sydney, Australia. I had a stopover in Manila, where it was warm and tropical, and then flew on to Sydney. We were over a desert in Australia, when the pilot played the live radio report of the first manned moon landing over the public address system. Looking down, I could almost imagine I was looking at the moon.

I know some astronomy, and knew I was going from the northern hemisphere to the southern, where it was winter, but neglected to pack any warm clothes. Sydney is not as cold as Europe or New York in the winter, but it was chilly. I had on a thin summer suit.

I had written to Bob Gould, the only Australian who had recent contact with the Fourth International, and I was expecting him to meet me. I was looking around the airport waiting room for someone who looked like they were looking around for someone. I noticed that there was a group of hippie-ish young people who seemed to be milling around. When all the other passengers had left, I was alone with them. Finally, I walked ever to a young man with a red beard and asked him if he was looking for Barry Sheppard, and he was. They thought I was CIA or something, what with my suit and short hair.

What I found was a very pleasant surprise. These young people had organized a youth group called Resistance. Resistance was in the thick of the antiwar movement in Australia.

One of the first things these young comrades did was provide me with some warm clothes.

I was invited to a conference held in their headquarters and bookshop, which were quite impressive. It wasn't just for members, but included a lot of young people around their group, and the room was packed. They gave reports on their political work. I gave a report that covered the antiwar and Black power movements in the United States, the Socialist Workers Party, the Fourth International, and the World Congress.

The main leaders of Resistance were brothers, John and Jim Percy. It was Jim Percy, with his red beard, that I had approached at the airport. The Percy brothers were in a group called the International Marxist League, along with Gould. The Percy brothers were attracted to the SWP's party-building perspective, and had been in a struggle with Gould over the direction of the group. In a private meeting, they asked me to intercede, backing them against Gould. I told them that as I had just gotten to know them and Gould, I thought it would be wrong for me to do that. I explained that experience had made the SWP very wary of jumping into internal disputes among groups in other countries. They were disappointed, but knew I agreed with them on the necessity of building a party in Australia.

The result was the beginning of a close relationship between the American SWP and the party they went on to build. They had to break with Gould to do it.

In Brussels, the Bureau was also in contact with a person in Wellington, New Zealand by the name of Hector MacNiell. I had thought that Australia and New Zealand were pretty close, but found they are 1,500 miles apart when I flew to Wellington. I stayed with Hector and his wife in their small home. I remember that they had a whole bowl of butter on their table, and we ate a lot of lamb, both of which were cheap in New Zealand.

As in Australia, I found that Hector had a group of youth around him interested in socialism. This wasn't as big a group as in Australia, but they were campus leaders involved in the antiwar movement. I encouraged them to go in the direction of building an organization. The main young leaders I met were the Fyson brothers, George and Hugh. They did go on to build an organization, and had to break with MacNiell to do it. As was the case with the Australians, the New Zealand group developed close ties with the American SWP in the years following my trip. They would jokingly refer to me as the "father" of their group.

I flew back to Sydney for more discussions, and then headed back to the United States. At the immigration station, they were routinely checking the names of all passengers in a fat book. When they got to me, they evidently found me listed. I was hauled into a small room, all my belongings and papers were searched, and the papers were copied.

I stayed in New York for the SWP convention, held in early September. I gave a report on the international political situation and the discussion that had begun in the Fourth International. After the convention, Caroline and I flew back to Brussels.

38. Growth as the Radicalization Deepens

While Caroline and I were in Europe in 1969 our main contact with what was happening back in the United States was *The Militant*.

In the spring of 1968 student strikes at Columbia and San Francisco State, led by Black students with the support of the student body as a whole, marked a step forward for the student movement. Both struggles saw massive police violence designed to break up student demonstrations and occupations of campus buildings but the police attacks only spurred on student resistance.

These strikes demanded that Black studies departments be established, and that the racist curriculum be revised to include the real history of Blacks in America. The students also demanded ending the schools' complicity with the war machine, abolishing the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), and barring CIA recruiting on campus.

The SF State strike lasted into 1969. An interesting feature of that struggle was the inspiration the students' strike gave to teachers, who struck for union recognition. The administration got a court order barring the teachers' strike, which was followed by a brutal police attack on the teachers.

The spring of 1969 saw a wave of student strikes and occupations sweep the country, with many of the same demands and features as at Columbia and SF State, including the leadership of Black students. These too were met with police and sometimes National Guard repression.

The upsurge spread to the high schools. In Los Angeles thousands of Black and Chicano high school students challenged racism in the school system. In New York, 4,000 marched on the offices of Governor Rockefeller demanding that cuts to the education budget be undone.

These student actions represented a challenge to the institutions of bourgeois education. The students had moved from passive acceptance of the way higher

education was run to demanding a voice in decisions. The political issues revolved around Black rights and the fight against the war, the key issues fueling the radicalization of the youth. The concept of the "Red University" in the form of the "Antiwar University" and schools fighting racism was beginning to become a reality.

Republican Richard Nixon had been elected President in 1968 against the pro-war Democrat Hubert Humphrey, and replaced the discredited Johnson administration. Nixon's promises that he would bring peace through the negotiations in Paris with North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front, and his token withdrawals of US troops, were soon recognized as nothing but an attempt to buy time for the continuation of the war. Antiwar sentiment among young people and the population as a whole — and in the army in Vietnam — was growing. As a result, the Student Mobilization Committee took on new life, reviving on campuses and high schools where it already existed and spreading to new ones.

The SMC was key to building actions called for April 6, 1969, which were led by contingents of active-duty GIs. To make it easier for GIs to participate, the marches did not include any civil disobedience or confrontations. The largest march, of 100,000 people, took place in New York. There were 50,000 in San Francisco, 30,000 in Chicago, and 6,500 in Los Angeles. The movement gained a foothold in the South, and 4,000 people from all over the South marched in Atlanta, Georgia, with 50 GIs in the lead.

The growth of the SMC occurred in spite of the fact that the radical pacifists and the Stalinist youth had walked out six months earlier. The YSA was in the leadership of the SMC, but was careful to reach out to include activists from as broad a layer as possible in the SMC national leadership. If the YSA had attempted to impose its own program on the SMC, this growth would not have happened. Instead, the YSA built the SMC as a broad antiwar organization that welcomed all young people who wanted to fight against the war. The great majority of SMC members were not in the YSA, and many local SMC chapters had no YSA members at all.

Antiwar forces had been by and large won over to the perspective of seeing soldiers as potential allies.

At Fort Jackson, South Carolina, a group of mostly Black soldiers began getting together to discuss the war. One of them was Joe Miles, a Black member of the YSA. Another YSA member in the group was Joe Cole, who was white. The brass came down on the group with threats, trumped-up courts-martial, and the transfer to other bases of those they considered the leaders.

The GIs fought back, with the help of the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee. They formed GIs United Against the War in Vietnam at Fort Jackson, which drew in

many Black, Puerto Rican and some white soldiers.

Then the brass indicted nine members of GIs United and threw them in the stockade. A defense campaign led to victory for the defendants. One of the original nine defendants turned out to be an Army agent, but that didn't affect the fight.

Andrew Pulley was one of the accused. He was charged with not going to bed when ordered to do so, even though he was already in bed when the order was given. This charge backfired, and made the brass look vindictive and a little stupid. Pulley joined the YSA and later became a national leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

Opposition to the war among soldiers in Vietnam began to be reported in the daily press. On returning from six months in Vietnam *Chicago Daily News* reporter Georgie Ann Geyer wrote that "fully half of the US troops in Vietnam" are "against the war to some extent." Then the Associated Press reported that an entire company temporarily refused to continue fighting. We didn't know the extent of such resistance at the time, but it snowballed in the next years to the point that the US Army's fighting capacity declined sharply.

The YSA was growing. In June a meeting of the YSA National Committee was held. Larry Seigle, the YSA Organizational Secretary, reported that YSA chapters had been formed in 13 new cities in the past year, and that there had been a pickup in the recruitment of Black, Latino, and Asian youth, as well as high school and even some junior high school students. At some campuses, YSA members were being elected to student governments and even as president of the student body.

A factor in the growth of both the SMC and YSA was the collapse of Students for a Democratic Society. SDS had once been openly scornful of the potential of the working class to fight for social change, as were other members of the self-styled "new left." Now, however, their rhetoric took on a Marxist coloration. The French events of 1968 had a big impact on radicalizing youth, including SDS. But the newly found "Marxism" of the SDS national leadership unfortunately turned into Maoism, splits and absurd and disastrous ultraleft actions.

The Maoist Progressive Labor Party had entered SDS some time before, promoting a crude workerist orientation. The SDS leadership was unable to mount an effective opposition to PL, and SDS was now faced with an internal war of two nearly equal factions. PL was expelled in the summer — putting an end to SDS's "consensus" method of organization, which had been a hallmark of the new left. Those who expelled PL themselves soon split.

Both wings of SDS also counseled radicals, sometimes with the use of physical force, to repudiate the antiwar demonstrations scheduled for the fall.

Many local SDS chapters, repelled by this direction their national leadership had

taken, transformed themselves into SMC chapters. Others kept the name SDS but joined in helping to build the antiwar movement. Some individual SDS members joined the YSA.

Those who identified with the SDS nationally, and hadn't gone with the wildly ultraleft Weathermen group, had broken into factions, which would be around for some time as two mutually hostile Maoist parties. But the old SDS, which had reached a high point of some 100,000 members, was finished.

The growth of the YSA naturally led to the growth of the SWP. The September 1969 convention of the SWP registered this fact. About 700 people attended, from 49 cities, including, for the first time, sizable groups from the South. In addition to elected delegates from the party branches, many members of both the YSA and SWP attended as observers.

The report on the political resolution was given by Jack Barnes, who had been elected to the post of National Organization Secretary. The report was optimistic about the prospects of the current radicalization becoming deeper in the years ahead. I spoke on the international situation and the debate in the Fourth International.

There were reports on our antiwar work, given by Gus Horowitz; on the YSA, given by Larry Seigle, the newly elected YSA National Chairman; and on the Black struggle, given by Clifton DeBerry.

DeBerry presented an important programmatic resolution adopted by the convention, *The Transitional Program for Black Liberation*. This sought to link the immediate struggles Blacks had been engaged in to the need to form a Black political party independent of the Democrats and Republicans that could tie together and lead the struggles. It showed how this process could lead to the raising of new and more anticapitalist demands arising out of real struggles.

"Numerous [Black] revolutionaries see the necessity and desirability of breaking away, once and for all, from both the Democratic and Republican parties," the resolution stated, "and forming an independent black party which will not only enter candidates in election campaigns but mobilize the Afro-American communities in actions to attain community demands.

"However, they do not yet see clearly how to link struggles for the pressing immediate needs of black people with the revolutionary goal of overturning the whole racist capitalist system. In their search for an answer to this difficult problem they swing from one extreme to the other without finding a logical and practical connection between the two ends. Thus at one time they talk about armed struggle by small, highly disciplined, and trained groups of militants as the only really revolutionary method of action. When they run up against the unrealism of guerrilla-type actions in

the United States, where the scale of revolutionary struggles demands huge and much more complex commitments of forces, they fall back to spasmodic and uncoordinated activities associated with the largely spontaneous struggles that flare up in the community over issues that often do not appear to be far-reaching."

The resolution recognized that white workers remained basically quiescent politically. While the Black masses had demonstrated great militancy, including in massive uprisings, they could not *win* power in the United States as a whole by themselves, although they could begin the fight for this by forging an independent Black party**.** The current situation was what the resolution called a preparatory period.

A program for participating in the present struggles, with a view to advancing toward the socialist revolution, and connecting immediate issues with intermediate or transitional steps, was needed. "The solution lies in formulating and fighting for a program that can help transform the general discontent and general militancy of the black masses into an organized, cohesive, consciously revolutionary force. By presenting and fighting for such a program, a small vanguard can transform itself into an influential power among the masses."

The resolution went on to make suggestions for the planks of such a program. "Most of the proposals listed above have been brought forward at one time or another in the course of the black liberation struggle over the past years; others are taken from the experiences of the masses elsewhere in fighting against capitalist domination. A program of this sort cannot be fully finalized or frozen. It has to remain flexible and open-ended with plenty of room for additions and improvements as the struggle develops and new problems come to the fore."[1]

The dilemma facing Black revolutionists was evident in the evolution of the Black Panther Party. The BPP was increasingly turning to ultra-revolutionary rhetoric about armed struggle. The FBI and police in cities around the country were carrying out a campaign of repression against the Panthers. BPP leaders were facing many crude police frame-ups, and assassinations of their leaders. In 1968 and 1969, 28 Panthers were murdered by the cops.

On the night of December 4, 1969, Chicago police broke into the apartment where BPP leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were sleeping and executed them in their beds in a horrendous fusilade.

We, along with many others, campaigned against the repression of the Panthers. The Black Panther Party's greatest contribution, DeBerry told the convention, was to bring the idea of an independent Black political party from the realm of the abstract into the concrete.

He noted their ultraleft rhetoric and their abstention from ongoing broader struggles.

They tended to deride the Black students leading the campus struggles and strikes as "cultural nationalists." While remaining all-Black, they began to adopt their own version of the anti-Black-nationalist position of the Communist Party.

The convention discussed the formation of Black caucuses in the unions. In 1968, growing out of a series of struggles at one of the Dodge auto plants in Detroit, the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) was formed. Other plants in the area soon saw the formation of "RUMs."

This affirmed the proletarian revolutionary potential of Black nationalism. The great majority of Blacks were workers. In the Detroit auto industry there was a high concentration of Blacks. These Black workers were struggling not only against racist discrimination by the employers and the United Auto Workers union, which was rampant, but against the conditions all auto workers faced. These struggles pit them not only against the auto companies, but also against the sell-out leadership of the United Automobile Workers headed by Walter Reuther. Reuther's line was to seek peace with the auto companies and to silence the Black workers.

The battles these RUMs waged intertwined their struggle as Blacks with their struggle as workers. They were objectively fighting for white workers, too, and they got some support from many whites.

Students in Detroit, Blacks and others, supported these workers. At Wayne State University in Detroit, a young Black revolutionary, John Watson, became the editor of the student newspaper, *the South End*. The paper became an organizer not only of student support to DRUM and the other RUMs, but of the Black struggle as a whole and the antiwar movement. The *South End* became an important paper in the Black community and the auto plants.

The reaction of local politicians and other spokespersons for the ruling class was to strive to remove Watson. The UAW leadership joined in the chorus condemning *the South End*. Support for the paper in the Black community and among students thwarted these efforts.

An important workshop, led by Mary-Alice Waters, was held at the convention on the new women's liberation movement. The National Organization for Women had been founded in 1966. New organizations were being set up by younger women. Many of these young women came out of the student radicalization, particularly SDS and the anti-draft group Resistance. The workshop helped the party and YSA to get more involved in women's groups. We supported initiating and joining struggles around concrete issues, and participating in the discussions and debates within the movement in order to help clarify our own views with the perspective of eventually developing a program of transitional demands for women's liberation.

Evelyn Reed wrote articles for *The Militant* and *International Socialist Review*, the party's theoretical and political monthly, on the historical background of the oppression of women from the days of early class society up to the present. We sponsored forums and panel discussions, which included women from the many new feminist groups.

Inspired by the movement for Black liberation, other oppressed nationalities began to struggle. Chicanos, as the longstanding US communities of Mexican descent began to call themselves, fought for their rights. The largest concentration of Chicanos was in the Southwest. In 1969, there were big Chicano struggles in Denver, Los Angeles, Texas, and New Mexico. Native Americans stepped into the national spotlight, exposing the historical crime done to them by the European colonists and the United States, and protesting their oppression.

Joe Hansen was one of the first in the SWP to see the importance of the struggles against destruction of the environment, and ran a regular column in *Intercontinental Press* called "Capitalism Fouls Things Up."

Inspired in part by the Black struggle, the nationalist Catholic community in British-controlled Northern Ireland launched a new movement against discrimination and oppression fostered by British rule. One of the early leaders of this new movement was the young Bernadette Devlin, leader of People's Democracy. We were fortunate to have as a writer Gerry Foley, who was of Irish descent. He was very knowledgeable about the history of British domination of the island and the long resistance to it.

In Canada, the nationally oppressed French-speaking population began to raise the banner of their language rights and independence for Québec.

The situation nationally and internationally promised a hot autumn politically, and the SWP convention geared the membership up for a fall offensive.

39. The 1969 Fall Antiwar Offensive

The central campaign the September 1969 SWP convention launched was to make the fall antiwar actions as big as possible.

As the school year started, meetings of the SMC around the country were becoming large. The SMC called for an international student strike for November 14, and the National Mobilization Committee had called for mass demonstrations in San Francisco and Washington for November 15.

In September at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, antiwar activists distributed leaflets at a football game calling on fans to join an antiwar march after the game was over. Some 15,000 joined the march! *The Militant* ran a picture of ex-Pvt. Andrew Pulley of GIs United and Prof. Sidney Peck of the Mobilization Committee leading the march.

New forces began to join the movement**.** In September, more mainstream elements called for an October 15 "Moratorium" on business as usual for October 15, to protest the war. Over 500 student presidents and student press editors signed an advertisement in the *New York Times* calling for students and faculty to leave classes that day and go out into the community to talk about the war to their fellow Americans.

The Moratorium quickly mushroomed, drawing widespread support, not only on campuses but in the broader public. The fact that the Moratorium was initiated by figures associated with the "dove" wing of the Democratic Party opened the way for many who had not yet participated in antiwar actions to join them.

While some of its initiators sought to counterpose the October 15 Moratorium to the November 14 and 15 actions, the SMC and the Mobilization Committee jumped into support of the Moratorium, and it became a building block for November.

There were significant actions a few days before the Moratorium. Two were noteworthy for their connection with GIs. On October 11, there was a march against the war in Fayetteville, North Carolina, of some 600. This was significant in and of

itself, in a smaller city in a Southern state.

This protest was not only led by 75 active duty GIs, mainly from nearby Fort Bragg, but was organized by GIs. In an attempt to neutralize the GIs United at Fort Jackson, the brass had sent GIs United leader Joe Miles to Fort Bragg. This didn't slow down antiwar activity at Fort Jackson, but soon there was a GIs United group at Fort Bragg, too. It was this organization that brought in GIs from Ft. Meade, Maryland, and Pope Air Force Base. They also contacted area colleges, and groups from nine of them participated.

The Fort Bragg GIs United were holding weekly meetings, and published a newsletter, *Bragg Briefs*.

The next day, some 10,000 people marched to Fort Dix, New Jersey, led by a contingent of 100 women. Their goal was to demand the release of GIs who had been thrown in the stockade for their antiwar views, as well as to tell the soldiers that they wanted all the troops brought home from Vietnam immediately. They got inside the base, but were met by Military Police with rifles and unsheathed bayonets. Elite troops were brought in from other bases, and the demonstrators were dispersed. But some 350 prisoners were released from the Fort Dix stockade in the days immediately preceding and just after the demonstration.

On October 15 millions across the country, from the big cities to the little towns, participated in the Moratorium. Mary-Alice Waters, writing in *The Militant*, summarized, "As Oct. 15 drew to a close, Americans across the country attempted to comprehend the meaning and impact of the historically unprecedented day of action. Millions went into the streets to express their overwhelming opposition to the Vietnam war. From New York, Chicago and San Francisco to Pocatello, Idaho, Juneau, Alaska and Memphis, Tennessee, as one news analyst commented, 'The mood of the country was O-U-T!'"

She also wrote, "The scope, size and variety of the day's events almost defies the attempt to cover them.

"In New York, for example, hundreds of thousands took part in rallies all over the city — many of them occurring simultaneously — 10,000 at Columbia, 3,000 at New York University, 7,000 on Wall Street, 5,000-10,000 high school students in Central Park, over 1,000 in Brooklyn, 4,000 at a rally of people who work in New York's publishing houses, thousands in candlelight marches originating in half a dozen different neighborhoods. Late in the day over 100,000 massed in Bryant Park in mid-town Manhattan, producing a traffic jam of monumental proportions.

"New York's board of education estimated that high school absenteeism was 'well over 90 percent.'"[1]

While the range of speakers at the rallies necessarily reflected the broad range of sponsors and views, the left wing of the movement was strong enough to be represented. In Boston, for example, the first speaker at a rally of 100,000 on the Boston Common was Senator George McGovern, the Democratic Party dove. But it was also addressed by Peter Camejo and by Professor Howard Zinn, an antiwar leader.

The mass circulation daily, the *Boston Evening Globe*, which endorsed the Moratorium, two days before had "exposed" Peter Camejo as a member of the SWP. (Peter was one of our most widely known public spokespersons.) The paper wrote, the SWP "flies Vietcong flags and roots for a Cong victory in Vietnam." The first of these assertions was generally not true, but the second one certainly was — and we were now far from alone in this opinion among opponents of the war.

We had to fight for Peter's spot on the speakers list. He was put last, at a time when it was expected that the crowd would start to wither away. Ken Hurwitz, one of the Moratorium leaders, later wrote a book in which he described the scene:

"Still a step or two away from the microphone, [Peter] started on his speech. He didn't want a single person to leave the Common before he had a chance to work his spell. The words came in a high pitched staccato cadence, and his whole body vibrated to the rythm.

"Vietnam, he said, isn't a mistake but an absolute inevitability of the system.

"And to those politicians who are joining the bandwagon, he continued, this antiwar movement is not for sale. This movement is not for sale now, not in 1970 and not in 1972.…

"People were listening and responding. Certainly the majority wasn't agreeing entirely with the revolutionary stance, but they were listening … It didn't matter whether we were socialist revolutionaries or not. He made us hate the war perhaps more than we ever thought possible …

"Camejo ended his speech at the peak, and the crowd applauded until their hands were weary."[2]

Betsey Stone, writing in *The Militant*, said that Peter "militantly reaffirmed his stand in support for the liberation forces in Vietnam. The crowd cheered as he declared, 'Who are the people from this little nation, who are holding off the mightiest military power in the history of the world? The fighters of the National Liberation Front are the most beautiful people in the world — they are young people, giving up their lives for all of us, so that some day we can end the oppression in this world.'

"More cheers and applause came when Camejo put up a challenge to the many politicians that are coming out against the war. 'Now that we are a majority, they make statements against the war and want to get on the bandwagon,' Camejo said.

'And what we say to them is, if you want to support our movement, we are marching on Washington Nov. 15. Are you coming with us? Yes or no?'"[3]

This latter point, how to deal with the capitalist politicians who began to speak out against the war, pitted the SWP against various sectarian groups, including Progressive Labor and the Spartacist League led by former SWP member James Robertson. They were for excluding such politicians from antiwar actions, with the argument that their participation would turn the movement into a pro-capitalist front.

The participation of politicians in supporting the independent antiwar movement meant that they were supporting us, and not we supporting them. In addition, their participation helped legitimatize the movement and helped antiwar fighters reach out more widely to the American people.

Not many "dove" capitalist politicians wanted to be associated with the militant mass actions. Almost none of them were for the immediate withdrawal of the US troops from Vietnam. There were a few, however, and when they spoke at antiwar conferences and demonstrations, PL, the Spartacists and others attempted to throw them out by force.

In organizing security at these actions in the later years of the movement, the antiwar movement most often had to counter these physical threats from the ultraleft than from the ultraright, who were more and more isolated. The SWP's Fred Halstead, along with the pacifist Brad Lyttle, took the lead in organizing security for the big demonstrations.

In addition to Peter Camejo, SWP speakers, either as recognized antiwar leaders or as socialists or both, were in great demand around the country during the Moratorium. In the New York City area, speakers from the SWP New York election campaign were invited to 22 different campuses. Carol Lipman, the executive secretary of the SMC, spoke at a big rally at Wayne State University in Detroit.

At the University of Texas in Austin, a 6,000-strong rally sponsored by SDS and the SMC was addressed by Melissa Singler. When she got up to speak, the school administration blared the "Star Spangled Banner" from loudspeakers in the campus tower. The crowd responded by standing up and raising two fingers in the "V" peace sign or clenched fists, and giving Singler a standing ovation. There were many such incidents.

As momentum for the Moratorium built up, the response of the Nixon administration was to redbait the movement. Vice President Spiro Agnew (who would later resign in disgrace along with his boss) "exposed" the fact that members of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party were in the leadership of antiwar groups. The administration demanded that the New Mobilization Committee and the

Student Mobilization Committee repudiate a message of greetings from the Vietnamese people. The movement was unanimous in repudiating this demand and other redbaiting.

Caroline and I were back in Brussels when the Moratorium occurred. It was big news around the world. We were taking French lessons at the *Alliance Française*, and when we showed up for class the day after, the hot topic of discussion was the Moratorium. As the only Americans in the class, questions about it and the war were directed to us, and most of our classmates were pleasantly surprised to hear our antiwar views.

Early in November, the SMC published a full-page ad in *The New York Times*, with 1,366 signatures of active-duty servicemen opposed to the war. The armed forces officialdom tried to move against those who had signed the ad, and the GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee filed suit to stop the harassment. This was successful.

On November 14, on campuses and cities across the country, the student actions called by the SMC were joined by hundreds of thousands, many who got on buses to go to the November 15 demonstrations in San Francisco and New York.

A few of the Moratorium leaders opposed the November 15 action. They thought that a march on the nation's capital demanding immediate, unconditional US withdrawal from Vietnam was far too radical to win the support of millions of Americans. But one million people marched in the two cities that day. That was one out of every 200 Americans. Many more millions who couldn't attend were now strong supporters.

The speakers in Washington ran the gamut from Senators Goodell and McGovern, to Carol Lipman of the SMC. Comedian and Black activist Dick Gregory had the crowd in stitches with his satirical lambasting of Agnew.

In San Francisco, West Coast New Mobilization Committee cochairs Terrence Hallinan and Donald Kalish fought to put the movement at the disposal of Democratic Party forces. They called for having only one speaker, a pro-Democratic Party moderate. The rest of the rally would be a "Woodstock West," referring to the gigantic outdoor rock concert held in Woodstock, N.Y., the previous summer.

Their views were thoroughly defeated in local meetings of antiwar activists. After one such meeting, Hallinan, who was either in or around the CP, was so frustrated that he slugged the representative to the meeting of Painters Local Four who had disagreed with him. Hallinan was an amateur boxer. The person he punched was my brother, Roland.

The speakers list was broadened to include some militants, although it was not as broadly representative of the whole movement as the Washington rally. Nevertheless, the fact that 300,000 turned out for the march was more important. Many people on

these huge demonstrations couldn't hear the speakers anyway or didn't listen closely. The mass protest itself spoke louder than words.

In response to the calls for international actions for November 14 and 15 issued by the SMC and the National Mobilization Committee, there were important mobilizations in other countries. I attended the one in Copenhagen, and Caroline went to Paris, to cover these actions for *The Militant*.

I stayed with a young leader of the Revolutionary Socialists, the Danish section of the FI, who were among the most active builders and leaders of the Danish Vietnam Committee. The DVC called a student strike for November 14, and a mass demonstration for November 15. The universities in Copenhagen and Aarhus were shut down, and some high schools were affected. These campuses "featured teach-ins, discussions and films about the war in Vietnam, NATO, etc.," I wrote.

The Communist Party and the Social Democrats called their own action for the evening of November 14. They didn't want to be associated with the militant slogans for the DVC march, which called for Denmark to get out of NATO as well as demanding that the US get out of Vietnam. Some 7,000 turned out for the CP-SD rally, many of whom "marched with 'USA out' posters pinned to their jackets, advertising the much more massive and militant DVC action scheduled for the following day," I reported.[4]

On November 15, some 20,000 marched, in a country of four and a half million. I was in the front row of marchers, with the Revolutionary Socialists. Copenhagen was the farthest north I had ever been, and it was eerie when dusk began about 2 or 3 p.m. and the streetlights came on. The march began at the US military mission, proceeded to the US Embassy, and then to parliament. It was spirited, with colorful flags and banners.

A sidelight gave evidence that the situation in the FI was becoming factionalized. The young comrade I was staying with left a letter on a table while he was out. I believe he left it on purpose for me to read. The letter was from Gisela Mandel, the wife of Ernest Mandel, instructing the Danish comrades not to mention during the demonstration the role of the Student Mobilization Committee in calling for the November 14 international student strike. This was petty, and probably reflected more her lack of political maturity than any plot by the majority, but this could not have happened without growing tensions in the International.

Shannon Pixley, an American exchange student, was also on that march. She and a group of students traveled from Denmark to France, where they met Daniel Bensaïd of the Communist League. He steered her in the direction of SDS, and didn't mention the YSA. However, she did join the YSA when she returned to the States and later became my sister-in-law, marrying my brother Roland.

In Paris, Caroline reported, the Communist League and Red Committees (broader groups supporting the CL's newspaper *Rouge*) called for a demonstration on November 14. The Communist Party called for its own demonstration for November 15. "The CP apparently decided on this demonstration in an attempt to increase the little support it now has among youth. But they did very little to actually build the November 15 action," Caroline wrote.

"The CL and CR issued a leaflet explaining their attitude towards the CP-sponsored demonstration:

"'Revolutionary militants will participate, with their own slogans, in the demonstration scheduled by the CP …'"[5]

The CL-led demonstration on November 14 was a target for the cops. Indeed, leaders of the CL were arrested that day and were accused of "reconstituting" the organizations banned by DeGaulle after the May-June 1968 events.

The CP action was supposed to take place in the *Les Halles* market area in the center of the city. In a last-minute decision the CP called off its demonstration there, and instead held three smaller demonstrations away from the city center. Unaware of this change, the militant youth came to *Les Halles*, and, isolated, they were attacked by the police. The CL wisely decided to disperse the demonstration. The cops left the CP demonstrations alone.

A month later, a demonstration of 3,000 was held in Sydney, Australia, "the most militant street demonstration ever held here to protest the war in Vietnam," wrote *The Militant*'s Australian correspondent.[6] It was organized by the Vietnam Mobilization Committee, in whose leadership were the young militants I had met some months before.

A feature of this action was a speech by Allen Myers, formerly a GI stationed at Fort Dix. Myers was a member of the SWP and YSA who had his own fight with the brass over his right to organize against the war. At the time, he was editor of the *GI Press Service*, a news service for the more than 50 GI antiwar newsletters that had sprung up at bases around the country.

Myers went to Australia as part of a world tour organized by the SMC. When he came through Europe, he stayed at our apartment in Brussels, to talk over what he could expect in the various countries he would be visiting. While in Australia, he met the love of his life, Helen Jarvis, and later returned there to live, playing an important role in building the Australian group in the following decades.

Caroline flew back to the states at the end of December to attend the convention of the YSA, held in Minneapolis December 27-30 in freezing weather and plenty of snow. There were over 800 young people present, including 60 high school and junior

high school students.

International guests came from revolutionary organizations in six countries: France, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Switzerland.

"The mood of the delegates reflected the significant growth of the YSA in the last year," Mary-Alice Waters commented, "the successes registered by the YSA in its many fields of work. Those attending included many of the key organizers of the million-strong antiwar demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco on Nov. 15; leaders of some of most successful Black and Third World student actions of the last year; leaders of many other campus struggles; organizers and leaders of the growing women's liberation movement."[7]

Caroline reported on the resolution that SWP leaders had drafted and which the United Secretariat had presented to the 1969 World Congress, "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International." It was this resolution which the young French comrades had objected to at the World Congress. I have never been able to make head or tail of the French objections.

Catherine Samary, a young leader of the French Communist League, presented their view on the resolution.

Caroline's report centered on the transitional method that underlay the resolution, which projected a program of democratic and transitional demands for the student radicalization, designed to tie student struggles into those being waged by working people and other sections of society and lead them in an anticapitalist direction.

Larry Seigle, YSA National Chairman, reported on the American political situation; National Field Secretary Tony Thomas reported on the Black struggle; and National Secretary Susan Lamont reported on the antiwar movement. Nelson Blackstock, the National Organization Secretary, projected the YSA's organizational tasks.

There was also a workshop on women's liberation.

A feature of the convention was the tribute paid to surviving participants of the great 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike at a public rally after the end of the convention. The main city newspaper, the *Minneapolis Tribune*, reported "old militants met young militants at the University of Minnesota Saturday night, and there was no generation gap."[8]

One result of the convention was that Randy Furst, a young writer for the *Guardian* newspaper, which at that point was attempting to orient to the fragments of SDS, joined the YSA. Sixty other youth did likewise**.**

A session of the convention open to the press was covered by NBC and CBS television, as well as local TV and newspapers. This session concerned stepped-up attacks by extreme rightists against the YSA and SWP in Chicago. The report was

given by YSA National Committee member Lee Smith. A group calling itself the Legion of Justice attacked the YSA and SWP Chicago headquarters on November 1.

On December 6, Legion thugs broke into an apartment and attempted to beat up six YSAers. When they were repulsed, they gassed the YSAers, who had to be taken to the hospital. On December 10, Richard Hill, the SWP organizer, received a death threat from the group. The police appeared to be cooperating with the Legion. They did nothing to apprehend the fascist-minded thugs. Laura Miller, a YSA member who was gassed, reported that a cop who was questioning her about the attack asked if Fred Hampton was in the apartment. Hampton was the Black Panther Party leader who was gunned down as he slept by the Chicago police two days before the attack on the apartment. The cop's question to Miller was a clear threat. In the following months, the Legion also attacked other groups in the city.

Not all YSA members were able to go to the YSA convention. In Los Angeles, a New Years Eve party sponsored by the SWP and YSA to celebrate the eleventh anniversary of the Cuban revolution was firebombed by Cuban counterrevolutionaries.

Our response to all such attacks on ourselves or others in the movement was to build as broad a public counter-mobilization as possible.