

NEW LEFT NOTES

SDS · 1608 W · MADISON · CHICAGO · ILL.

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE

JANUARY 8, 1968

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

Successes & Failures of the NC

Mike Spiegel, National Secretary

Unfortunately, the December National Council missed a golden opportunity to engage in a meaningful debate on the political development of SDS in relation to its organizational responsibilities. The Sunday afternoon plenary session on the four proposals for a Spring Program failed to develop substantive political arguments about the real issues and left everyone frustrated, no one particularly enlightened about the real issues.

There were many reasons why that debate did not materialize. In the first place, the original Davidson-Calvert article (NLN, Dec. 11, "Ten Days to Shake the Empire") on national program failed to deal with either the question of the analytical background or the programmatic details of the proposal. The article was concerned mainly with the question of SDS as a national organization faced with national political responsibilities

necessitating national organizational response. The major defect of this approach is that it is comprehensible only to that minority of SDS members who work at the national level and are in daily contact with the national demands. Those demands and the resultant perspective are alien to the political experience of the majority of members working at the chapter level.

It was this dichotomy between national and chapter perspective which produced

the mistrust and charges of manipulation which ran rampant through NC discussions. Chapter delegates saw the Spring Program proposal as an attempt by the National Interim Committee and the National Office staff to shove a program down the throats of the membership in order to reinforce their position in the organization. National officers and staff responded with bitter defensiveness at what they considered to be the narrow perspective of the delegates. This quarterly meeting, which should be an opportunity for the SDS organizers working at a variety of levels in the country to show their concerns and their perspectives, only broke through to common concerns intermittently and unsatisfactorily. National leadership failed to get their viewpoint across while chapter delegates remained uncertain about the motivation of their officers and service staff.

This problem is not new to SDS. But, it has appeared in a new form. In the past, there was a real division between a national leadership with liberal politics and a membership with little sense of politics but with deeply radical sensitivities. Now there is a broad consensus on the radical perspective at all levels in the organization. What exists is a new contradiction between people of the same sensitivities: that contradiction concerns the nature of political work, the role of a political organization, and the role of political leadership.

This new contradiction is the outgrowth of our history as a left movement. The New Left developed and named itself in conscious opposition to the bankruptcy of existing left leadership in the United States. In a primitive and often naive instinctual fashion, young Americans rejected the Old Left which had revealed its inability to relate to a freedom struggle either by reverting to reformist, manipulative political work, or to a sectarian dogmatism which reduced revolutionary thought to a mechanistic repetition of empty phrases about "the revolutionary potential of the working class." The "new leftists" were politically naive, but they were deeply convinced that what they felt was infinitely more radical and potentially more revolutionary than any of the hollow leftist dogmatism which surrounded them.

Among the discoveries of the New Left were two of prime importance. First, that "talking to people about their own powerlessness", about the decisions (the power) affecting their lives, created a new political spark. Secondly, that practically everything which people were really concerned about, was really political—everything from women's dorm hours and sex to the corporate connections of Protestant churches and Democratic party hacks. Furthermore that people's powerlessness and their real concerns were the basis for a truly radical politics. These discoveries are essential to understanding the New Left—they are also the key to its contradictions.

Heady with its discovery that "revolution was about people's lives," SDS launched its energies towards a localism and immediateism which obscured the real force of its understanding. Just because the real issue is the transformation of people's lives, the revolution in human potentiality, SDS tended to forget that 1) the individual perspective must lead to a national political movement, and 2) that the political struggle in which we are engaged in revolutionizing people is a struggle against an enemy which wields real power and which will defend itself against threat by whatever means necessary to maintain its power.

Unfortunately, the educational conference and the NC failed to debate these very real problems. Talk about national perspectives for SDS and the student movement rarely rose above the level of rumors and accusation about the supposed manipulation of the National Office. Talk of repression and defense produced the usual reactions about terrorism and the underground without ever provoking a serious discussion about how

NC Sets Direction For Spring

Naomi Jaffe, New School SDS
John Fuerst, Wisconsin Region SDS
Bob Gottlieb, New York Region SDS

(A) A national program should provide a broad political framework which responds to the felt needs of chapters for political coherence and strategic direction. Within this framework, chapters develop tactics based on analysis of their own specific situation and in response to their own local needs.

(B) Chapters feel the need to break out of political isolation, to make our politics understandable and relevant to other students and non-students. To do this, we have to organize around their needs and interests, but to select those issues which make it clear that those needs and interests are part of a broad radical struggle.

(C) Thus student issues should be raised in a way which shows that the firm of our education in the university is related to its function of channeling manpower into the corporate structure of society. Education over which we have no control prepares us for jobs over which we have no control.

(D) We don't attack dorm rules simply in order to relate to students, but we attack them as a form of socialization of women into subordinate roles in society.

(E) We don't attack Dow simply because it recruits on campus, but we use Dow to expose the university's function as a training ground for the repressive institutions of American society. We don't attack university complicity with the war, but the university as an integral part of the corporate structure which necessitates and wages imperialist wars.

(F) The same strategy applies to the formation of links with non students: We should choose issues which demonstrate the links between immediate needs and anti-imperialism. Specific ways in which people are being fucked by the war, such as the draft and urban deterioration are obvious opportunities in radical action,

(G) In forming links with non-students, a further criterion is to choose issues which establish organic connections between students and other groups—issues which identify a common source of oppression.

(H) At Columbia, the university is using a public part in a ghetto area to build a huge gymnasium. In Chicago, the university profited from urban renewal which destroyed the housing of graduate students and black ghetto residents. In Boston and New York students and other subway riders pay high fares, and transit workers are payed low wages, while banks and large bondholders reap tax-free profits from the public transit systems.

(I) Leafletting at factory gates is the sort of mechanical approach we should avoid. It produces no real contact. Popular fronts based on narrowly defined economic issues force us to hide our politics instead of sharing them.

(J) Universities are factories producing technical, professional, and service workers. We can relate to these workers on issues coming from their powerlessness and alienation. We can reach them because we are being trained to become them.

(K) The draft cuts through the fragmentation that divides students from non-students. The privileged status implied by the student deferment is being eroded by the new draft law. The military and university are parallel institutions. Whether the 2-S forces students to remain in school and become technicians or the draft forces them to become soldiers, both coerce individuals into the roles required to maintain a repressive system.

(L) Local issues should be explicitly related to a radical context. A nationally linked program can and should reinforce and make visible the anti-imperialist content of local struggles and act as a catalyst in areas and groups otherwise beyond our reach.

(M) The links we want to build are those which really unite fragmented

groups because we experience similar problems and similar sources of oppression. These links have to be developed organically, not mechanically or on paper or in rhetoric about the 'working class' but in terms of our politics and chapter programs.

IMPLEMENTATION:

1) A period of action would extend over a ten-day period in April to allow chapters to carry out a schedule of educational programs, joint actions and demonstrations aimed at a variety of institutions related to the issues that have given urgency to the question of a national program. The specific choice of date can include different spans of ten days in April which each region can decide in terms of their own needs.

2) Local and regional chapters should choose actions for the national program that come out of their own needs.

3) Chapters should begin to plan their work, their strategy, for the coming semester as soon as possible and submit requests to the NO for materials needed, travellers desired, and other assistance required to implement their local programs.

4) The NO will make as one of its major priorities in the coming months the production of materials on a series of topics relevant to the work of local chapters. The pamphlets should be short and analytic and suited for use in a wide variety of situations. (Examples of topics are imperialism, draft, racism, university and manpower channeling, electoral politics.)

AMENDMENTS

That the analysis section of the Wilkerson proposal on spring program be adopted as a preamble to the resolution.

FAILED

Paragraph (D): by Leonard Siegel—"repression of women" replaces "social-

continued on page 2

continued on page 3

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Women's liberation lies in building the anti-imperialist movement in this country. No social change can succeed without organizing women politically. Organization around the oppression of women should not be a separatist movement, but should parallel the political issues being dealt with in SDS chapters.

High School Organizing Resolution

submitted by High School Workshop

The National Council of SDS resolves: That there be literature relevant to the high school struggle. This will be written and printed in the next month. (Jan., 1968)

That regional centers of distribution and organization be created in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. Because the central office should be located where there is an active movement and personnel and because Los Angeles is such a place, that the temporary central office be located in L.A.

That a newsletter be written informing organizers and students of activities and contacts across the nation. The newsletter will be coordinated out of the central office.

That the National Office of SDS relieve Bruce Pohlman of his duties as Rayte Clerk and continue to pay him \$20 a week as the Chicago and Midwest coordinator.

That Judy Berezin, Beth Reisin, and Jeff Jones take the responsibility for setting up the East Coast coordination in New York.

That Jim Fite be designated as West coast coordinator working out of the central office of Los Angeles. That Bill Watson and Jeff Segal work in the Bay Area.

That because the high school program is relatively undeveloped we reject national programs but encourage coordinated action on a local level.

That the central office, until the next national council, be partially funded from the national body of SDS and through the national office. This funding will include \$75 a month for organizers in New York and LA and one hundred dollars for production of literature. The literature will include a high school organizer's handbook, an analysis of high school problems and suggested actions, an explanation of SDS, and a simple history and fact pamphlet about Vietnam and the draft.

That a representative from the high school organizing program be given one non-voting seat on the National Interim Committee.

AMENDMENTS:

Resolved that SDS regional areas shall determine any kind of high school coordination to be carried out in their area, including the persons to do such work. RESOLUTION PASSED; AMENDMENT FAILED

51% of the population of this country are women, and they are channeled into acquiescent, unproductive, uncreative roles as housewives. They are channeled into secondary roles as teachers, secretaries and nurses. Most women are economically dependent on men and are taught to fulfill themselves vicariously through the men with whom they have relationships.

Women have the main responsibility in organizing a political program for their liberation and taking the initiative to discourage male supremacism in interpersonal relationships with both men and women.

Therefore we submit the following proposals as projects for local SDS chapters:

1. The largest "recruitment" for jobs on most campuses is through the Education Department, which perpetuates a reactionary elementary and secondary educational system, and Home Economics, both of which function to keep women in their place. We should organize in these departments.

2. When organizing, women talk mainly to men. Therefore, women organizers should make an effort to build a base among women.

3. Inter-chapter female discussion groups should be set up to deal with imperialism, the draft, etc., to overcome the fear women have of participating intellectually at meetings.

4. We propose that on campuses women's caucuses within chapters organize women around a radical perspective and involvement on their lives and the war.

5. Discriminatory social conditions on campuses, such as housing and dress regulations, should be dealt with.

6. Research topics: How women's roles benefit the ruling class, and How do women achieve liberation in socialist countries?

7. SDS women who are not in school should attempt to organize in their communities. PASSED

CHILD CARE AT NEXT N.C.

The situation often exists where women are unable to attend the national SDS meetings because the responsibility for the care of children is not shared equally with the men—more often than not the woman is forced to stay home with the children.

We feel that the organizers of NC's and Conventions should be responsible for providing a child care center so that families with children can attend. This would probably mean a house with people to take care of the children, where children and parents would possibly sleep together at night...Volunteers to care for the children should be both men and women.

PASSED

OUR GENERATION

the largest new left quarterly in North America

analysis on: the student power movement, the anti-war movement, the nature of the new radicalism, organizing the underclass, the Quebec independence movement, and other subjects...

subscription: \$5 (4 issues)
sample copy: \$1.50

from: OUR GENERATION
3837 St. Laurent
Montreal 18, Quebec, CANADA

JOIN People Form NCU; Gain SDS Support

We, as people from the white working class believe the course taken by SDS and the radical movement is no longer relevant to what we consider to be our role in the movement and announce our intention of establishing a separate and distinct organization which will carry out what we believe are our objectives and the objectives of the working class in America.

The goal of the newly established National Community Union is to create multi-issue programs with which people from the white working class can really identify. It is our belief that until the radical movement creates such programs the goals of the movement as a whole cannot be realized.

Therefore, given these facts, we demand that this SDS body, by show of hands, resolve:

1) SDS gives fraternal support to the programs of the National Community Union.
2) SDS creates a seat on the National Interim Committee for one representative from the National Community Union.

3) SDS will provide space in the Radical Education Center which will be used by the National Community Union.

4) SDS supports the National Community Union financially for at least one year in the following manner:

a) By printing the NCU newsletter and informational material free

b) By providing stationery and mailing expenses free

c) By making available to the National Community Union the SDS membership list, chapter contact list, and contributors list.

5) SDS eradicates all past printing debts incurred by Local #1 (JOIN Community Union).

AMENDMENTS

2) That the NCU be given a seat ex-officio—without vote—on the NIC. by Marc Steiner. PASSED

4) (to a. and b.) That the NCU submit a budget to the NIC for its financial requests for one year for all items mentioned in the resolution. by Jody Bateman. FAILED

That the NC authorize a contribution to the NCU up to \$1000 for one year. by Neil Buckley (\$1500) as amended by Eric Mann (\$1000). PASSED AS AMENDED

4) (c) Withdrawn by the makers of the resolution.

RESOLUTION PASSED AS AMENDED

NEW CHAPTERS

- Albright College, Ripon, Pa.
- Bowling Green State, Bowling Green, Ohio
- Chico State College, Chico, Calif.
- Detroit-At-Large, Detroit, Mich.
- Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Ill.
- Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa.
- Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.
- Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa
- Hank Williams Chapter, Chicago, Ill.
- University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.
- Millard Fillmore Memorial, N.Y. Regional Office, N.Y.C.
- Ripon College, Ripon, Wisc.
- Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas
- Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y.
- Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.
- Whitman College, Walla Walla, Wash.
- Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas
- Alice's Restaurant Marxist-Leninist, Los Angeles Regional Office

Spring Program

continued from page 1

ization of women". FAILED
Paragraph (I): by Anne O'Brien—to delete the paragraph. PASSED

by Allen Young—to add new paragraph (I) reading: "Leafletting at factory gates, if it is a mechanical approach, should be avoided. It produces no real contact. Popular fronts based on narrowly defined economic issues force us to hide our politics instead of sharing them." FAILED
Paragraph (J): by Anne O'Brien—to delete the paragraph. FAILED

by Earl Silbar—to substitute the paragraph: "The main goal of Imperialist education is to train students to run and service oppressive institutions; to keep them separated from the most oppressed and exploited people. We must organize professional and service workers to the common struggle against the common enemy—the Imperialist ruling class. FAILED

Additional paragraph to be inserted after Paragraph (L): by Anne Hawks—"The programs against the military-industrial complex should be relevant by bringing real pressure from the community to complement the actions on campus, which are self-satisfactory, but politically ineffective if they are isolated from the community and the working class." PASSED

1) by Al Silverstone—The 10 days in April should be specific and nationwide. The National Office should choose the

10 days after extensive chapter consultation and a chapter mail referendum. PASSED

by Mike Spiegel—The date shall be from April 20 to April 30. PASSED

Paragraph to be added after 2): Mike Kazin—To prepare for these Spring struggles we should use the months leading up to the designated 10-day period to broaden our base and influence among students. We should turn the classrooms into forums to debate the universities' complicity with the war, and we should participate and raise anti-imperialist ideas within student struggles on other issues in order to win over those not yet committed to opposition to the Vietnam war." (paragraph adopted from Levin proposal on spring program) PASSED

by Jared Israel—During this 3-month period, conferences will be held in the regions to consider and plan actions during the 10 days. Proposals from the regions should be published in New Left Notes. PASSED

by Ted Gold—One of the major priorities should be the previously considered Draft Resistance program. PASSED

by Mike Spiegel—that the NIC shall choose the name for the 10 days. PASSED

by Eric Mann—that the program passed be supplemented with specific programmatic articles in New Left Notes. PASSED

RESOLUTION PASSED AS AMENDED

new left notes

Published weekly by Students for a Democratic Society, 1608 W. Madison Street, Chicago, Ill., 60612, except July and August when publication is bi-weekly. Phone 312/666-3874. Second class postage paid at Chicago, Ill. Subscriptions: \$1 per year for members, \$10 a year for non-members. Signed articles are the responsibility of the writer. Unsigned articles are the responsibility of the editors, Carol Neiman and Lyn Kempf.

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Carl Davidson, Inter-organizational secretary; Robert Pardun, Internal Education secretary; Mike Spiegel, National secretary.
National Office: 1608 W. Madison St., Rm 206, Chicago, Ill. 60612 (312/666-3874)
New York City: 41 Union Square West, Rm 436, NYC, NY 10003 (212/675-2626)
Niagara Regional Coordinating Comm.: 1504 E. Genesee St., Syracuse, N.Y. 13210
Southern California: PO Box 85396, Los Angeles, Calif. 90072
New England: 102 Columbia St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139
Washington, D.C.: 1779 Lanier Pl., N.W.

National Secretary's Report

continued from page 1

we should respond politically to the problem of repressive state power.

Most disappointing of all was the failure of the debate on the Spring Program to deal with the real proposals. Four proposals were presented: the Fuerst-Gottlieb-Jaffe proposal which finally passed, the Progressive Labor Party proposal on "Broadening Our Base," the Wilkerson-Halliwell proposal on organizational priorities, and the Hamilton proposal on the student strike.

REPRESSION

The SDS National Council recognizes that the most important way in which we can fight repression is to develop a strong constituency and a broad base.

The SDS National Council mandates the NO and the NIC to:

1. develop and distribute materials on repression and defense to the chapters for internal education;
 2. attempt to increase communication and coordination with and support for other movement groups which are under attack;
 3. coordinate legal problems of the organization: i.e. work with the Lawyer's Guild, ACLU, and other legal organizations to compile a list of lawyers who will handle political cases, send those to chapters and regional people to check them out, and develop a file on lawyers and what kinds of cases they will take. (Point 3 amended by Jane Adams.)
- RESOLUTION PASSED AS AMENDED

Rap Brown Gets SDS Support

Explanation: H. Rap Brown has been confined to the Southern District of New York (Manhattan) since August. He is presently under indictment and according to the terms of the bail bond is forced to stay in the immediate area of his attorney's office.

The law which Rap is charged with violating is clearly unconstitutional, and the power structure is fully aware of this. What they are concerned with is keeping him from speaking and organizing. Ultimately this law will be thrown out—but the litigation may take years—and in the meantime Rap has been immobilized. What this amounts to is a case of preventive arrest.

SNCC and its attorneys (Kunstler and Kinoy) are moving to get the travel restrictions lifted and have asked for help. Soon they will file a "citizens petition" with the Supreme Court. The petitioners will be individuals and groups who feel that their rights, as well as Rap's, are at stake. We are being asked to join in this petition.

Movement groups are also being asked to help in another way—that is by inviting Rap to speak. Telegrams should be sent to: H. Rap Brown, c/o SNCC, Room 803, 100 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.. A large number of invitations will help the lawyers to show that there is a widespread concern about this issue—that many people feel that Rap has a right to speak—and that they have a right to hear him.

This legal effort may or may not succeed. Its chances of success are good if many people become involved.

Resolution:

1. The SDS National Council mandates the national officers to make the organizations a party to the citizens petition to end the restrictions on Rap Brown's travel.

2. The SDS National Council recommends that individual chapters invite Rap Brown to speak on their campuses and that chapters join in the petition. Submitted by: Cathy Archibald, Bernadine Dohrn, Sue Eanet, Sharie Fite, Barbara Flynn

Amendment:

That the SDS NC go on record as supporting the right of Rap Brown to bear arms.

RESOLUTION PASSED AS AMENDED

The real debate should have occurred between the Fuerst-Gottlieb-Jaffe and the Wilkerson-Halliwell proposals. The first presented a political analysis of the nature of our organizing within the multi-versity and guidelines about future actions. The second discussed the larger questions of the direction of the student movement and what role and response is appropriate for SDS as a national organization vis-a-vis that movement.

Instead of pursuing this debate, which would have offered an opportunity for those operating at the national, regional, and chapter levels to share experiences and perspectives, the debate took place between the PLP proposal and the Fuerst-Gottlieb-Jaffe resolution. PLP immediately withdrew its proposal, thus eliminating the possibility for an in-depth discussion of the political differences between their perspective and an important sector of SDS thinking.

There were two additional factors which prevented a coherent debate on SDS' role in the national student movement. First, was the set of demands surrounding the creation of the National Community Union (NCU) with its very important program for poor-white and white-working-class organizing. Second was the set of resolutions surrounding the particular concerns of the Southern Caucus. Both of these proposals demanded serious attention: neither were debated on political grounds. Distrust and defensiveness, rather than an honest effort to understand the specific problems faced by various sectors of the movement, characterized these discussions. * * * * *

Not all was bleakness and despair, despite very real problems of communication. After the smoke had cleared, SDS had passed a major national anti-war action for the Spring, had dealt with repression and defense and a new anti-draft program, had defined a new political alliance with the National Community Union, and had decided for the first time in its history to participate actively in the anti-war coalition represented by the National Mobilization Committee. In addition, its National Office staff and National Officers had made a serious if sometimes bungled effort to meet the demands of collective leadership by presenting a set of priorities for the organization. On the balance sheet, that makes for one of the most important National Council meetings in the history of the organization.

Hopefully, the frustrations of the gathering will not inhibit the further development of the political debates which did not occur at Bloomington and which should be pursued in the pages of New Left Notes.

SUMMER ORGANIZING

SDS recognizes that only a broad-based movement can get the U.S. out of Vietnam and defeat U.S. imperialism. As (1) a continuation of our efforts to broaden our base among students and to develop ties with working people, and (2) as a concrete alternative for students to the liberal imperialist attempt (McCarthy, et al) to co-opt and mislead the growing anti-war sentiment in the country, SDS proposes a national summer program.

The general strategic direction of this program is to win people to an anti-imperialist perspective and to involve them in projects which develop ties between students and working people. This would be a continuation of our spring program and would be undertaken with a long-range outlook.

The program includes the following specific projects and recommendations:

- (1) SDS should recruit students to work with the National Community Union (JOIN) as well as establish other projects, e.g. uniting workers and students to fight for fare increases on public transit (N.Y. and Boston) and fighting university encroachment on working class neighborhoods;
- (2) SDS should encourage students to get summer jobs in factories (work-in) with the aim of gaining experience in building personal and political ties with workers. SDS should also support strikes, rank and file insurgencies, and unionizing efforts among workers; and,

NEWS COLLECTION

The task of compiling the experiences of local chapters into a realistic and coherent view of the state of the movement requires a steady flow of basic, mundane facts about local activities into a central location. As the movement expands and broadens, this task will become increasingly important. It will also become more difficult unless each chapter places a high priority on news generation and unless a systematic method of collecting that news is established.

The national news organ of SDS, New Left Notes, must be regarded not only as a newspaper but also as a depository for facts about local activities. These facts will then be available for collation into articles by the New Left Notes staff and, in the long range, into movement research papers.

Resolved:

1. That each chapter be requested to submit to New Left Notes at least one article each month, dealing with the most significant activities in the chapter, campus or community;

Coalitions, Convention Demonstration & Youth Festival

The anti-war movement has grown in scope as well as in depth over the past year and a half. Dissatisfaction with the war now includes elements from all classes, races, and social groups. The most radical elements within the anti-war movement have adopted the rhetoric of resistance and have indicated their willingness to support young people in militant acts of resistance.

Given the collapse of left liberal groups such as SANE and NCNP, SDS recognizes the importance of entering coalitions which will provide comprehensive support and increased militance within the anti-war movement. However, in the context of a national electoral campaign, it is also aware of the danger of co-optation by liberal elements within the anti-war movement. It recognizes that many left liberal organizations are designed to play the same role that McCarthy has admitted is his own—to channel dissent that is potentially radical into Democratic Party confines.

Given these considerations, the Winter 1967 NC suggests the following procedure:

1. a) That a member of the NIC be

2. That supplementary material from the chapter newsletter or local press be included if possible;

3. That all but the shortest articles be accompanied by a short abstract or summary;

4. That references to previous articles, published or unpublished, be included where relevant;

5. That chapters be encouraged also to submit the articles to the national movement press such as THEMOMENT, national GUARDIAN, LIBERATION NEWS SERVICE, and regional SDS newsletters;

6. That the New Left Notes staff file the articles and abstracts by subject and make these files available to individuals engaged in movement research;

7. That the substance of this resolution be printed in New Left Notes and that the staff at New Left Notes be requested to report to the next National Council on the extent of chapter compliance with this resolution. PASSED

mandated to attend the meetings of the National Mobilization Committee or whatever coalition is ultimately responsible for the call to demonstration at the Democratic Party National Convention;

b) That the person report to each NIC meeting;

c) That he should be held accountable to the instructions of the NIC on questions relating to the coalition and its implications for local projects;

d) That he/she report once a month through NLN on the status of the coalition and its implications for local projects;

e) That a further evaluation take place at the Spring NC and at the Summer Convention.

2. a) That SDS send a delegate to the preliminary meeting on a Youth Festival planned for the week immediately preceding the Democratic Convention in or around Chicago;

b) That the same conditions be applied to that representative as apply to the Convention representative.

3. That SDS suggest through NLN and regional and local meetings planning community based work for the Summer that the plans for the Convention and the Youth Festival be considered in their project preparation and be included in same if ratified by the Convention or the Summer NC.

Democratic Convention and Youth Festival Workshop

RESOLUTION PASSED

The anti-draft resolution, Southern Caucus resolution and position paper, and more details from the NC at Bloomington will appear in next week's New Left Notes. NLN encourages the membership to respond to the resolutions passed with articles and letters.

AMENDMENT

"....and that each chapter seriously consider this program for use for the summer, of finding out where each person on our campus who is radically oriented will spend the summer, and getting names of persons in the community whom they can work with. Unless we take this structural strategy, our summer program will again run far below what it should to really bring about a revolution. PASSED

RESOLUTION PASSED AS AMENDED

A review of «Bonnie & Clyde»

Murdered in Louisiana

A review of Bonnie and Clyde, a film starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway; screenplay by David Newman and Robert Benton; music by Robert Strouse; banjo sequences by Earl Scruggs; produced by Warren Beatty; directed by Arthur Penn.

by Neil Buckley

Jerry Long published a review of this film in the September 9 National Guardian based on the proposition that "the violation of property rights is what Bonnie and Clyde is all about." Long is definitely on to something, but gives Hollywood more ideological credit than it deserves. I doubt if director Penn and star-producer Beatty intended the film to be quite as revolutionary as it finally becomes for us. This is often the case when Hollywood liberals—among whom Beatty and Penn find themselves—attempt to bring off a film which has as its central assumption the liberal axiom that individuals stand above and beyond class in their struggle with society—no matter what form that struggle may take—they invariably produce a revolutionary film; antithesis speaks to us better than intent.

Plot in Bonnie and Clyde is quite simple. Yet its meanings for the viewer are complex, both personally and emotionally (which is to say, politically). Several levels of meaning work in the film; from their admixture and failure comes the revolutionary content of Bonnie and Clyde.

Bonnie Parker, the peroxide waitress in a West Dallas, Texas diner, is a contrivance for alienated American youth of the early '20's. She is a sensuous flapper who, in 1931 when the film begins (things got to Texas late), finds her only employment in bed with truck drivers whom she cannot stand. Her male counterpart, Clyde Barrow, a handsome ex-young con, is a contrivance for a non-literary American male who might have lit out for Paris after the First World War, had he not been too young then, or had he not been in jail when the time came to leave. Clyde's phallus is his gun, not a pen; this Smith and Wesson promise first brings Bonnie and Clyde together. Both born of poor families, both trapped in Texas in those first cold days of the Depression, both broke and "looking for suitable employment", Bonnie and Clyde begin a crude symbolic sexual fantasy-as-robber. This idyllic career of non-violent robbery at gunpoint continues until the hot Texas day a pursuing bank teller is repelled from the getaway car by a shot through a backseat window. This shot (with excellent cinematographic technique) blows the teller's face apart. That maidenhead broken, the pair, with their comitragic aide C. W. Moss (a third alienated youth picked up on the way), Clyde's brother Buck, and Buck's preacher's daughter wife, Blanche, metamorphose from bungling amateurs who try to rob a moniless bank to an effective and sophisticated band of professional bank robbers. They successfully evade capture by police, breaking out of several well-coordinated traps with an ease only professionals enjoy until finally, in Iowa, Buck has the top of his skull blown off and Blanche is wounded and captured (to finally tell the tale). Bonnie and Clyde are severely wounded, but, with the undaunted and still bungling C. W., they effect an escape to C. W.'s farm in Louisiana, where the film ends. Healed of their physical wounds, Bonnie and Clyde mutually surmount Clyde's impotence (which has dominated one level of the film from the time Clyde exposed his barrel on a barren Texas street) and consummate their love. The following day they are brutally murdered with machinegun fire by Texas Rangers in an ambush arranged by C. W.'s red-neck father, Malcolm.

One level of meaning is straight out of Hemingway, by way of Hollywood. This is Clyde's story alone (Bonnie does not, thankfully, approach the substantive horror of a Hemingway heroine.). Clyde has been psychologically wounded by his past much like Nick Adams or Jake Barnes

or Frederick Henry—Clyde's fictional contemporaries—or Hemingway himself. Clyde's impotence, like his fictional counterparts, is the physical manifestation of his psychological anguish. His wounds deepen or multiply as he passes from the childish innocence of the film's first scenes to the matured innocence of the later parts of the film. Not until Clyde sustains a severe physical wound can he begin to reconcile his past with his present condition or his physical ineptitude. Up to this point it's Hemingway all the way. Then Hollywood steps in with matters of script and sentimentalizes Clyde's possible recognition of his condition and transforms a potential classical tragedy to a frankly embarrassing charade of middle-class sentimental love.

Clyde is made "whole" by a poem Bonnie wrote about them and their exploits. After the poem (the title, "The Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde", gives it away) is printed in many Southwest newspapers, Clyde declares to Bonnie, who is stretched sensuously on a blanket: "You've made me somethin'....I was goin' to make you somethin' and now you've gone and made me somethin'." Tone establishes the sentimentality and middle-class assumptions; public fulfillment is necessary for Clyde to become Bonnie's lover. The potential tragedy created by the film's beginning and middle for the development of Bonnie and Clyde as human beings is never realized. They never recognize their true selves, their true conditions as slaves. They die knowing "they know who we are", not "we know who we are". Moreover, they die not knowing who they—the audience—are. Such a major dramatic, and for us, political, fault is pre-determined in Hollywood's genre. Its awkward presence in Bonnie and Clyde substantiates on internal evidence that Penn and Beatty couldn't have the lives of the hero and heroine change significantly. Such changes usually don't happen in America; they can't happen in the movies.

A second level of meaning forms around a typical Good Bad Guys versus Bad Good Guys theme. Bonnie and Clyde are not bankrobbers for the kicks involved in crime as a recent Time article on violence in the movies suggests; rather they are doing what they know best to make a living in the Depression. Further, these criminals (unlike their brethren who have flashed across many a screen) are, for all of their professional acumen, basically innocent and above all not evil. The cops, who come off the villains of the film, are cynical and inhumane in their actions, which is to say, not innocent and of necessity evil. In less violent times, an audience faced with this film and these defining propositions so clearly present and so obviously intended, would mouth irrelevancies about the tragedy of youth gone bad (and make an instant connection with crime in the streets, etc.), and go home grieved, but unchanged. In our time of struggle, every audience leaves the theatre visibly shaken.

Yet the effect on a normal audience is not revolutionary. If it is anything, it is reactionary. The assumption working on most normal, and I assume liberal (in its non-vulgar sense), viewers is: Bonnie and Clyde were somewhat justified in taking up crime; the police were cruel and unmerciful in the treatment tendered Bonnie and Clyde (the Warren Court would never stand for this police force); but—(the liberal kicker)—they did break the law, and had, however unjustly, been forced to accept the proper consequences for their actions. Still, the viewer leaves the film with a tingling sensation where the bullet holes might have been in his body had he too gone wrong—had he too violated property rights. His murder in Louisiana was once a possibility; yet he is not against property rights; he did not go wrong; he merely COULD have been a Bonnie or a Clyde. He's safe behind the system, and he knows it. He has seen the political equivalent to a horror movie and reacts the same way; Frankenstein slowly disappears from his

dreams and the assumed holes in his body heal.

Further, the film makes no mention of the ruling class itself. The police (prime source of evil) are the only despicable beings here. It is probably the case that bank presidents shake their heads over the sorrowful lot of the Barrow gang. The ruling class has always done that. In their ethic, they always should.

Yet Jerry Long is quite right: Bonnie and Clyde is about property rights; the deaths of the hero and heroine, Buck, and the cops, and the tellers, results from the necessity of property rights in America and the protection thereof. This theme makes the film revolutionary, if the theme is recognized. Take this proposition further. The viewer, as the protagonists, participates in the plot to the point of admission that unfreedom—alienation in its political form—is a paradigm necessity for American Civilization and Culture as Capitalism. Neither make the ethical connection between capitalism and unfreedom. Without that recognition, the viewer and the protagonist remain in ideological and personal flux. They are never able to say "I am!" as the free man must; they only come to the point where the utterance of "I could be" is a possibility. Bonnie and Clyde is revolutionary because we make it so.

The most important aspect of the film's content is not its submerged ideology but its deromantizing effect. To challenge capitalist property is not only to accept death, as Oglesby suggests in his book, but in a very real way almost to insure death. America the State has sufficient power, will, internal justification and internal organization to crush our movement violently when they so choose. That we have not suffered many deaths in our ranks is both surprising and encouraging. To suspect that this state of grace of liberal society will continue much longer is to be overly optimistic.

The fact which comes raging through the film is: we are not potential Bonnies and Clydes, we are Bonnies and Clydes, in the real things, challenging America in a real and fundamental way (which Bonnie and Clyde did not do—which makes us exceedingly dangerous).

In its essential element, Bonnie and Clyde is revolutionary because it defines

NEW LEFT NOTES
Room 206
1608 W. Madison
Chicago, Ill. 60612
RETURN REQUESTED

Second-class postage rates paid in Chicago, Illinois

Stuart Do wty
532 S. First Ave.
Ann Arbor Mich
4810 3

0

67

possible futures for us based on the reality of conditions under which we struggle. The film does not depict a revolutionary ideology nor a revolutionary situation. It does much more than that; it defines a revolutionary's lot. For me at least, recognition of that lot deepened my commitment. If I end up like Bonnie and Clyde—running, hiding, dead—I can never be free; I have in essence failed. The film reinforced the recognition that I had to be free to be human. To be free is to revolt; to revolt together is Revolution.

"One man is no man" Brecht wrote.

LIBERATION

THIS ISSUE FREE:	T
Dave Dellinger	H
Barbara Deming	E
George Dennison	A
Paul Goodman	M
Martin Jezer	E
Keith Lampe	R
Sidney Lens	I
Staughton Lynd	C
Walter Schneir	A
Arthur Waskow	N
John Wilson (SNCC)	R
David Zimmerman	E

The Pentagon and after... tactics and strategies for Resistance. This important issue is yours FREE with a one year (\$5) subscription to LIBERATION.

Your subscription will begin with our War Crimes Tribunal issue. Testimony by two N.L.F. women and three American soldiers that has been suppressed in the Establishment press.

Send your \$5 now to:
Liberation, 5 Beekman St.
New York, N.Y. 10038

REAC ELECTION RESULTS

Hank Williams Memorial Chapter
Don Bluestone
Tim McCarthy
Bruce Pohlman
Karin Ashley

NAC ELECTION RESULTS

Hank Williams Memorial Chapter
Clark Kissinger
Karen Gellen
John Rossen
Earl Silbar
Roosevelt Chapter
Carol Neiman