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THE NEW LEFT

MEMORANDUM

PREPARED FOR

THE SUBCOMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE
THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
INTERNAL SECURITY ACT AND OTHER
INTERNAL SECURITY LAWS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETIETH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION



OCTOBER 9, 1968

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344

only the black press and the African press be invited to all future SNCC press conferences (ibid., p. 15).

It was this kind of metamorphosis which transformed SNCC and CORE from civil rights organizations into revolutionary forces calling, not for the entrance of Negroes into society, but for the revolutionary reconstruction of the society.

It was this change which provided them with a common basis for union with other New Left organizations, which also sought the revolutionary transformation of society, one in which integration, as they saw it, would become a possibility. Until then, everything about the status quo had to be challenged, whether it was the selective service system or the war.

Perhaps the major fusion of the civil rights movement with the New Left was found, however, in the person of the late Martin Luther King.

The assassination of Dr. King in Memphis on April 4 of this year was an unspeakable tragedy, an affront to every civilized man. There is an ancient saying that one should say nothing critical about the dead. But a discussion of the developing relations between the New Left and civil rights movement is impossible without making note of the role played by Dr. King in these developments in the closing years of his career.

Martin Luther King, when he first emerged as leader of the civil rights movement, made a number of positive contributions for which he has rightly been honored. During this early period, among other things, he insisted on nonviolence and he avoided association with the extremists. Before his death, however, he had moved into an increasingly open alliance with the extremists and he had become increasingly fearless in his criticism of American foreign policy.

Speaking in New York on April 4, 1967, King called on "all who find the American course in Vietnam a dishonorable and unjust one" to apply as conscientious objectors to military service. He described the U.S. Government as the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." (National Guardian, Apr. 15, 1967, p. 13.)

Commenting on Dr. King's speech, Floyd McKissick, CORE leader, said that "Dr. King has come around and I'm glad to have him with us."

A challenge came from Whitney M. Young, executive director of the Urban League. He said that since Negroes "have as their first priority the immediate problem of survival in this country * * * the limited resources and personnel available to civil rights agencies for work in their behalf should not be diverted into other channels."

April 15 protest demonstrations in New York and San Francisco were organized under the leadership of Rev. James Bevel, chief assistant to King. At the New York meeting, King said that he hoped to raise \$700,000 to finance the work and that:

We view the Vietnam summer project as a major organized followup to last week's massive peace demonstration. It will offer a constructive channel for all those who ask, "What can I do?"

Dr. King said the civil rights movement had shown that—

Arrogant power can be made to yield to organized courage to the fight for peace.

On April 24, 1967, in Cambridge, Mass., Martin Luther King, of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, announced a "Vietnam summer drive" against the war and against U.S. interventions elsewhere. He said that the drive would include antidraft activities, sponsorship of peace candidates in local and State elections, and referendums in municipal elections asking for an end to the war. "We throughout the Nation who oppose the war must reach others who are concerned," Dr. King said. "It is time to move from demonstrations and university teach-ins to a nationwide community teach-out" (Washington Post, Apr. 24, 1967, p. 1).

Dr. King was joined at a news conference by pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock and Robert Scheer, editor of the radical Ramparts magazine. A pamphlet distributed at the conference stated the long-range aim of the organizing effort is the creation of a vocal, strong antiwar block by 1968. "We aim at more than changing a vote or two in Congress," the pamphlet said, "We seek to defeat Lyndon Johnson and his war."

A statement issued by Freedom House strongly criticized Martin Luther King for lending his "mantle of respectability" to an anti-Vietnam war coalition that includes well-known Communist allies and luminaries of the American left. The paper said that Dr. King had "emerged as the public spear carrier of a civil disobedience program that is demagogic and irresponsible in its attacks on our government." Joining in this statement was Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP and a member of the board of directors of Freedom House (New York Times, May 21, 1967).

In an advertisement in the New York Times a call for "Vietnam Summer 1967" was made under the names of Dr. Martin Luther King, Dr. Benjamin Spock, Robert Scheer, Dr. John C. Bennett, Carey McWilliams, and a number of others. The statement noted that—

Vietnam Summer is a call for 10,000 volunteers, including 2,000 full-time workers, to spend the summer in 500 communities organizing and educating against the war. . . . Vietnam Summer is a project to reach the millions of citizens in communities across the Nation who oppose the war in Vietnam but whose voices have not yet been heard (the New York Times, Apr. 30, 1967, p. 4-B).

The goal of this project was to create "a new, independent force in America which will undertake a broad range of concrete actions to end the war." The group proposed to stimulate antiwar feeling among young people and to encourage them in their refusal to join the Army or fight in the war.

The antidraft aspect of the New Left has been adopted by many within the civil rights movement. On May 1, 1967, Cleveland L. Sellers, Jr., one of the three major officers of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, refused to be inducted into the Army. The 22-year-old Negro called the Vietnamese war a "racist conflict" and joined with Stokely Carmichael, then student committee chairman, in accusing the United States of drafting large numbers of Negroes as part of a plan to commit "calculated genocide." At the same time, Carmichael announced that 15 other student committee workers had refused induction within the previous 3 months as part of the organization's campaign against the war in Vietnam (New York Times, May 2, 1967, p. 11).

In an interview, the Reverend James Bevel, assistant to Dr. Martin Luther King, and head of the April 15 antiwar march in New York and San Francisco, was asked how he would "implement" antidraft sympathies. "You don't need a whole lot of complicated plans," Bevel said. "When Mr. Johnson comes around to get you, you just say: 'I won't go.'" He expressed the view that—

Mr. Johnson is not going to stop, but we won't stop either. We're going to organize students by the thousands to go to jail by the thousands. . . . We're going to have a radical summer. We're going to say to young people, you must get out of the school and into the streets. . . . Close down New York City. . . . Tell Mr. Johnson plain that he is going to have to stop killing the folks in Vietnam (the Washington Post, Apr. 29, 1967, p. C-4).

An antidraft organization was established at predominantly Negro Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga. Seventy-eight students signed a petition which declared "We cannot conscientiously permit ourselves to be used as objects in war." Henry Bass, a spokesman for the Atlanta Committee to End the War in Vietnam, said that—

the Morehouse guys are pledged to seek legal classification as CO's; that is, they are pledged not merely to opt out by going to Canada, staying in graduate school, fathering children, etc., but actually to combat the draft (National Guardian, Apr. 29, 1967, p. 3).

Despite all of this activity within the civil rights movement, there has also been a strong reaction against it by traditional advocates of civil rights and by many Negro leaders.

Speaking at Howard University in Washington, D.C., Richmond M. Flowers, Alabama's former attorney general and a racial moderate, charged that Stokely Carmichael had betrayed Negro interests and that Martin Luther King, Jr., was wrong to oppose the war in Vietnam. He called Carmichael's draft card burning exhortations "almost treasonous" and compared Carmichael with former Alabama Governor George Wallace and suggested that the two men run on the same ticket for President and Vice President.

I do see a very close parallel with such a leader defying a draft notice and the Governor of a State standing in a schoolhouse door in defiance of a Federal court order that admits a qualified citizen of that State to the State university and attempts to exclude her for the sole reason that she is a Negro.

He said:

Defiance is defiance, whether you are defying a draft notice or a Federal court order (Washington Post, May 3, 1967, p. A-9).

Flowers noted that "black power, defiance, and black supremacy are just as immoral and illegal as white power, defiance, and white supremacy." Turning to Dr. King, he said that there is no connection between the civil rights movement and the war in Vietnam:

I fear that certain leaders have taken this attitude in order to keep themselves in the news rather than spending their energies to improve the Negro's position in this Nation. . . .

Dr. Ralph Bunche, a member of the NAACP's board of directors and longtime Negro leader, said that—

In my view, Dr. King should positively and publicly give up one role or the other. The two efforts have little in common (New York Times, Apr. 19, 1967, p. 21).

At the antiwar meeting in New York on April 15, Dr. King found himself doing what he once said he would not do. He appeared on the

Speaking in New York, Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, said he thought Dr. King was sincere in making the prediction, "But I think it's dangerous * * *". He said that "less disciplined persons" might interpret such warnings as encouragement to riot (New York Times, Apr. 21, 1967).

The leader of a group of West Side Negro ministers in Chicago declared that Dr. Martin Luther King should "get the hell out of here" because his civil rights marching in Chicago last summer "created hate."

The Reverend Henry Mitchell said that—

If he wants to march on the West Side, let him march with rakes, brooms, and grass seeds.

He noted that the ministers represented the sentiments of 50,000 Chicago Negroes who want "peace, love, and harmony," don't approve of civil rights marches, and "just want to live in their communities and upgrade them." (Chicago Tribune, Apr. 20, 1967).

Scores of Howard University students chanted "Burn, baby, burn" as an effigy of Selective Service Director Lewis B. Hershey was set afire during a campus rally on April 19, 1967. The burning was spontaneous, following hangings of effigies of Hershey, University President James M. Nabrit, Jr., and Dean Frank Snowden of Howard's College of Liberal Arts. After the hangings and a round of speeches denouncing Nabrit and Snowden as "Uncle Toms," someone in the crowd of more than 400 students yelled, "Burn that white maffinhead." Other students quickly took up the cry, shouting "burn him" and "Naplan him." (Washington Post, Apr. 20, 1967.)

Before the hangings most of the crowd jammed into a hallway in a campus building where a number of students were facing disciplinary charges for forcing General Hershey to cancel a speech at Howard on March 21. Outside the building Ronald O. Ross, cochairman of the Project Awareness student committee that had invited Hershey to speak, said:

I'm sorry I invited him. I don't want him to speak. He's a white man (ibid.).

Referring to university charges that the students "disrupted the * * * orderly operation of the school," Ross continued:

With this rope we're going to disrupt it some more. We don't intend to be responsible. We intend to be black * * * He [Nabrit] is reading Homer and shooting this university to pot. I say we don't have time for Homer. First let's get rid of every Uncle Tom around here (ibid.).

A cache of arms, ranging from a slingshot to a sawed-off rifle, was uncovered by police in a raid on a Harlem theater noted for its production of plays with antiwhite themes. A police inspector said the raiding party also found a rifle practice range in the basement of the Black Arts Repertory Theater. Officers arrested six men, including one who was armed and tried to block detectives at the door. Police said they found a sign inside the theater which read:

All weapons cleaned and sharpened by 6 p.m. All weapons will be inspected by Khan, the Leader.

The theater is the same one founded by bitterly antiwhite playwright LeRoi Jones with partial support from antipoverity funds (Washington Post, Mar. 18, 1966).

against things as they are, regardless of whether the things be detrimental or beneficial.

It is for this reason, too, that violence becomes a tactic which in the eyes of the Negro New Left, is wholly permissible. It is, after all, the established order of doing things to call for rational discourse, debate, and a democratic and peaceful settlement of disputes. If the New Left-civil rights coalition disputes the establishment in all areas, it also disputes the establishment with regard to violence.

It is important that the majority of Americans recognize the fact that these revolutionary views are held by only a small minority of Negroes. Yet, like the non-Negro New Left, it is a militant, vocal and active minority and it makes its presence felt out of all proportion to its numerical strength. Racism in reverse may be an understandable reaction to many years of discrimination and suffering, but it is the kind of reaction which will prevent real progress in the very important area of race relations.

Martin Luther King's brief membership in this coalition, that he had become willing to appear on the same platform and program with the black power advocates he shunned only a short time before, indicates that his own views had changed significantly. The fact that Negro opinion has been sharply divided over the new affiliation of portions of the civil rights movement with the antiwar movement was pointed out in a recent study of the effect of the war in Vietnam upon American life:

The peculiar conflict in Negro sentiment emerged strikingly, too, in a measurement of current attitudes toward Nobel laureate Martin Luther King. Has King's outspoken anti-Vietnam war stand, the pollsters asked, damaged the civil rights movement? Only 37 percent of the Negroes (as compared with the 64 percent of the general public) answered "Yes." Yet, significantly, the poll suggested a dramatic decline in King's popularity among Negroes. Only 15 percent of them, in fact, said that they would vote for him if he ran for President. The chief reason for this does not seem to be King's pacifism. Rather, it apparently is that his antiwar activity has obscured his previous role as a champion of the Negro cause per se. "The war isn't King's problem," says the mother of a Negro GI from Chicago, "but the Negro people is, and he ought to stick to it" (Newsweek, July 10, 1967, p. 34).

Despite the efforts of the militants, Negro participation in antiwar protests has been slight. Many see a parallel with past efforts of the Communist Party to enlist Negro support for a separate Negro Republic in the South by identifying themselves with civil rights activities. But for the limited response to the black power appeal, it would appear that the current New Left attempt to use the Negro as a catalyst for revolution will fail as dismally as have past efforts to exploit the American Negro for revolutionary purposes.

The split which has been growing in the civil rights movement since the association of some of its members with the New Left, antiwar movement, has seen conflicting organizations and viewpoints arise.

Ex-convict Eldridge Cleaver, the Black Panthers' "Minister of Information" and presidential nominee of the Peace and Freedom Party, explained his revolutionary goals to a group of San Francisco lawyers:

America is up against the wall. This whole apparatus, this capitalistic system and its institutions and police . . . all need to be assigned to the garbage can of history and I don't give a ——— who doesn't like it. If we can't have it

*Some obscene words used by New Left activists have been omitted from these articles. Although it might be argued that to quote such language would help to depict the nature of these militants, the most offensive words were deleted because they were found to be objectionable under congressional standards.

Stokes noted that

... you must not confuse some of the many disturbances around our country that have reflect reaction of people to an unresponsive city administration or to a continually frustrating environment. The acts of the people the other night were not deliberately contrived lawlessness and determination to commit violence among this small group. (Washington Post, July 28, 1968.)

Experts state that the key figure in the conspiracy was Fred "Ahmed" Evans, a local black power leader who has been linked to the pro-Peking revolutionary action movement. In May 1967, Det. Sgt. John Ungvary, head of the Cleveland police department's subversive squad, said that terrorists under Evans' direction were plotting a "black revolution" to coincide with "a war between Red China and the United States." Evans, who was arrested during the riots, was charged with shooting to kill. "If my carbine hadn't jammed I would have killed you three," police quoted him as saying. "I had you in my sights when my rifle jammed." Evans told police that he and 17 others had organized the sniper attacks that resulted in the deaths of three policemen. Told that three of his snipers had been slain, Evans said, "They died for a worthy cause." Phil Hutchings, militant head of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, told newsmen that the Cleveland outbreaks were "the first stage of revolutionary armed violence." (Human Events, Aug. 3, 1968.)

It is evident that a certain segment of the "civil rights" movement has turned to separatism and to violence. It has joined forces with the New Left in opposing the very structure of American society, and in calling for defeat abroad and revolution at home.

Those who truly seek civil rights, who truly seek an American society in which Negroes and whites share a common citizenship, are disturbed with this trend among younger, more militant Negro spokesmen. This concern was expressed by former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare John Gardner:

Negro extremists who advocate violence assert that non-violence did not work. It is untrue. The greatest gains for the American Negro came in response to the non-violent campaigns of Martin Luther King Jr. and (before it turned violent) SNCC. It is the fashion now to belittle those gains, but they were great and undeniable. They were registered in historic civil rights legislation and even more emphatically in social practice. . . . The violent tactics of the past two years have brought nothing but deepened hostility between the two races and a slowing down of progress in the necessary drive toward social justice. . . .

Nor do those who condemn violence ever speak of the legacy of bitterness and division that will be left by increasingly harsh outbursts of destructive interaction. What good will it do to dramatize the problem if, in the process, hatreds burn themselves so deep that the wounds permanently cripple our society. . . . To date the moderates—both Negro and white—have been all too silent. (Reader's Digest, June 1968.)

The joining of forces between the New Left and certain elements of the civil rights movement is a dangerous symbol of the extremism toward which we are moving. Part of the reason for its success, as Secretary Gardner has said, is that the moderates have not stemmed the tide. In many cases, they have encouraged it, fearing to lose their own leadership role. If this continues, society will face an ever more serious problem. Violence begets violence, and the gains of the past will be in danger. This would be harmful to all Americans. Only those who appreciate the gravity of this new coalition can act to defeat its influence and power.

THE APRIL 15 MARCH AND PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

April 15, 1967, marked the culmination of one important phase of the antiwar movement and saw large numbers of marchers parading in New York and San Francisco. The New York City Police Department's Office of Community Relations said that police officials at the United Nations Plaza estimated the number of demonstrators at between "100,000 and 125,000." The parade was led by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Benjamin Spock, and Harry Belafonte, and was sponsored by the Spring Mobilizing Committee To End the War in Vietnam, a loose confederation of New Left, pacifist, and more moderate antiwar groups (New York Times, Apr. 16, 1967, p. 1).

About an hour before the parade started a crowd of young men gathered on a rock in Central Park to burn their draft cards and demonstrators said that "nearly 200" were burned. As each card caught fire, a throng of several thousand persons, many of whom carried or wore daffodils, chanted "flower power."

In one area of the park, where the demonstrators gathered prior to the march, the U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam built a 40-foot-high tower of black cardboard tubing. They then attached a number of flags of blue and red with a gold star in the center, the flag of the Vietcong.

Most of the marchers carried signs that had been authorized and printed by the Spring Mobilization Committee. Among the slogans were "Stop the Bombing," "No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger," and "Children Are Not Born To Burn." There were also many "unauthorized" banners and placards. One, a bed sheet carried by three young men, bore in large black letters the words "Ho Chi Minh Is a Virgin" (ibid.).

One of the significant things about the march was the fact that it represented a new coalition of the so-called hippie left and the more traditional political left. One eye-witness report stresses this fact:

The marchers, variously estimated at from 100,000 to 200,000 gathered at the Sheep Meadow in Central Park, and the first impression the visitor received was that of a summer afternoon outing. The Angry Arts Against the War Committee performed several plays, portraying mean and vicious Americans murdering innocent and noble Vietnamese. Poems were read, and songs were sung, and at one point the meeting was interrupted by an announcement that one of the audience was needed immediately on "Hippie Hill," where he was to participate in a rock 'n roll group.

"Hippie Hill" was the point in the park where the advocates of LSD, marijuana, and other drugs met and performed their own private ritual. One sign there stated that "War Is a Bad Trip," and a small group continually beat their improvised drum and rhythmically chanted "LSD, LSD, LSD."

Another part of the Sheep Meadow was used for what was politely known as the Medical Contingent. High atop a tower were the flags of the Vietcong, and money was being raised to send to North Vietnam. A leaflet distributed by the U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front stated that "To be effective the peace movement must come out in support of the NLF. The Peace Movement should work to show that the real enemy of Americans is not in Vietnam but in our own country."

We are engaged in a war that seeks to turn the Clock of history back and perpetuate white colonialism. The greatest irony and tragedy of it all is that our Nation which initiated so much of the revolutionary spirit in the modern world is now cast in the mold of being an arch anti-revolutionary (National Guardian, Apr. 22, 1967, p. 2).

Showing the ambivalence of the critics to the nature of the Vietcong, Prof. Howard Zinn of Boston University told the New York rally that—

“... This administration has said a social revolution is needed in this destitute and crippled country, which we have helped to make destitute and crippled. Who could better carry out such a revolution than the National Liberation Front? ... it is quite clear ... that the National Liberation Front can do a more efficient, humane, and democratic job of running South Vietnam than either Premier Ky or General Westmoreland or Ellsworth Bunker (ibid.).

According to antiwar spokesmen, the mobilization represented the broadest coalition of “peace” groups. One peace group which did not support the demonstration was the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, but William Price, National Guardian reporter, noted that “throughout the crowd, banners appeared identifying participants with local Sane chapters.” One delegation estimated at 350 marched behind a huge red banner lettered in gold: “Communist Party, New York State Area.” In the group was Gus Hall, Communist Party national chairman. Communist Party public relations head Arnold Johnson said frequent applause had come from onlookers and interpreted this as “approval of the open participating of the party in the political life of the country.” Such participation, he said, marked the end of McCarthyism (National Guardian, Apr. 22, 1967, p. 1).

A leaflet distributed at the rally, and published by the U.S. Committee To Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (Box C, Old Chelsea Station, New York, N.Y.), said the following:

The U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam urges you to show your opposition to the U.S. Government's aggression by expressing your support for the Vietnamese peoples' fight in defense of their liberty. The time has come to decide which side you are on!!! The USCANLF-SV wishes to help give the Vietnamese NLF a voice in the United States and believes that to be effective, the Peace Movement must come out in support of the NLF. The Peace Movement should work to show that the real “enemy” of Americans is not in Vietnam, but here in our own country.

At the New York rally Stokely Carmichael called Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara “a racist,” Secretary of State Dean Rusk “a fool,” and President Johnson “a buffoon.” William Pepper, the author of “Children of Vietnam,” called for an end to “the reign of Lyndon Johnson” and proposed a national ticket of Martin Luther King and Dr. Benjamin Spock. Howard Zinn of Boston University urged for “the most magnificent, elegant withdrawal” from Vietnam, with the bands playing and “Bob Hope cracking jokes” (Washington Star, Apr. 16, 1967).

One contingent of militant Negro protesters broke away from the main line of march in New York and proceeded on their own to the Times Square area. The following report appeared in the May-June 1967 issue of Black Mass, a black nationalist publication in New York City:

“Red! Not Blacks! We’re Go!” Waiting in Central Park for the April 15 mobilization force to get underway, the Harlem contingent is spotted making their way down Central Park West. They would not take the legal parade route, but would

but to "orient it toward * * * the revolutionary organization whose program does provide the basis for such a general struggle."

Protest leaders viewed the results of the April 15 march optimistically, and many expressed the view that this represented "only a beginning." The Reverend James Bevel, committee director and a close associate of Martin Luther King, viewed the April 15 action as "the beginning of a mass movement against mass murder." He said that the aim of the new movement "will be to get Johnson's troops out of Vietnam by Christmas."

Jack Smith of the National Guardian asked the question: Is it possible in the United States at this point to develop a mass, broad-based anti-Vietnam war movement with the potential of seriously affecting government decisions? His answer:

A year ago the answer would have been an immediate unqualified "no." Today the answer from some leaders in the antiwar struggle is a cautious, qualified "perhaps." This response is forthcoming even though there may have been more antiwar action a year ago, and the movement, on the surface, has been in decline in recent months.

The next several months will determine whether this year's more optimistic prediction has substance. Part of the answer depends on whether there has been a qualitative change in the mood of the American people toward the war. Part depends on the existing antiwar movement itself and whether it is able to capitalize on any such change. (National Guardian, Apr. 4, 1967, p. 13).

A significant change in the approach of organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society is that they no longer seek to express their disapproval of either the war or the American society through mere sporadic protests, or "dropping out," or what they call the "parliamentary games" of liberals.

What they seek to do is develop a political awareness and move from "nonpolitical protest to political resistance." In order to do this it believes that "alienated youths must be brought to understand that their 'personal' problems are collective—the result of a society in which man is increasingly distant from the decisionmaking process. The cause for such distance, the New Left seems to be saying more and more, is the entire economic, social, and political structure of society. Programs are now being devised to expose the powerlessness of the "unrepresented" groups in society, and among these the major ones are opposition to the war, opposition to the draft, and an effort to achieve "student power." The long range goal is "not power in this particular class, but the development of this class into a revolutionary force that would work with other oppressed classes in society" (National Guardian, "SDS Aim: To Build Revolutionary Consciousness, Apr. 15, 1967, p. 5).

The national secretary of Students for a Democratic Society, Gregory Calvert, said that "We are working to build a guerrilla force in an urban environment. We are actively organizing sedition" (New York Times, May 7, 1967). New York Times reporter Paul Hoffman stated that "during a 3-week series of interviews with some 75 New Left activists and sympathizers from coast to coast * * * sounded much more truculent than members of the Moscow-oriented Communist Party, U.S.A." He reported that Che Guevara's picture was found on the walls of the offices of radical newspapers and living groups and that "His name cropped up in talks whenever the New Left's current infatuation with direct action was mentioned."

THE CHICAGO CONFERENCE ON NEW POLITICS

Let anyone believe that the New Left's interest in American politics is limited to simply criticizing the "establishment" and the mores and standards of our society, the National Conference for New Politics, which took place in Chicago during the first week of September 1967, should be sufficient to establish that criticism plays only a minor role in this New Left's attacks.

Chicago's Palmer House Hotel was the scene of a meeting which brought 2,000 delegates from throughout the country together to decide what political path the New Left might profitably take as it approached the 1968 elections. The group convened on August 31, 1967, for a meeting which may set the tone for radical activity for some time to come. It was, in a sense, the end of one phase of New Left activity and the beginning of another.

Prior to the meeting much discussion took place concerning future possibilities for action. Writing in the Communist Worker, Carl Blake noted that—

"If there is any clear consensus as the convention gets underway, it would be that whatever form the movement takes, nothing will be given up. The participants reject the calls to move "from protest to politics." Electoral action, they say, should move no one off the streets. If new politics is to mean anything, it should mean more than the ballot box and/or the picket line. (The Worker, Sept. 3, 1967, p. 1.)

In a position paper prepared prior to the Chicago meeting, the W. E. B. DuBois Clubs set forth its own approach. It stated that—

"Once the place of the 2d ticket on the ballot is assured then other work may be undertaken, and a peace ticket in the Democratic primary could be the basis for leading a larger number of Democratic voters to support a 2d presidential ticket in November 1968, after Johnson is re-nominated. But if there is no peace ticket in 1968 the voters against Johnson will have no place to go except the CP. ("New Politics for a New America, an Approach to the 1968 Elections" The Worker, Aug. 20, 1967, p. 7.)

Some of the 2,000 participants wanted to field a third party ticket in 1968, headed perhaps by the Rev. Martin Luther King or Dr. Benjamin Spock. Others, however, expressed the view that the whole election process is a fraud and that they should not directly involve themselves in it.

The keynote address was given by Dr. King. He accused President Johnson of betraying people who supported him in 1964. "The promise of a Great Society was shipwrecked on the coast of Asia on the dreadful peninsula of Vietnam," he said. He denounced the war in Vietnam and said that if it isn't ended by next year "all men of good will must create a situation in which the 1967-68 elections are made a referendum on the war. The American people must have an opportunity to vote into oblivion those who cannot detach themselves from militarism, those who lead us not to a new world but drag us to the brink of a dead world." (The Washington Star, Sept. 1, 1967.)

In his address Dr. Spock said the United States should announce

of the John Birch Society." Their revolution, he said, "is psychological, not political or economic, and they talk loud and long about what they're opposed to, like big Federal Government, but they say hardly anything about what they're for." (New York Times, Sept. 7, 1967.)

Not all Negroes found themselves in agreement with the demands of the militant black power advocates. Joseph Dawson, son of Rep. William Dawson of Illinois, said that "This is not a convention. This is hell. These people have the audacity to say they are helping our cities' Negroes. Well, I am a Negro and they're not helping me." (Human Events, Sept. 16, 1967.)

Prior to the Chicago meeting Professor Peretz wrote in the "New Politics News" a warning of what might occur:

It is possible that years hence we shall be able to look back upon this national convention as having been a milestone in the maturation of a new American politics . . . But this convention may also prove to be the burial grounds of our hopes and programs and energies. It may become a footnote to history recording not our triumph but our missed opportunities. I fear we may look back upon this convention . . . as being the place where the lefts engaged in mutual vituperation and in fratricide, where ideological absolutism displaced both theory and concrete analysis. (Quoted in Washington Star, Sept. 11, 1967.)

The plans for a third party ticket for 1968 never reached fruition as a result of the internal wrangling evident at the conference. Jeffrey L. Hodes analyzed this event in these terms:

Drained by the Black Caps, the sponsoring NCCP never was able to pursue its original objective: acceptance of a King-Spock ticket for 1968. Support for Dr. King dissipated after his opening night speech. He not only failed to fire emotions, but the black militants and white radicals wrote him off as passive. Stoughton Lynd and Renée Davis of SDS stated in a position paper that they "unequivocally refuse to condone the ghetto rebellion" and hence could not back Dr. King who had joined the moderate civil rights leadership in condemning riot and those who incite or provoke them. (The New Leader, Sept. 11, 1967.)

In this analysis, the role of the Students for a Democratic Society and other university organizations is discussed:

. . . SDS and other university groups believe radicalization means transforming society itself. The real power, they contend, lies within corporations, media, universities, and the military. In addition, they claim elections are manipulative and tied to existing value systems. Voting then, in SDS's lexicon, is passive act that gives one a choice between options provided by others—the help of powerlessness. SDS prefers to concentrate on local organizing in urban ghettos and universities, on advancing counter-communal institutions, on altering consumers and students to the "system" and on radicalizing the poor.

Others in Chicago sharply differed with the SDS approach. Dan Kolodney of Berkeley's New Action Politics believes the Presidency the focus of American politics. He urged the idea that providing third choice widens the limits of national debate and threatens existing order.

Two clear-cut approaches emerged. The first called for local political action, organizing the ghettos and working class communities, opposing the war. The second, supported by New York and California delegations, proposed an independent national ticket, with candidate to be selected by a national nominating convention next year.

The compromise which resulted came about in this way:

To avoid splitting the convention, a pre-midnight caucus was held in an attempt to iron out a compromise between SDS and the Californians. Max Bernstein of Berkeley proposed backing the resolution on local organizing