

*Documents on SDS and the Split*

# **RYM SDS on the Split at the Convention**

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# **NATIONAL CONVENTION EXPELS RACIST PL, AND ELECTS NEW OFFICERS**

THE PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH PL WAS EXPELLED, ADOPTED  
BY THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

1. We support the struggles of the black and Latin colonies within the U.S. for national liberation, and we recognize those nations' rights to self-determination (including the right to political secession, if they desire it).

2. We support the struggle for national liberation of the people of South Vietnam, led by the National Liberation Front and the South Vietnamese Provisional Revolutionary Government. We also support the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, led by President Ho Chi Minh, as well as the Democratic Republic of China, the People's Republics of Korea and Albania, and the Republic of Cuba, all waging fierce struggles against U.S. imperialism. We support the right of all peoples to pick up the gun to free themselves from the brutal rule of U.S. imperialism.

The Progressive Labor Party has attacked every revolutionary nationalist struggle of the black and Latin peoples in the U.S. as being racist and reactionary. For example, they have attacked open admission, black studies, community control of police and schools, the Black Panther Party and their "breakfast for children" program, and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

The Progressive Labor Party has attacked Ho Chi Minh, the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, the revolutionary government of Cuba—all leaders of the people's struggles for freedom against U.S. imperialism.

The Progressive Labor Party, because of its positions and practices, is objectively racist, anti-communist, and reactionary. PLP has also in principle and practice refused to join the struggle against male supremacy. It has no place in SDS,



an organization of revolutionary youth.

For these reasons, which have manifested themselves in practice all over the country, as well as at this convention, and because the groups we look to around the world for leadership in the fight against U.S. imperialism, including the Black Panther Party and the Brown Berets, urge us to do so, SDS feels it is now necessary to rid ourselves of the burden of allowing the politics of the Progressive Labor Party to exist within our organization. Progressive Labor Party members and all people who do not accept the above two principles are no longer members of SDS

*We should rid our ranks of all impotent thinking. All views that overestimate the strength of the enemy and underestimate the strength of the people are wrong. (Mao, Red Book, Page 86)*

# VICTORIOUS STRUGGLE —

by Mark Rudd, National Secretary; Jeff Jones, Inter-organizational Secretary; Bill Ayers, Education Secretary

The revolutionary youth movement, the black liberation struggle, the working class, and the whole international struggle against imperialism won a victory and took a step forward at the June 1969 SDS convention.

This convention expelled from the organization all members of the Progressive Labor Party and all others who share their betrayal of the struggle of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and their active opposition to the struggle for self-determination of the black people within the United States.

This action is a direct outcome and consequence of the great advances over the last year and a half made on all fronts against imperialism, especially by the struggle in Vietnam and the black liberation movement, and on the part of SDS in the strength and clarity of its alignment with these struggles. It is an outcome of the great advances made in practice by the youth movement in fighting imperialism directly, at San Francisco State, Kent State, Berkeley, etc., and the increasingly obvious detrimental and reactionary role played by the PLP through its active opposition to revolutionary nationalist struggles.

This contradiction in practice, between active support for liberation struggles and active opposition, has existed for a long time within our organization, but has sharpened in the last year. What became clear in the course of this convention is that we cannot demand of people outside the organization a choice which we are unwilling to enforce within it. The decision of the convention to exclude the PLP was the resolution of that contradiction; and it makes explicit the principles upon which SDS must be built.

Within the world today, the most important revolutionary struggle is between the national liberation movements of the colonized nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and U.S. imperialism. These are

primarily revolutionary nationalist struggles. Revolutionary nationalism, on the part of an oppressed colonized people, far from being the reactionary ideology that PLP claims it is, is an intrinsic part of revolutionary internationalism. To accept and defend revolutionary nationalism, far from being harmful to working class revolution, is a necessary component of it if one desires to actually be revolutionary in relation to reality.

The Progressive Labor Party has claimed that its line is "pro-working class," and that it has fought strenuously against "anti-working class" ideas within SDS. In fact, taking a line that is opposed to revolutionary nationalism is harmful to the international proletariat—is objectively "anti-working class"—and, as such, is harmful to the working class in America. The white working class must be won to an anti-racist, anti-imperialist movement if it is ever to participate in a revolution to end its own exploitation, emiseration, and enslavement by this imperialist monster. Further, SDS's strategy for reaching the working class is through the revolutionary youth movement—by building a fighting force of working class youth committed to the struggles for national liberation and self-determination, to the international proletariat as a whole.

Thus the political difference is not one "within the left" or "within the movement"; it is a principled difference on what the movement is about, where and what class war is, and who the sides of it are. If the PLP opposes revolutionary nationalism on the part of colonized peoples; opposes the self-determination of the black colony within the U.S.; opposes the National Liberation Front and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and call Ho Chi Minh a traitor; then they are in no sense part of the people's movement and in fact serve the enemy of the people, U.S. imperialism, which is waging fierce wars of aggression and suppression against revolutionary nationalist struggles, the self-determination of the black colony, and the National Liberation Front and Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

—While black students were waging a militant



struggle around admissions and self-determination at City College in N.Y., Third World members of PLP infiltrated the occupied South Campus to organize against the demands;

—While black students were demanding more control of the SEEK program at Queens College, PLP denounced the demands. The SDS office was attacked by black students as a result of PLP's actions. A month later blacks were chased off the campus by white racists—and only a few white persons fought with the blacks.

—While black students at Columbia University were struggling around black control of black admissions, PLP refused to support their demands, and acted on university expansion, claiming it was the only way to fight racism.

—In Chicago on election day, PLP put out a leaflet denouncing the election day strike leaders as "adventurist".

—At a Black Panther rally on the Circle Campus of the University of Illinois in Chicago, a PLP member read a program he had already agreed with the Panthers not to read, and was physically ejected from the podium.

—At San Francisco State, after supporting the demands and the struggle led by BSU/TWLF, PLP changed its line in the last weeks of the strike, saying that special admission of black and brown students and the newly won Black Studies Department was "bourgeois" and co-optive, and denounced the leadership of the struggle as "nationalist." The next rally called by PLP was boycotted by all black and brown students and all community organizations.

---And, while SDS as a whole has been trying to organize an internationalist, anti-imperialist working class youth movement, PL has labeled Ho Chi Minh a "traitor," has accused the NLF of "making deals" with the imperialists, has denounced Cuba as "revisionist," and has called the Black Panther Party "racist in reverse."

The expulsion of the Progressive Labor Party was decided on at a meeting resulting from a walkout led by Bernardine Dohrn and Mike Klonsky from the original meeting room. The walkout occurred Friday night, the first day of the actual convention, after a presentation by members of the Black Panther Party denouncing the racism of the all-white "self-proclaimed vanguard," the PLP. In addition, a spokesman for the Brown Berets had read a letter jointly approved by the national leadership of the Black Panther Party, the Brown Berets, the Young Lords Organization, and other black and Latin organizations, as well as the Young Patriots, a community organization of white youth, which stated in part: "We demand that by the conclusion of the National Convention of the Students for a Democratic Society, the Progressive Labor Party change its position on the right to self-determination and stand in concert with the oppressed peoples of the world and begin to follow a true Marxist-Leninist ideology," and further, "SDS will be judged by the company they keep and the efficiency and effectiveness with which they deal with bourgeois factions in their organization."

This meeting was at first far from unanimous. The ISC and other opportunists argued that there was no principled split, that to have walked out was manipulative, and that to expel the PLP would be even more democratic. Bernardine Dohrn, Mark Rudd, the Seattle regional caucus, and others argued for expulsion on the grounds that there was no basis for PLP even existing within our organization, or for their legitimacy within the people's movement at all. Various other

people argued for the forming of a more active caucus within the same organization as PLP, or even for leaving SDS to them and forming a new organization. However, in the course of a day's debate, the vast majority of people were won to the necessity to expel PLP and actively write them out of the revolutionary movement, as they had already written themselves out through their opposition to black self-determination and revolutionary nationalism.

The academic argument that the split was not "politically" spelled out before the walkout was rejected, as the walkout itself was understood as political. It was the conclusion of over a year of clarifying political differences—especially at Ann Arbor, Austin, again at this convention, and in many sections of the organization on the local level. Further, the legalistic argument that we should take a vote among the entire convention body was rejected, as it meant counter-revolutionaries having the right to "vote" on their own counter-revolutionary nature. Our task was not to vote: People saw clearly that our political position required action, that action alone would clarify the irreconcilable and antagonistic character of the differences in a way that no words could possibly have done.

The 1969 SDS convention must be considered a critical turning point in the development of SDS as a mass revolutionary organization. Over the past year we have made many advances, while we have still failed substantially in providing real material support to the black liberation struggle and the Vietnamese war of liberation. We have failed to keep the war the key issue—and immediate withdrawal the key demand—in our movement. We have failed to defend the Black Panther Party in a strenuous, militant, and consistent way. We have failed to take the issues of the black and Vietnamese struggles to the masses of working class youth—challenging white supremacy, male supremacy, and anti-communism, and building a mass based fighting force of revolutionary youth.

These tasks remain before us. Having expelled the PLP on the basis of their theory and practice of betraying revolutionary youth movement struggles in support of the People's War in Vietnam and the black liberation movement.

The national action in the fall gives us this opportunity. It must be the culmination of our summer work in the cities, bringing out thousands of newly won working class youth. It will bring the war home and carry it to the American people. It will unify our movement and draw a clear line between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary practice. It will strengthen all of our local organizing by sharpening and focusing our day to day work.

Work on the action is beginning immediately. Hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature must be produced, fund raising must be undertaken, and chapters must begin to lay the groundwork for the action. Hundreds of people will go to the Black Panther Party-called United Front Against Fascism Conference in California in July, and this action will be proposed and discussed at that conference, along with other activities of support for the black liberation struggle.

All chapters should contact the National Office for information, and also send us your comments and criticisms of the actions at the national convention. Support and co-ordination will be important in the coming period. Let us hear from you.

All Power to the People! Long live the victory of People's War!

