

## A STATEMENT ON THE DISSOLUTION OF M2M

**Build And Unite The Movement**

Two years ago, the existing student organizations represented a variety of unsatisfactory choices for many radicals who wished to take an active part in politics. Thousands of students, motivated by genuine radical consciousness, sought through "the movement" to fight against racism, poverty and aggressive war. But too often the movement's "respectable" leadership soured their radicalism with its accommodating, liberal postures, and its constant overtures to the establishment. Many who perceived the ultimate social identity of the merchants of death in Vietnam and Mississippi and the peddlars of the "new frontier" and the "great frontier," who saw American capitalism as the ultimate sponsor and perpetrator of both domestic reaction and foreign counter-revolution, many of these radicals—whether they called themselves communists, Marxists or anti-imperialists, found themselves without a satisfactory vehicle for social struggles.

The Peace Movement was led by nuclear pacifists and others who never failed to condemn the socialist camp when announcing their opposition to U.S. aggression. In the midst of Marine interventions, armed invasions, CIA coups, infiltrations and assassinations, their cry of "a plague on both your houses" benefitted only the aggressor.

The peace movement leaders misled many. They smothered support for the peasants and workers of the oppressed nations who are slaughtered peacefully by poverty and violently by the dictator's police and army, and channeled protest into the dead end of "ban the bomb" politics.

The peace groups' "third campism" was reinforced by red-baiting. The leadership of SANE capitulated to government intimidation and carried out sweeping purges of its ranks. The "neutral" national administration chuckled as SANE got rid of the reds and wiped out its sizable student following in the process.

The Civil Rights Movement was developing the tactics of direct action based solely on the goal of equal civil rights for black people. Despite its limited perspectives, the movement captured the imagination of millions; thousands of students became involved in struggles that called for personal courage and sacrifice.

However, the old line middle-class leadership of the integration movement again acted as a brake on the militancy of the activists. They clung to the national Democratic Party, supported the aggressive foreign policy of the national administration, fought against attempts to link up the freedom fight here with the world anti-colonial upsurge, preached the concept of gradualism and were satisfied with token reforms.

Many young radicals, disregarding their dislike for the liberal-conservative leadership in both peace and civil rights groups, joined up nonetheless, and fought with conviction against compromise and vacillation. Others, put off by the leaders' continued red-baiting and political opportunism, were discouraged and stayed away.

Outside of these movements were a number of youth groups attached to various left-wing parties. Although each party had definite revolutionary ambitions, they were all characterized by their failure to develop a perspective of mass work. Instead of actively seeking out ways to bring revolutionary ideas into the existing areas of struggle, they concentrated upon building up a nucleus of cadre around sectarian and non-revolutionary ideology. Those who were put off by the backward leadership of the movements and who rejected the non-revolutionary politics of the left parties, could only work as individuals trying to organize or simply persuade their friends and acquaintances.

Following a Socialist Conference at Yale University in March of '64, a group of radicals, some associated with the Progressive Labor Party, organized for demonstrations against the war in Vietnam. The successful demonstrations, which took place in a number of cities on May 2, 1964, called for immediate U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam and an end to U.S. aggression. The size of the demonstrations convinced the organizers and many of the participants that an organization was needed to bring together the scattered forces in the peace movement, to build a principled, radical peace movement, with an anti-imperialist outlook and leadership.

In its early months, the May 2nd Movement concentrated its organizing work on mobilizing and developing opposition to the Vietnam war. Through rallies and marches, films, forums, publications and perhaps most deeply through man to man contacts and struggles on the level of individual discussions and shared experiences and friendships with others in the movement, we molded and put forward our ideas. With the publication of Free Student in February 1965, the movement enlarged its focus, with analyses and critiques of the domestic consequences of imperialism, particularly the role of the universities as service centers for the establishment, the impact of big corporate trustees on educational policy and content, and the suppression of radical thought and action in curricular and extra-curricular spheres. Ours was the first coherent factual presentation of a position which supported the victory of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam, and expressed root opposition to all manifestations of the imperialist foreign policy of the American government.

The activities and propaganda work of M-2-M, although limited to not more than 20 campus chapters,

were modestly effective in publicizing an anti-imperialist politics and sometimes influential in helping to formulate and express the ideas and mood of the campus peace movement at large.

However, the founding and growth of M-2-M was only one of a range of reactions, responses and changes that were beginning to shape the "New Left."

By 1964, stepped-up revolutionary action around the world and intensified reform struggles at home were reflected in an upsurge of radical activity and thought that swept through the movements. The Kennedy administration had neatly scooped the peace movement with the partial test ban treaty of July '63. While liberal cheers rang out, Kennedy was already giving the orders for stepped-up U.S. aggression in Vietnam, increasing the numbers of U.S. troops and the flow of U.S. arms.

Atrocity stories, concentration camp tactics, chemical warfare, napalm—all familiar aspects of counter-revolutionary war—began to arouse the attention of Americans. At this juncture, the peace movement, still playing out its one-sided love affair with the national Democratic Party administration, questioned the "propriety" of certain U.S. tactics and faithfully condemned the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong for terror and aggression.

But Vietnam was not the only arena in which the carefully constructed peace-loving image of the U.S. government was crumbling. The Cuban revolutionaries had stopped Kennedy at the Bay of Pigs. Others were not so fortunate. Thousands of Congolese dead—slaughtered by Anglo-American mercenaries—aroused shouts of indignation and world wide protest at the fraudulent and cynical white man's humanitarianism. Millions of U.S. dollars were spent in Laos to undermine a national coalition government to sustain warlords and feudal fiefs. Military coups and dictatorships in Latin America and Africa were openly encouraged and supported by Johnson as a sure guarantee of the status quo and a stable environment for U.S. investment expansion.

These events had begun to clarify the nature of the conflict between the revolutionary aspirations of the "Damned of the Earth"—their pressing demands for independence, economic self-sufficiency and socialism—and U.S. imperialism's plans for the "American Century"—a world empire of exploitation and profit. The American Century was no mere whim of a particular administration or party. 20 years' history of cold and hot war against the world's poor could not be written off to policy mistakes. The more the U.S. government tries to cloak the far-flung corporate ambitions that determine its policy under the mantle of a fight for freedom, the more Americans have begun to question and reject the paranoid clichés and political racketeers of "anti-communism."

Johnson's Marine intervention in the popular revolt in Santo Domingo (set against the background of his top advisers' fingers deep in the Dominican sugar bin) killed thousands to prevent a takeover by 57 reds, but opened millions of eyes in America and recruited new thousands to militant opposition.

Finally, the U.S. attack on North Vietnam, the daily bombing of that country, the systematic attempt to destroy its infant industries and terrorize its people into submission, interspersed with outrageously pious calls for peace and threats of more aggression, spurred the growth of protest and radical consciousness.

The unfolding panorama of war and destruction, unleashed by the U.S. in its profit-motivated drive to dominate the people, labor, resources and markets of the world, has served to educate the new movements. Many began to realize that "peace" was not merely for the asking, that it was "not enough to be for peace," especially the more LBJ insists: "I'm for peace, too."

The lesson of relying on SANE or "responsible leadership"—Johnson in the '64 elections—has been driven home to many who supported him at the urging of the responsible peace leadership.

And the understanding that peace will not be won by test-ban treaties—disarmament conferences—or U.N. "peace keepers"—these are only some lessons that our movement has begun to learn. The anti-imperialist perspective that is beginning to emerge is the result of these lessons. It is the result of the failure of narrow compromising—and unprincipled approach of the past to mount any effective opposition, to curtail expanding U.S. aggression. Anti-imperialism has appeared in the movement in response to the experiences which demand a politics that is capable of engaging millions of Americans in sharp and total conflict with the foreign policy of the government that aims to stop.

## Changing Movements:

The emerging consciousness, product of the global crisis and conflict, is reflected in the growth of the New Left organizations in the last two years. Students for a Democratic Society, the Independent Committees to End the War in Vietnam, the Vietnam Day Committee and other groups have overcome some of the weaknesses imposed by the liberal-conservative leadership of past movements. The emphasis on the need for internal democracy and rank and file control has given the new movement a flexibility and toughness that seemed altogether lacking in the fifties. Red-baiting, the principle ideological weapon of U.S. imperialism, has been rejected by many elements in the new movement—although by

no means decisively defeated.

The new organizations broke away from the pattern of inaction and token protests that were the hallmark of the conservatively-led cold-war peace movements. Through marches on Washington, draft-card burnings, attempts to stop troop trains, pickets in front of SS boards, teach-ins, they developed a whole series of tactics that began to direct opposition to the Vietnam war towards condemnation of the national administration, its domestic as well as foreign policy. Thousands of students have enrolled in the new movements, because its politics and conduct often voice their own feelings of anger, disgust and frustration with the government's wars abroad and cynically conceived "poverty wars" to win support at home.

Although the new peace movement has grown and considerably broadened its following, it is still grappling with some of the old problems. Conservatives in the movement are fighting hard, with considerable help from Vice-President Humphrey, et al, to take the edge off the movement's effectiveness by attaching its demands to some of the phony peace concessions that Johnson periodically offers. If the peace movement could be persuaded to limit its slogans to: "Stop the war now," without raising the essential demand of "U.S. get out of Vietnam," Johnson would too gladly embrace and smother it with his unctuous "me too."

The struggle for political and ideological clarity in the peace movement has taken many forms. The M-2-M, through the pages of Free Student, leaflets and forums tried to advance what it considered to be a position of principled, radical politics. This outlook meant the exposure and criticism of certain slogans and positions which would, if adopted, lead the movement down the wrong track or derail it altogether:

1. "Negotiations" in Vietnam; i.e., the Vietnamese people should give up their struggle for liberation and negotiate the conditions of their servitude with American aggressors.

2. The "Peace Offensive"—a frantic public relations job to sell the notion that the U.S. government is seeking peace while it actively expands its war of atrocities.

3. U.N. intervention as "arbiter" in Vietnam. After the U.N. "arbitrated" the death of Patrice Lumumba and the preservation of Belgian and American business interests in Katanga and Kasai, it is only reasonable that the U.N. should bring "peace" to Vietnam and the Dominican Republic as well.

4. The Peace Corps as the place for the idealism of American youth. Millions of peasants and workers are condemned to starvation, slavery and death by the interests of U.S. business. This status quo is enforced by the State Department, the CIA, and the Pentagon, who now cordially invite all those who are guileless and worthy of security clearance to administer band-aids and CARE packages as tokens of the unbounded generosity of the U.S. government. Those who volunteer and are deemed fit will receive \$2,000, draft deferral, and the gratitude of the government for staying out of the peace and civil rights movement at home.

5. "Peaceful Alternatives to the Draft." Those who do not wish to incur the risks of serving the American business empire in the imperial army may help the war effort by training a small number of the poor to fill the gap in the supply of skilled labor, or otherwise by helping to reduce the social welfare costs flowing from capitalist organization of urban slums and rural mechanization.

6. "Foreign Aid" The U.S. government offers upon receiving the surrender of the National Liberation Front, to build a brand new police state which will have none of the technical deficiencies of its predecessors and to include irrigation projects for the landlords, hydroelectric installations to service prospective American investors and improve the lighting in Saigon bars.

7. "Peaceful Coexistence." The U.S. and Soviet governments are prepared to cooperate in maintaining their respective hegemonies. But National Liberation movements, and certain socialist countries (like China), should understand that to struggle for liberation from U.S. imperialism and exploitation creates the danger of war and nuclear destruction. The rich get richer and the poor...

8. "Evolution not Revolution." The legal monopoly of violence in the oppressed nations ought to remain where it is now; since if the peasants and workers attempt to defend themselves and remove their oppressors, and the U.S. government tries to maintain or restore itself, what will become of Peace?

The criticism of these slogans, positions, and the programs advanced by their partisans, are elements of an anti-imperialist perspective, or more positively, are essential to a politics that squares off the peace movement with its main enemy, the U.S. government. Two years ago, the M-2-M advanced this politics, when other groups could not do so because of the stranglehold of timid and tired leadership. Today, however, a serious struggle is going on within the new movements, between the old and the new, conservative and the radical, the "respectables" and the revolutionaries. The upheaval in the peace groups has its counterpart in the great changes taking place in the civil rights movement.

The government by its acts has helped to educate the freedom movement. It is the federal government that has failed to enforce its own laws in the South. It is the federal government that has failed to offer adequate

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protection to civil rights workers who are enforcing its laws. It is the federal government whose money pays for Negro removal in northern cities, that sponsors "welfare" as a substitute for doing something about slum housing and the horrible school systems which generate the social disintegration and misery of ghetto life. One might say that the government's intent in all of its programs is to ward off revolt by repression, removal, and bribery while preserving the slums as profitable investments. The government does not act to curb police brutality; it suppresses the revolts which such brutality produces and conspires with the producers. The federal government does not produce a minimum housing statute or build decent housing for the poor. It simply reduces the living space of the ghetto via middle income projects. Rather than directly confront those who profit from the overcrowding, rats and roaches, which drives youth to live more or less on the streets, the government tries to remove the youth from the streets by "job corps," Haryou, etc., in order to reduce police problems. From this point of view, the draft is just another means to remove "corner kids" who cause "trouble." If ghetto conditions produce broken homes, prostitution, druggism, alcoholism, drop-outs and structural unemployment due to lack of skills, etc., the federal government offers a little unemployment relief and other handouts to the victims. If in spite of all these measures, "riots" occur, the government "rehabilitates the business districts within the ghetto."

The federal government's policies are fooling fewer and fewer people in the freedom movement, north and south. Those who have worked on voter registration only to see share croppers thrown off their land for registering, those who have seen J. Edgar Hoover giving Governor Johnson a pat on the back for his police work in Mississippi, those who have seen a Mississippi racist appointed by Johnson to a key judicial post in civil rights cases, who have seen Bill Epton's name fraudulently kept off his hard won place on a NYC ballot, who have seen Julian Bond denied his elected seat by racist legislators—all of them have been instructed that unless the social basis of the U.S. power structure is reversed, racial equality is a myth.

The new radical consciousness in the freedom movement results, as in the peace movement, from education through struggle and the casting off of some of the old, ham-stringing concepts.

Firstly, the gradualist-integrationist leadership of the movement has failed to direct the struggle towards satisfying the basic economic demands of the black working class. Johnson talks "poverty wars," but conditions for black workers worsen; their demands cannot be met by civil rights acts or voting concessions. Birmingham, Harlem and Watts are heroic reminders. The concept of working within the two party framework is losing ground; a third party movement (MFDP, Black Panther Party) is growing. Furthermore, the enrollment of black working class forces in the movement has facilitated the struggle against the more debilitating pacifist ideas of the middle class leadership. The emergence of the Deacons, the Birmingham black militia, and the great popularity of Malcolm X before his assassination, indicate the rejection of the notion of non-violence (for black people).

Secondly, the rise of independent African states, and the participation of the African peoples in the anti-colonial movement, has been an important factor in radicalizing black political consciousness in America. This consciousness has replaced servility and fear with pride and militancy. It calls for black leadership. Its demands for jobs, housing and education continue to sharpen the conflict between the black population and a profit-based capitalist economy. Also, for the first time, the Freedom Movement is turning its attention to foreign policy. SNCC's statement, condemning the war in Vietnam, protesting the discriminatory draft, which sends the black poor off to kill other colored people on behalf of the white rich, and stating its determination to win freedom here is a great contribution to the peace and freedom movement and a slap in the face to those who are still actively working to bring both movements under the shirt tails of the Democratic Party.

## AN EVALUATION:

Let's summarize the changes that have taken place.

1. The U.S. government is expanding the war against the Vietnamese people, and has stepped up the intensity of its counter-revolutionary activities around the world.

2. Black workers and others are increasing their pressure for liberation at home.

3. The old reformist leadership of the peace and civil rights movement has been partly discredited by its "token" politics and its inability to win meaningful reforms, concessions, or peace.

4. As a result, favorable conditions have emerged for the development of a mass, radical student movement. This development has already begun. Within the movements there is heated debate over the content and perspectives of the politics and ideology that are needed to enable the movement to continue its growth, break out of its relative isolation on the campus, and become a potent political force. The debate and the programs advanced which reflect the differing points of view, is as open as it is heated.

The May 2nd Movement has contributed its share of the analysis, discussion, activity and criticism to the debate. At the same time, we did not develop into a mass movement.

We failed to work sufficiently on domestic issues, whereas the civil rights and community organizations have expanded their orientation to include foreign affairs. SDS and SNCC have grown because of their gradual development of anti-imperialism on a broad range of issues. They have benefitted from an organizational looseness which permitted new members to develop their ideology gradually as they gained experience on a campus chapter or summer project and then to politically mature within the organization. Our insufficient domestic programs and projects meant that we could never function well off-campus. We had a series of chapters which took a very radical stand on foreign policy and a national newspaper which reflected that stance. There was little room for a student, whose radicalism did not go beyond a vague feeling that U.S. foreign policy or even domestic policy was not in keeping with liberal ideals, to come into a May 2nd chapter and gradually mature as a result of experience and struggle. We recruited from the minority that was already quite radicalized and thus at the end of a process of experience and reflection which produces alienation from the mainstream and a commitment to building socialism in America.

Thus we tended to become a cadre organization for those students who were at once too radical in ideas and sometimes too inexperienced in organizational work to function well in the other existing organizations. With this drawback, we served two limited but important functions. We gave our members experience in publishing, organizing rallies and holding forums. In many chapters people became experienced in writing research papers and speaking before mass meetings. Quite a few intellectuals were dragged out of their apartments, dorms and coffee houses into real political work for the first time. The consciousness of many of us was raised by these efforts. We began to gain a realistic impression of what the political level of students was and the forces that produced that level. Finally, our members saw what it was to be known as radicals and how that affected their lives.

Besides our self-development, we helped improve the political understanding of the students at our campuses, especially through our newspaper, the Free Student and position papers. We showed by deed that anti-imperialism can be advanced in America.

Taking modest account of our work, the key question for all of us is very clearly: "How can we, given the new, favorable circumstances in the movement, best make our contribution to building and uniting it around effective, radical politics?"

We had two choices: 1) To continue to build M-2-M. 2) To dissolve M-2-M and work as members and activists to build the existing "mass" organizations that are changing and becoming radicalized through struggle.

Over the February 4-6th weekend, a conference took place in NYC, at which representatives of the chapters of M-2-M that were actively functioning on the East Coast voted to dissolve M-2-M. This decision was approved by other regional meetings. The choice was made based on a favorable estimate of the new organizations and the need for us to throw all our energies into their development as the radical "student movement" in America. This favorable estimate was made with the understanding that the struggle for political definition and aims is going on now within the movement and has by no means been resolved in favor of socialist, left, or anti-imperialist perspectives. On the contrary, many of the old, opportunist ideas and approaches are actively contending in the movement. There is no reason to expect the new movement to leap over the Great Wall of bourgeois ideology all at once.

The notion that piecemeal reforms can lead to satisfactory over-all change persists, but it is pitted against a growing socialist consciousness, which asserts that no basic reforms can be won without defeating the social power of monopoly capitalism. Our radicalism is based on the belief that the student movement cannot survive or grow without a socialist perspective.

The decision to dissolve M-2-M was a decision to fight for the politics that we believe will strengthen the movement and enable it to achieve mass proportions.

Our experience in mass work is limited, and the content of our radicalism has been blunted by its relative isolation. The conditions in the new movements have opened many areas of militant struggle; we can stand aside only at the expense of our own development as radicals; we would give up our aspirations to be fighters and become only critical critics.

Were we at this point to maintain an essentially competing organization, what would be the result?

Marxists would find a haven in our organization, where they could relax in the comfortable surroundings of a group that shared their views, and thus relieve themselves of their responsibility to put their ideas to the test of struggle and to sharpen and consolidate the positions which will strengthen the movement on the basis of the tests of practical experience. Rather than join in the task of building a strong, mass student organization where Marxist analysis and program could forge a specifically

American content, the development of this content would be retarded by the allegiance of its proponents to a more secure but isolated environment.

We choose to work in and build the existing radical organizations—our goal is the development of a mass socialist student movement in America.

To accomplish these ends:

1. We dissolve the May 2nd Movement.

2. The Free Student newspaper will continue to publish. It will try to a) Serve as a center of active debate, of radical views and analysis, Marxist and non-Marxist, on the key ideological and programmatic questions before the movement. b) Encourage and participate in a full scale student assault against the establishment universities which, as the ideological prep schools for U.S. imperialism, have refined the techniques of mis-education, rote learning, compartmentalization, and total control over the students' lives, in an effort to turn out faithful and fully alienated servants of monopoly capital. The newspaper will continue to have an anti-imperialist editorial line. The present editorial board will continue until they are joined or replaced by others of the movement.

We have definite ideas as to where the movement should go. The only way these ideas can be developed further is through experience and the analyzing of that experience. In this process we all must participate. We ask all those who agree to join together with us and unite in a struggle around these ideas:

A. The movement must further develop a clear ideology based on an understanding of U.S. imperialism overseas and domestic racism, exploitation, and cultural and intellectual degeneracy.

B. Students and intellectuals alone can not be the motor force for fundamental social change (revolution). We will work to strengthen the process that has already begun in the radical movement to forge ties and alliances with the growing movements of the workers and the poor of this country, both black and white.

It is these groups, along with students and intellectuals as allies that will bring about the changes necessary to satisfy the material and social needs of our people.

C. Intellectuals and artists must ally themselves with the workers and the poor and not with the exploitative ruling class. They must turn their energies and talents towards the workers and the poor and towards the movement. Only in this way can their lives be meaningful and socially productive.

D. We must develop independent political electoral activity, independent of the racist and imperialist Democratic and Republican Parties. This activity must be based on a clear understanding of the class nature of the State—i.e. that we won't be able to elect in the changes we want (that no ruling class will abdicate power to the ballot alone). Independent electoral work is both educative and a good organizing tool. Certain limited gains can be won in this form of struggle.

E. We must expose the class nature of University administration, its ties to business and the government. We must carry on direct struggle with the administrations and demand and fight for student and faculty control of the University in all its aspects.

F. We must expose the U.S. government as the chief enemy of peace in the world today and as the supporter of racism and exploitation at home and imperialism abroad. We must expose the lie that the U.S. government is different, that it is the neutral arbitrator of societies' disputes. We must maintain our uncompromising opposition to U.S. imperialism as the root cause of the evils that this movement is fighting. We must engage in struggle to expose and eventually to defeat U.S. imperialism.

We will continue our support of national liberation struggles. They are our greatest ally against our common enemy. We will advance socialism as the alternative to monopoly capitalism.

These are our reasons, that is our voice, and this is our program. We are enthusiastic to start working directly with those who have been our friends for many months. More unity, greater determination, ultimate victory.

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