

Will the real Nat stand up?

By CARL ROLLYSON

Much of the recent unfavorable criticism of William Styron's novel, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, attacks the book for its supposed historical inaccuracies. Several critics, including Mr. Bruce Curtis in the last issue of *Collage*, point out to us what appears to be Styron's neglect or distrust of mere historical fact:

the book is neither racist nor a tract, but a novel, an essay of the imagination where the necessities of always questionable 'fact' often become subsumed into a larger truth. (Nation, April 22, 1968, 545)

Mr. Curtis believes that the author "insists upon his right and duty to reject discrete historical facts when they impede his novelistic purpose of seeking a larger truth." (*Collage*, April 8, 1969, 3)

The fundamental assumption most of these critics make, however, is that they know Nat Turner very well and are capable of judging when Mr. Styron has strayed into the territory of his own fantasies. Actually we know very little about Nat Turner, and most of the information that we do have is found in a document also called *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, written by a Southerner with obvious racist opinions. Most of the other information is con-



tained in highly unreliable Southern newspapers that reported every rumor, every white fantasy, every scare story that proliferated at the time of the revolt. To be brief the document previously mentioned was supposed to be a transcription of Nat Turner's actual words as he sat in jail awaiting his trial and hanging. Although the document was actually written by a Southern racist it is usually taken as genuine because despite his prejudice, the author, T. R. Gray briefly described Nat as a very human, very courageous, and a very astute human being. It is this Nat Turner, the one described in a 5,000 word pamphlet, that Styron lifts out and transforms into a viable black slave who to the very last was unrepentant and considered himself "not guilty" of his alleged crimes because he did not feel so. It is on the basis of this article, then, that we must consider whether Styron "ignores and alters some of the soundest facts about Nat Turner." (*Collage*, April 8, 1969, 3)

Mr. Curtis suggests that one of the "soundest facts" is that Nat Turner learned to read and write from his black parents. No mention is made of this in the novel. Instead Nat Turner is taught to read by his kindly white master, Samuel Turner. What does Styron have in mind in this seeming alteration? Mr. Curtis suggests that it is because Styron wants "black and white to become reconciled." Styron, so the Curtis argument continues, is an integrationist and wants to emphasize the fact that black and white must learn to live together. The emphasis in the novel is pushed from the "black slave quarter to the white big house." One must keep in mind, however, that Styron based his novel on a very short document. In putting together his novel Styron obviously had many questions that needed answering: Who taught Nat's parents to read? How is it that slaves on the Turner plantation were not only allowed to read but indeed they were allowed to teach

their child a fundamental skill denied to almost every other slave in the South? Could the master or his family have taught them? From the original document we know that the whites in the area surrounding the Turner plantation were well aware of Nat's literacy, and they are depicted in Gray's pamphlet as warning that such an educated black would never be content to suffer in a servitude so debasing. Yet for some reason Nat Turner's master neither sold Nat nor prevented him from reading and preaching. Nat also mentions to Gray that several white people taught him to pray. Whether Nat's white master ever positively encouraged him to read we shall never know, but to reject Styron's interpretation of white influence out of hand is a bit hasty to say the least.

It should be stressed here that Styron's interpretation is being defended as one possible way of thinking of Nat Turner but surely not the only way. Certainly Styron in his various comments about his novel has demonstrated that he actually believes he has recreated the historical Nat Turner, but we are not compelled to accept him as gospel or accuse him of making points for integration. For the Nat Turner of his novel is not just another racist view of a dumb darky who is lifted out of his degradation by white education. On the contrary, the Nat of the novel is an inherently bright child who steals the white people's books even before he can read or the whites show any interest in him. Furthermore, he is curious about his parents and his heritage. He is given the example of his father who runs away rather than accept even a momentary insult by a white man. Nat's grandmother dies of a broken heart and even tries to destroy her own child rather than allow it to be subjected to slavery. Finally, Nat rejects the white religion that preaches slaves must obey their masters for his own reading of the Bible, especially the Old Testament prophets.

It would also seem reasonable that even a brilliant black slave, the leader of a rebellion, would feel certain inadequacies. After all none of the slaves had been in positions of leadership, none of them had ever known the feeling of wielding power or even simply carrying themselves in any other manner than as property. Yet Mr. Curtis objects that too much importance has been placed on Nat's close relationship with white people:

A MAN

*A Man was killed today
The sun didn't set early
Birds continued to fly
And the clouds still held the mountains
in place
Some people said it was
my fault
I wasn't there
He was supposed to have been
great
Does that mean
I'm responsible for only great men's
death
It isn't very strange
He's being killed somewhere else
today
And I've only been awake a short
time
But I'm responsible
I'm going to die
someday
And I won't be on the
front page
I'll be covered by
dirt
And not guilt
So you don't have to worry
Because I'm not important enough to be
... your fault*

--John Dowling



His meaningful intellectual exchanges are with white. His sexual fantasies are lily white. The most meaningful human relationship he experiences is with a white girl. . . William Styron's Nat Turner wants white. He wants to be integrated.

Again Mr. Curtis is suggesting that Styron wants to prove something about his political philosophy. Yet one need not take Mr. Styron's portrait of a black man who both hates and loves his people while at the same time reaching out for the supposedly ideal, the clean, the pure, the wonderful white woman! One only has to read such black writers as Calvin Hernton, James Baldwin, Claude Brown, and Malcolm X to know that given a long history where the black man has been treated as a peculiarity, a "Negro," a piece of filth, he will often and sometimes unwillingly finally submit to the caricature that whites have made of him. This includes at times a desire for the most valuable of all flesh, white flesh. Since so little is known about Nat's actual sex life, there is no need to censure its appearance in the novel. Furthermore, Nat never does ravish a white



woman, and he explicitly orders his fellow rebels never to "defile the white woman." Styron's reading of Nat is not contrary to the spirit of the original document. For in the document one is impressed with Nat's unrelenting devotion to revolt, his unshakable belief that his mission was ordained by God, and it is easy to conceive of such a man deciding to become a celibate to insure that his human failings would not endanger his divinely revealed calling.

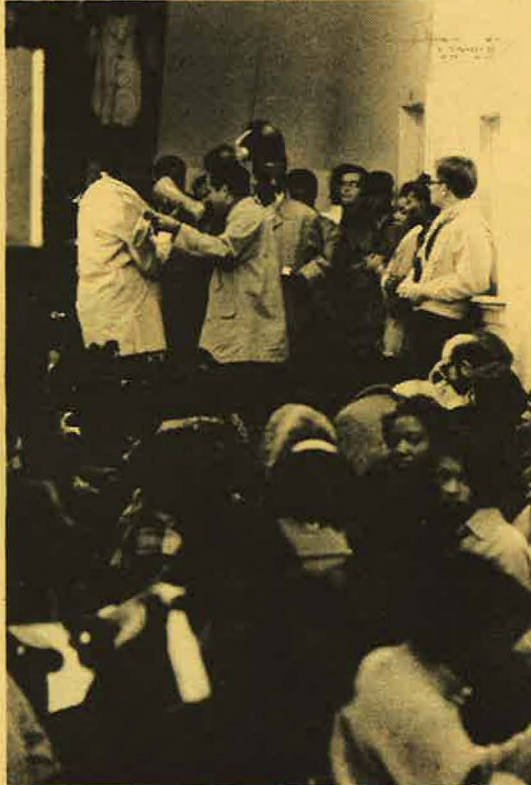
Another strange objection Mr. Curtis raises is that Styron is not a historian, and therefore, seems to have "little use for history." Yet Styron claims to have spent over twenty years doing historical research and thinking on Nat Turner. Also, Mr. Styron grew up near Southampton County, the scene of the Turner revolt and is well acquainted with the people and the geographical area. Other eminent historians of the South including C. Vann Woodward and Eugene Genovese describe Styron as a remarkably good historian. Finally Mr. Curtis states that Styron's Nat Turner "would almost certainly be unrecognizable to the original." Again he is making it seem like there is a real Nat Turner, an objectively historical Nat Turner, that can be made to stand up. Mr. Styron was aware of the weakness of such a position in his author's note when he stated it was a "meditation on history." The best we can say for the novel is that it gives us one way of considering how Nat Turner may have felt, but we shall never know historically the truth of our feelings. The best one can do is to return to the document of 1831 and compare it with the novel. A detailed and thoughtful analysis of the two will lead us to conclude that Mr. Styron did not distort the meager historical facts, but rather he provided us with a wealth of insights to help understand what slavery must have been like as it crossed and recrossed the paths of both black and white individuals.

historical Outline of

By MARION NOWAK

1961: In this year, as through the rest of the Kennedy era, semi-complacency rather than the supposed involvement of concerned youth was the rule. The State News was still able to print front-page headliner articles discussing "meeting the threat to our society from the Communist bloc" with a straight face. The only really radical group around was the Young Socialist Club, and its strength in influencing the University's student body was virtually nonexistent. The big radical event of 1961 was the arrest of student Woolcott Smith in Mississippi for freedom-riding. A Student committee for Woolcott Smith, formed to raise money for bail and fines, fell far short of its goal.

1962: On May 21, the board of trustees triggered the year's major controversy by banning communist speaker Robert Thompson from the campus. Instead, Thompson finally spoke in the yard of the Delta Sigma Phi fraternity, to



an audience of 2000, mostly hecklers. Subsequently ten members of the fraternity were fined a total of \$500 by their Lansing alumni control board. A campaign by the Young Socialist Club, Thompson's original sponsors, managed to raise \$100 toward the fines.

The final result of the Thompson controversy was the formation of the Campus Club Conference. Composed of the heads of nine influential student groups ranging from Young Socialists to AUSG (All University Student Government, forerunner of ASMSU), the purpose of the conference was to sponsor unapproved speakers. In October the CCC presented a series of non-approved speakers from SNCC without incident.

Transition Years

1964-1965: These were the transition years from complacency into involvement, from general apathy to greater (relatively, of course) concern. Importantly, the complacency-concern pattern is paralleled by the death of Kennedy and ascendancy of Johnson.

The most vital event of 1964 was the formation of the Committee for Student Rights (CSR). CSR was not and never sought to become a University-approved organization. Their goals appear merely liberal at best today—but (affording a brilliant view of the MSU student body five years ago) they were condemned as wild, subversive radicals whenever they surfaced, which was frequently. The wild subversive goals of CSR were several. In February, 1965 they iterated them as: liberalization of women's hours and of overnight permissions, improvement of restrictions against moving off-campus and elimination of the University's "in loco parentis" attitude toward its students. CSR was largely condemned by both the administration and much of the student body be-

cause of these "extremist" views and because the group refused to seek official recognition. A senior who began here in 1965 says of an experience with freshman orientation, "CSR was big then (summer of '65) and was passing out leaflets to prospective freshmen claiming that orientation was a bunch of bullshit. At a 'Meet ASMSU' presentation, a sleek, slick session for orientation students, someone asked who was passing out the leaflets. An equally sleek, slick ASMSU girl emphatically explained that it was from an UNAUTHORIZED student group and the leaflets were, therefore, UNAUTHORIZED. I was horrified and sickened at the thought that I had accepted the leaflet." Yet on February 23, 1965, 4,202 students signed a CSR petition demanding improvement of off-campus regulations.

The same term, the State News was finally able to note with delight that "MSU finally made it!" The event admitting us into this vague big-league was MSU's very first peaceful anti-Viet Nam demonstration. A series of civil rights sit-ins in the Lansing area shifted the general sense of amazement at this fledgling form of activism away from Berkeley and toward MSU. Suddenly there was not just a Young Socialist Club and CSR but a Committee on Vietnam and, soon, an MSU chapter of SDS (that was to be the most long-lived radical group here). In fall, 1965 the chapter, in a protest at the annual Careers Carnival, found several of its number arrested in the melee of the protest. This event, however, was largely submerged as a greater controversy, one of the two most significant radical-oriented controversies in MSU history, unfolded.

Paul Schiff

Paul M. Schiff was a graduate student from New Rochelle, N.Y., who had been accepted to the University in 1963 on provisional status working toward a masters in economics. In Spring of '65 Schiff did not enroll, instead applying to MSU for readmission as a history master's candidate.

On June 3, Schiff received a letter from this history dept. informing him that he'd been so accepted. On June 21, he received another letter from Registrar Horace C. King informing him that he'd been denied readmission. John A. Fuzak, vice president for student affairs, said that the reasons for Schiff's denial were not political. Schiff had, however, exhibited what the administrator felt was a "pattern of disruptive behavior" here, best exemplified by such actions of subversion as his circulation of Logos (CSR's satirical publication). Schiff, thus, was being refused readmission for entirely nonacademic reasons.

Schiff's prominence as a radical figure here was great. He had been president of the Young Socialists Club fall '64 and winter '65, on the steering committee of the Committee on Vietnam and an active member of CSR. His case against the university contained six major points: that there exist a lack of specifically defined regulations which are easily accessible to students; that the university restricts freedom of expression; that the University lacks any written bill of particulars governing students; that the University acts in a denial of due process; that there exists here a distinct lack of freedom of political expression and that non-academic considerations have taken precedence over academic ones in accepting students.

In November, Schiff took his case as a complaint against MSU to the federal court in Grand Rapids which handed the case back to MSU. On January 11, 1966, he was, after over a term of controversy, formally readmitted to the University.

On the occasion, Eldon R. Nonamaker, dean of students, said that "we never suspend students for more than a year." He termed the entire action "routine."

In the same month, MSU's chapter of SDS voted to form an anti-draft union. The idea of this union, the forerunner of various national resistance movements, was designed

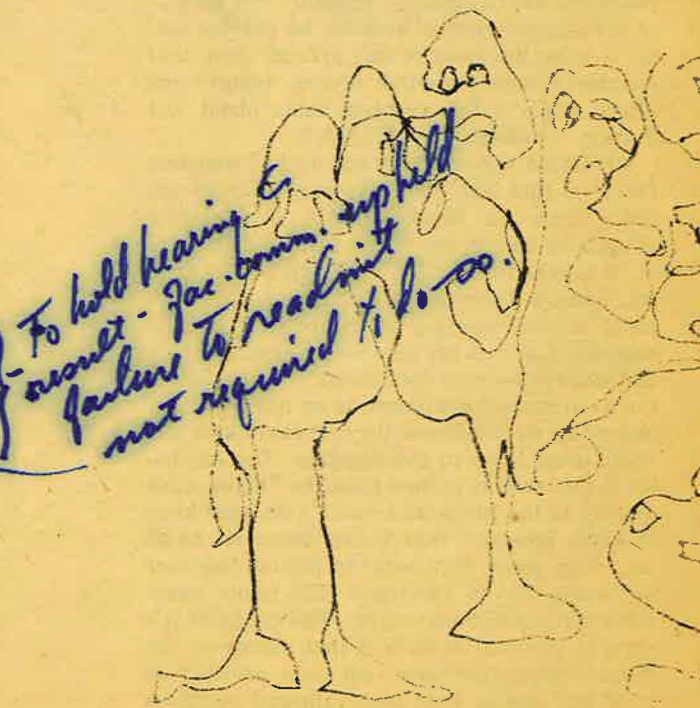
as a largely political device. Its goals were threefold: first, circulating a petition of draft resistance reading in part "We, young men of draft age, certify our refusal to serve in Vietnam or to submit to conscription in any form"; second, counseling on alternatives to the draft; third, working in communications, occasionally referred to by members as agitation and propaganda: agitprop. Sometime during this period CSR as an organization of any sort died. SDS, however, kept in there punching with political activism of a non-local focus. (This in itself may account for its perennial nature: minimum local radical involvement with emphasis on the national and international. Significantly, every MSU radical group with a basis in a local issue, from CSR to SLA in '68, has expired from apathy and lack of momentum.)

Fall, 1966: SDS, in a change of tactics from those of the previous year's Careers Carnival, held a highly organized protest in the form of leaflet distribution at the carnival. The leaflets were based on the idea that "War is Good Business" and that the majority of the companies represented at the Careers Carnival all contributed in some manner to the support of the war machine.

Orange Horse Rally

The same term the university's most successful radical confrontation in terms of popular support exploded around the mediocre facade of Bessey Hall, submerging the work of SDS for some time. The entire issue was touched off when the ATL dept. told three instructors that they would not be rehired when their contracts expired in June of the following year. The men, William Gary Groat, John Kenneth Lawless and Robert S. Fogarty, all demanded some reason for the termination. (As has been seen, tradition here holds that no reason need be given for such administrative actions as student suspension and contract termination). The most immediate results of the term were a request from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to review the ruling on the trio on the grounds that there existed considerable doubt that they had been "denied reappointment for purely professional reasons." According to the three men, such was most definitely the case. Groat was an editorial advisor, and Lawless a contributor to Zeitgeist, area magazine which Groat said "rocks the boat" against the University establishment. Fogarty, although not connected with Zeitgeist, felt that he, too, was being fired for rocking the boat in the classroom.

The ATL controversy spawned a new radical organization, United Students (US), with activism directed at a more local level than the



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(continued from page 3)

like it with their emphasis on instrumental and corporate-serving skills easily disposes of such myopia. There are also those, in some ways even more blind, who argue the university is merely a stopping place for children of the middle-class on their way to the society of the suburbs. In some sense, this is the more dangerous view because it forms a large part of the ideology of the university itself. From the time one arrives at a campus like MSU, you are told of the "privileges" you enjoy; of the "careers" that await you, and of the "knowledge" you are receiving. In the classroom, the emphasis is always on the safe and distant past, or on the horizonless future for which you are being prepared. In either case, the individual experience of futility, the genuine oppression one experiences doing meaningless work for some future employer is denied. One can either wait until he or she enters the "real world" or one can, out of guilt, assume the oppression of others--as happened with regard to the old civil-rights movement--to give meaning to one's own life. Both responses are self-denying. Even more important for our concern with building a strong movement, both deny the legitimacy of moving against this society *where one is at*.

What is not understood in both these objections is the centrality to which American colleges and universities have moved in our society. Ours continues to be a capitalist society dependent upon the extraction of profit from the many for the benefit of the few, but *not* a capitalist society in which the wage-earning class is composed of semi-skilled factory hands as in Marx's day. Rather, the continuance of capitalism is dependent, among other things, upon the availability of a large, highly-skilled, technical-scientific labor force. No single corporation can underwrite the many years of training (i.e. "education") necessary to maintain itself. The requisite labor force is trained by the universities, high-schools and armed forces "tech" schools under the guidance of the state and paid for by all working people in the form of taxes. In a very real sense, the universities are part of the production process.

Some of us in SDS feel that whatever strategy we adopt for challenging our society, it must be informed of such realities. Such a strategy revolves around a seminal proposal made five months ago by Mike Klonsky at a national council meeting in Ann Arbor. Entitled, "Toward a Revolutionary Youth Movement," it was based on an understanding of the antagonisms that already exist in our society, *vis.* the black liberation struggle and the movement of young people.

At MSU, in developing a revolutionary youth movement that will change society, we must expose and struggle against the AID program and the International Center, the ROTC which trains the army for aggressions abroad, the police administration school which enforces laws protecting the interests of the unpropertied few, the entire system of channeling students into specific slots and skills that will serve to perpetuate America's imperial ambitions. We must build a movement *here* that defies the university's right to make decisions that affect our lives. We must build a movement *here* that defies the university's right to participate in the oppression of people around the world. We must build a movement *here* that defies the student's right to be recruited to kill or participate in the oppression of people around the world. We must build a movement that will end racism at this university.

Such a struggle must eventually incorporate all sections of America's working class but it can only begin here with each of us.



Radicalism at MSU

politically-oriented SDS. US organized the main part of student protest against the firing, included such mass meetings as the all-night November 15-16 Orange Horse rally, attended by 1,100 students (where an obscure psychology instructor named Bert Garskof told the crowd that if the three were ultimately fired, it was the students' fault), and a vigil in Bessey Hall lasting through the following weekend.

Ultimately, everyone from ASMSU to the AAUP demanded reasons for the actions of the dept. But the three, in spite of one of the best-supported student movements at Michigan State were not rehired. United Students lasted through the school year, wilting away sometime in '67.

Meanwhile, MSU's SDS continued to plan political activism.

Winter, '67: the group announced final development of their Anti-Draft Union, designed to block the draft in any feasible manner of protest. They gained converts but popular attention was soon transferred once again to more local issues.

Spring, 1967: After years of effort beginning with the early work of CSR, the Board of Trustees finally agreed to two major issues that were startling innovative in terms of administrative attitudes: liberalization of women's hours and acceptance of an actually written Academic Freedom Report.

Fall, 1967: SDS continues its efforts against the draft. An attempted dialogue with Navy and Marine recruiters in December succeeded in attracting students (many because of the electric band) but failed in creating any dialogue with the recruiters.

Winter, 1968: Digressing from its anti-draft plans, SDS began concentration on the local issues of the University by requesting permission to hold a cost-price booksale of paperbacks in the Union. The request was denied on several grounds, mostly based on such regulations as a prohibition against selling non-student publications on campus and a soliciting regulation.

The booksale was held anyway. The most significant occurrence was that books were sold. The University never took action against the booksellers; yet neither did SDS follow up its new advantage.

Spring, 1968: Several significant radical events took place this term. The most vital of these

events was the emergence of the Black Students' Alliance (BSA), which following the death of Martin Luther King presented a list of demands concerning black recruitment and Afro-American studies programs to the University.

The next event took place during finals week in a massive three-day protest before everyone went home. The protest was triggered by the arrest of 12 students for drug possession. In protest of the methods used in the arrest, several students from among a crowd of emotional protesters sat in at the Administration Building, allowing themselves to be locked in when it closed at 4:30. At this time they were technically trespassers on University property and, as such, were promptly arrested. Consequent climactic anger and indignation led to the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to raise funds for their bail, and for the fines of those arrested on marijuana charges. When finals week ended, so did the protests.

In Fall, 1968, the Ad Hoc group reemerged in an entirely different form. Having over the summer announced a goal of giving students more control over the decisions of the university, they appeared fall term renamed the Student Liberation Alliance (SLA). The first major SLA activity was the disruption of the Hannah convocation welcoming incoming freshmen.

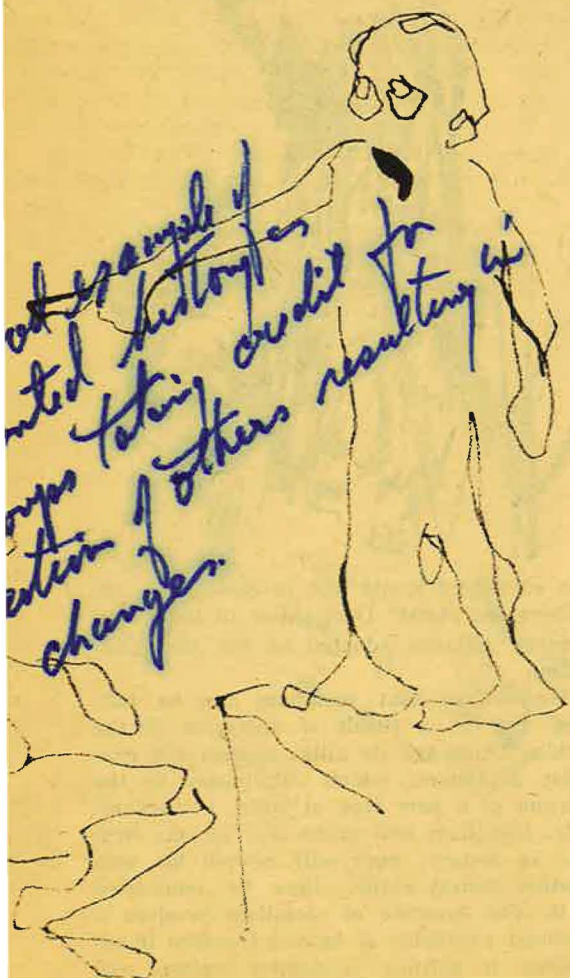
Bert Garskof

Winter, 1969 SLA took part in the attempt to reinstate assistant professor of psychology Bert Garskof. The Garskof controversy, reminiscent of the ATL controversy of 1966, began with demands for reasons for noncontinuation of Garskof's contract. Christening itself The Movement, the pro-Garskof action absorbed such groups as SLA in trying to attain an emotional re-run of the ATL controversy. To avoid becoming a one-issue movement, the organizing committee of The Movement magnified its demands to include one concerning "the class divisions in society." In the words of the committee: "We demand that the University institute a policy of open admissions for black, Third World, and white working class people."

It was largely because of this added demand that the objectives of The Movement failed. Any movement seeking popular appeal must use popular issues, play upon popular fears, to get the student body's attention. In the Schiff case, the general fear of suspension by the powers that be was played upon. The ATL controversy was MSU's most successful radical confrontation because it was based on the universal dislike of the ATL dept. But the Movement, in its discussions of organic learning, the "Third World" and "brothers and sisters" managed largely to alienate middle-of-the-road students who felt left out. In such an atmosphere, the Garskof controversy atrophied.

Spring, 1969: While The Movement still continues, the Garskof issue has lost importance as other than a symbol. Garskof's firing, however, inspired the formation of yet another radical group. Composed of faculty, staff and graduate students, the organization calls itself the New University Conference. Dedicated to liberation from the repressions of American society, the Conference has chosen to begin such liberation at the universities because, in the words of a member writing in this issue, "the university is strategically involved in the world society." (NUC's platform is discussed on page 8.) The appearance of several controversies this term can already be predicted: foremost among these are an attempt to eliminate ROTC at the University and an attempt to secure more academic and social freedom for students within the structure of the University.

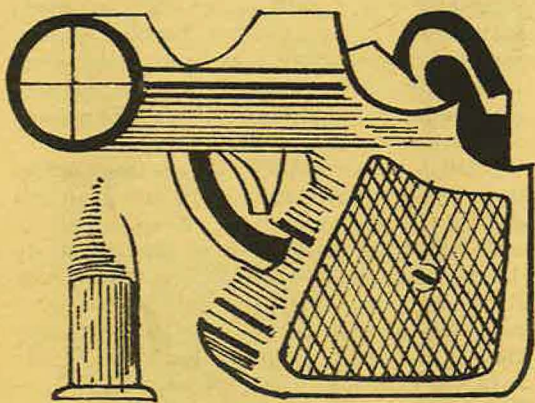
Whether the groups forwarding these attempts can manage to survive remains to be seen. CSR holds the MSU local-issue radical record of a year and a half. It will take much longer than this to "liberate the University." The new multitude of MSU radical groups is fighting not just the stereotypes of administration and apathy, but the stereotyping of time.



Garskof's legacy

The New University Conference is a radical organization composes primarily of professors, staff and graduate students. Our history is brief, having started with the firing of Bert Garskof.

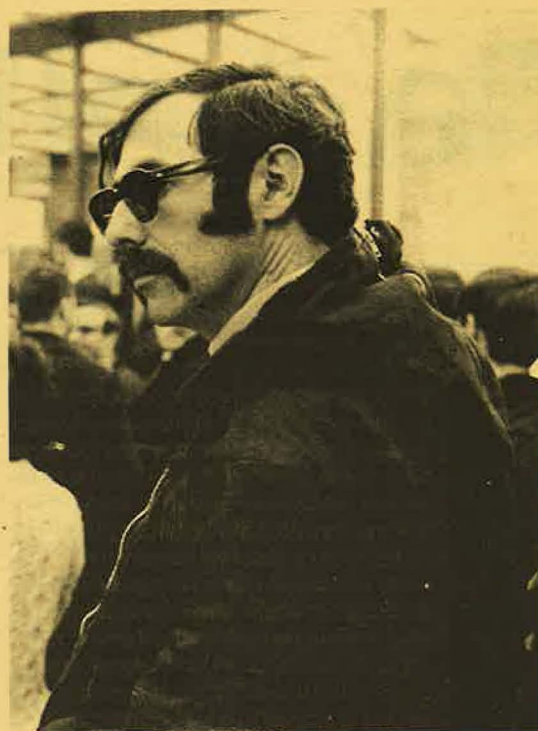
Our primary concern is to change those conditions which, under the present State, suppress and pervert the human spirit. Our goal is the creation of a society which will liberate our finer and subtler selves. We begin the struggle at our University, for not only are we physically present in a university community, but the American university is strategically involved in world affairs in a fashion directly counter to our ideals. The university provides brain power and organizers for numerous repressive governmental activities, and develops little more than "socially useful" capacities of its students.



The transformation of these conditions poses several obstacles which are not to be minimized. Quite obviously, some of us are in danger of being fired or at the least alienated from our colleagues. Of a more complex nature is the involvement of potential NUC members who are committed to support present university policies, by virtue of their long records of complicity and outright approval. To renounce one's past actions demands intense honesty and critical thought. The relatively stable environment of academia doubtless engenders insufficient self-appraisal among our professors. The idea that a correct political analysis, upon which effective action is based, is deemed impossible by some and undesirable by others. Students, surrounded by hypocritical authority on all sides, bombarded by conflicting reports from numerous sources, and witnessing the increasing and slanderous attacks upon the New Left, are uncertain of any "truth," much less its execution. Many of the faculty assume a position of neutrality.

NUC feels that these tendencies can be countered by individual direct involvement. The person changes with action. Our actions have political consequences and therefore we must investigate our situation and act in terms of our awareness and feelings.

What does NUC hope to do in light of its objectives and obstacles? We hope to do the following:



Maintain our existence as an example of radical political action;

Continue with the Garskof case;

Establish a critical university wherein we may examine our system with the sole aim of making it fit for human life;

Eliminate ROTC and other destructive programs;

Provide information and analysis of specific issues. We have just comprised a fifteen-page document considering Dr. Garskof's dismissal;

Cooperate with and aid other radical groups with coinciding interests.

Young Socialists in Action

By GINNY OSTEEN

In its desire to label and classify every phenomenon of today's society, the American public has chosen to lump all radicals into the political grouping known as the New Left. Yet, for all its expediency, this classification is extremely inaccurate, for we of the Young Socialist Alliance do not consider ourselves part of the New Left. In terms of years, we are young and new; in terms of political traditions and experience, we are as old as the "Communist Manifesto" of 1859.

The YSA was organized in 1960 by a group of individuals who saw the need for a revolutionary socialist youth group in the United States composed of young workers and stu-



dents. Various political parties existed—all claiming to be revolutionary socialist parties, but there was no autonomous youth group as such. The YSA bases itself on the revolutionary principles of Marxism as developed by Lenin and Trotsky, and works closely with the Socialist Workers Party, although we have no structural ties with it.

The Young Socialist Alliance is a disciplined national organization -- not a federation of autonomous local groups. We operate under the principle of democratic centralism which was developed by Lenin in the Bolshevik Party. When a person joins the YSA, it is understood

that he is in basic agreement with our politics. All political decisions are made democratically, but once the majority decides on a policy, the entire organization works together as a team to carry out these decisions. In contrast, SDS embraces a number of varying—and at times conflicting—tendencies, such as Maoists, anarchists, and those with no concrete political analysis at all.

The Young Socialist Alliance is part of the international revolutionary socialist movement. We have co-thinkers in almost every country of the world, and sister organizations such as the JCR in France which was in the leadership of the student-worker revolt of May and June, and the YS/LJS in Canada.

To defend and support the revolutionary struggles for liberation occurring throughout the world today constitutes one of the most important tasks of the YSA. Mobilizing masses of American people to demonstrate against the Vietnam war has been an important phase of our activity, for this anti-war work is the best way to defend the Vietnamese revolution. We support the Czechoslovakian workers and students in their fight for democratic socialism against the Russian bureaucracy. Because of our unceasing defense of the Cuban revolution, fourteen YSA members received invitations from the Cuban government to attend the 10th Anniversary celebration of the Revolution. After spending six weeks in "el territorio libre de norteamérica," these members are presently traveling across the United States, telling the truth about Cuban society.

The black liberation struggle and the fight against racism cause much controversy today among the various radical factions. The YSA realizes that to destroy racism one must attack its economic base—capitalism. To fight racism without fighting capitalism is to cut off the top of the weed without pulling out its roots. In the United States, Afro-Americans and Third World people consider themselves a national minority, and therefore merit the right to self-determination—the right to remove themselves from the racist exploitation of American capitalism. We defend their right to lead their own struggle for liberation by means of their own organizations, e.g., an independent black political party, such as the Black Panther Party; black caucuses within the trade unions, such as the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) in Detroit; and Third World Liberation Fronts, such as the one at San Francisco State. As

revolutionaries, we see the present struggle of national minorities for self-determination as a prelude to the revolutionary struggle of the entire working class for control of their own lives through socialism.

Although the Young Socialist Alliance is relatively young, it has been growing in numbers, strength, and political experience. We have a rich tradition behind us; we have not, as those of the New Left have, rejected the lessons to be learned from Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and Debs. Indeed, we have enriched their teaching with those of modern revolutionary leaders such as Malcolm X and Che Guevara.



In closing, I would like to quote from the "Where We Stand" Declaration of the Young Socialist Alliance adopted at the 1963 Convention.

"We believe that socialism can be initiated only as a result of struggles of the working class and its allies against the capitalist exploiters, which culminates in the creation of a new type of state, a workers' state. Socialism will mean that for the first time in history, man will control his own creation—society—rather than be controlled by it. The dynamic of socialism involves a continual expansion of human freedom in all spheres: in politics, economics, culture and in every aspect of personal life."