

Politics of RYM II — an analysis

By DOUG JENNESS

ATLANTA, Ga.—The RYM II faction of the Students for a Democratic Society will hold a national conference here Nov. 27-30. According to the conference call there will be "discussions and debates on the national question, white supremacy, male supremacy, and the direction of RYM II."

Led by Mike Klonsky, Noel Ignatin and Marv Treiger, Revolutionary Youth Movement II is one of three groups that are presently competing for the allegiance of young radicals in SDS. Many SDSers who are disgusted with the extreme ultra-left antics of the Weatherman faction and with the Worker-Student Alliance's reactionary view of Cuba and black nationalism will be interested in seeing what RYM II has to offer.

It is difficult at this time to discuss RYM II's views because they are evolving very rapidly, vary from one city to another, and most of them are not written down. Nonetheless, there is enough information to consider some of the positions held by the leadership of this group.

The acid test for revolutionary internationalists today is whether or not they are helping to defend the Vietnamese revolution in action. While they organized the April, 1965, March on Washington, SDS's record on this question since then has not been good.

Although they were the largest student radical organization in the country, they played almost no role in the major national actions. However, even before their split with the Weathermen, the RYM II leaders were beginning to recognize the importance of the antiwar movement and since the split have talked more about doing something than the other factions.

What concretely have they proposed to do? Following their split with the Weathermen, RYM II held a national conference in Detroit in mid-September where they adopted a resolution introduced by Marv Treiger entitled, "Serve the people—Get the U.S. out of Vietnam." The first paragraph begins "RYM II SDS has taken off." The Detroit gathering passes a resolution for action including these points: 1) A national action in Chicago in the fall relating opposition to the war to the theme of 'Serve the people.' 2) A political line for that action based on the principle slogan "U.S. Get Out of Vietnam" plus a number of secondary slogans. 3) The launching of a year's solidarity with the Vietnamese including mobilizing for the Nov. 8 local actions and planning a spring offensive "of our own" against the war.

Not a word in the entire resolution about the then upcoming Nov. 15 march on Washington and San Francisco nor was there any mention of this action in the first issue of their newspaper, *Revolutionary Youth Movement*, even though the principal demand of the D.C.-S.F. actions was immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Vietnam.

As it turned out, RYM II organized a relatively small action in Chicago on Oct. 11 aimed primarily at countering the Weatherman faction's adventure rather than building a mass action against the Vietnam war. The Nov. 8 mobilization never materialized.

After the tremendous outpouring for

the Oct. 15 Moratorium, most RYM II groups decided to "get in on the Moratorium action," as Mike Klonsky told his supporters in Atlanta and they then endorsed the Nov. 15 action.

This was definitely a progressive though belated step. However, despite this endorsement, they did not become involved in the New Mobilization Committee or the Student Mobilization Committee and help to build the action as part of the organized antiwar movement.

Rather they spent most of their time and energy organizing activities separate from the organized antiwar movement and often around demands other than "U.S. Out of Vietnam Now," which they claim is their principal slogan.

In Atlanta, for example, the primary activity of RYM II prior to Nov. 15 was an attempt to form a "Nat Turner

port the right of Afro-Americans to self-determination, many of them are very confused on this question. For example, the Atlanta RYM II leadership argues that black people should have a separate black state with clearly defined geographical boundaries. This is a resurrection of the "black belt" policy Stalin foisted on to the American Communist Party in 1928. The CP at that time advocated the formation of a black republic in the southern black belt and even published maps showing where the possible boundaries could be.

This position was adopted in total disregard of the sentiment of the 12 million black people in the United States. The very term self-determination implies the right of an oppressed group, that is those most directly effected, to decide for themselves what they want, and how, and when. Although black

a word in the RYM II resolution or in their newspaper about the necessity of Afro-Americans making a political break from the capitalist parties and the significance of promoting an independent black political party.

Their positions on the Vietnam war and the black liberation struggle show that the central feature of RYM II's politics is pragmatism and lack of any concept of class political principles. They lack an overall program with a clear analysis of the major currents in the world socialist movement and an understanding of the victories and defeats of the working class movement over the past 120 years. Consequently they flit from one position to another, from one action to another, without any apparent rhyme or reason. They wet their finger, put it in the air, and try to see which way the wind is blowing.



Photo by Joel Aber

STEP FORWARD. While modest, labor participation in Nov. 15 Washington antiwar march was best yet. Some in RYM II assert need for orientation toward working class, but policies of group contribute little toward involving ranks of labor in struggle.

brigade" for participation in the Nov. 15 action in order to "express the basic theme of solidarity with the Vietnamese."

In Washington, D.C. on Nov. 14 and 15 RYM II sponsored and concentrated their main participation in the Saigon embassy rally around the demand, "Support the Provisional Revolutionary Government," and the ultra-left confrontation with the cops at the Justice Department building. All their talk about building a mass anti-imperialist movement around the principal slogan, "U.S. Troops Out of Vietnam Now," was scattered to the winds.

In other words, RYM II has not really broken from the sectarian and ultra-leftist stance towards the antiwar movement that has plagued SDS for the last few years.

Will RYM II's proposed spring offensive against the Vietnam war be discussed at the Atlanta conference or is this just another idea thrown off the tops of their heads like the Nov. 8 action? And if they do plan a spring offensive, will they seek collaboration and support from the organized antiwar movement?

Black struggle

What is RYM II's view of the black liberation struggle? Although they sup-

Americans may decide they want to form a separate state, and revolutionaries have the duty to defend that right, they have not yet chosen this course.

It is also noteworthy that the program for the black community which the RYM II gives the most attention is the Black Panther Party's breakfast for children program. In the resolution passed at the Detroit conference, they state: "We call for action around institutions created by the people themselves that are designed to 'serve the people.' These actions will be in support of proletarian institutions such as the 'breakfast for children' program of the Black Panther Party and the 'day-care centers' of the Young Lords Organization and others. Our goal should be real aid to people's institutions."

What RYM II proposes in effect is to take SDS back full circle to the reformist community-organizing projects it was involved in a few years ago. The struggles of black people for control over their schools and black students for black studies programs run much deeper than the free breakfast program but there is no mention of them in the resolution.

Furthermore there is absolutely not

The absence of a program of their own means that they are highly prone to adopting bits and pieces from other programs especially of reformist currents. One example is the uncritical acceptance by a number of the RYM II leaders of the most pernicious Stalinist slanders against the Trotskyist movement including defense of the Stalinist purge trials and Stalin's brutal assassination of Leon Trotsky. All of the crimes were perpetrated to crush the revolutionary Marxist tendency in the USSR and internationally so that the reformist politics of Stalinism could prevail.

This acceptance of so monstrous a counterrevolutionary crime is not unrelated to RYM II's failure to even attempt a political assessment of the Trotskyist organizations, the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party.

One would assume that if the RYM II leaders are serious in their rejection of Trotskyism they would be dissecting each point that they consider to be in error. How can anyone take seriously people who aspire to be revolutionary leaders but do not explain fully where they differ with alternative programs?

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