JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM
IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATION

AGENCY : CIA
RECORD NUMBER : 04-104 33-10157
RECORD SERIES : JFK
AGENCY FILE NUMBER : RUSS HOLMES WORK FILE

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : CIA
FROM :
TO :
TITLE : THE NEW LEFT
DATE : 10/09/68
PAGES : 12
SUBJECTS : KING

CLASSIFICATION : UNCLASSIFIED
REQUIREMENTS : OPEN IN FULL
CURRENT STATUS : OPEN
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 12/18/98
OPENING CRITERIA :

Released under the John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Act of 1992 (44 USC 2107 Note).
Case#: NW 53216 Date: 06-13-2017

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTED
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
NINETY-SECOND CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

OCTOBER 8, 1958

Printed for the use of the Committee on the Judiciary

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402
The New Left

only the black press and the African press be invited to all future SNCC press conferences (ibid., p. 12).

It was this kind of metamorphosis which transformed SNCC and CORE from civil rights organizations into revolutionary forces calling, not for the defense of Negroes into society, but for the revolutionary reconstruction of 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 outrage to every civilized man. There is no need to say anything 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 extremist. Before his death, however, he had moved into an increasingly open alliance with the extremists and he had become increasingly flexible in his criticism of American foreign policy.

In his opening address to the American Society in New York on April 4, 1967, King called on "all who have brought the American course in Vietnam to dishonor and unjust one" to apply conscientious objection to military service. He described the U.S. Government as the "greatest purveyor of violence in the world today." (New York Times, 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" must be "prioritized" so that "the resources 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 $100,000 to finance the work and that:

"We plan to use the Vietnamese summer project as a major organized follow-up to last week's peace demonstration. It will offer a constructive channel for all those who say, 'What can I do?'

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

Aggressive power can be made to yield to organized courage to the right for peace.

14-11-67
On April 24, 1967, in Cambridge, Mass., Martin Luther King, 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 anti-draft 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-in." (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 anti-war movement by 1968. "We are 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 leading his "mantra of responsibility" 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 Williams, 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, Camp Curtin Williams, 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 spread the summer long to communities organizing and educating against the war. By 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. 20, 1967, p. 5-6.

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

The antiaircraft aspect of the New Left has been adopted by more within the civil rights movement. On May 1, 1967, Cleland B. 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 Sickle 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 anti-war march in New York, and San Francisco, was asked how he would "implement" anti-draft sentiments. "You don't need a whole lot of complicated plans," Bevel said. "When Dr. Johnson comes around to get you, you just say: 'I won't go.'" He expressed the view that:

Mr. Johnson is not going to knock us into un Miglet. We're going to organize protests 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. We're going down North Main Street. * * * Come down North Main Street. * * * Come down North Main Street. * * * Come down North Main Street.

An anti-draft 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 COs; that is, they are pledged not merely to get out by going to Canada, staying in graduate school, forsaking children, etc., but actually to combat the draft (National Guardian, Apr. 29, 1967, p. 5).

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 demonstrations "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 see a very close parallel with such a leader directing a draft notice and the Governor of a State sending a schoolhouse door in demand of that State to the State university and attempts to exclude her for the sole reason that she is a Negro."

He said:

Defence is defence, whether you are directing a draft notice or a Federal court order (Washington Post, May 3, 1967, p. 4-A). Flowers noted that to make, per se, defense and black supremacy are just as immoral and illegal as white power, defense, 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-acters have bide too common (New York Times, Apr. 14, 1967, p. 20).

At the anti-war 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, Ron Williams, 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 march in Chicago last summer "created hate." The Rev. Henry Mitchell said that—

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

He noted that the ministers represented the sentiments of 50,000 Chicago Negroes who went "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 14, 1967. The burning was spontaneous, following hangings of effigies of Hershey, University President James M. Nabrit, Jr., and Dean Frank-Knowden of Howard's College of Liberal Arts. After the hangings and a round of speeches denouncing Nabrit and Knowden as "Uncle Toms" someone in the crowd of more than 100 students yelled, "Burn that white motherf*cker," Other students quickly took to the roof, shouting "burn him" and "explan 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 11. Outside the building Ronald D. 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 type we're going to disrupt it some more. We don't intend to be showing this university to pot. I say we don't have time for Hershey. First let's get rid of every Uncle Tom around here (Ibid.)."

A cache of arms, ranging from a 45-caliber Smith & Wesson Model 10 revolver to a saved-off rifle, was uncovered by police in a raid on a Harlem theater noted for its pro-black plays and anti-white 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 black detectives at the door. Police said they found a sign inside the theater, which read:

All weapons cleared and sharpened by 6 p.m. All weapons will be inspected by E.H. the Leader.

The theater is the same one founded by bitterly anti-white poet-playwright LeRoi Jones with partial support from antipoverty funds.

(Washington Post, Mar. 18, 1968.)
against things as they are, regardless of whether the things be desirable or beneficial.

It is for this reason, too, that violence becomes a fact 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 discussion, debate, and a democratic and peaceful settlement of disputes. The New Left, especially 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 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 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 popular protest in Negro civil rights seemed to have reached a peak during the early and middle years of the Vietnam war, but the protests waned, and there were signs that the Negroes (as compared with the general public) favored the war. Yet, simultaneously, the polls suggested a dramatic decline in King's popularity among Negroes. Only 15 percent of the Negroes were willing to vote for him if he ran for President. The most articulate antiwar activists have been those who have come to regard King's position on Vietnam as a major issue. King had never been a supporter of the war, of course, but he had not taken a clear and public stand against it.

Despite the efforts of the militant Negro participation in antiwar protests has been slight. Many see a parallel with past efforts of the Communist Party to solicit 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 attempts 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 within 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 oppressive system and its institutions and policies... all must be restored to the country that it doesn't need it. If we can't have it...
Sidkes noted that

you must not confuse some of the many disturbances around our country

that have disrupted the lives of people of all races and traditions and
disrupted our political and social fabric. The impact of the events the other night were

just another chapter in our nation's history of racial and economic injustice.

Secretary Gardner has said, the disturbances have not stemmed the tide. In many cases, they have

been used as a means to achieve their goals. If this continues, society will face a much 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 condition can act to

defeat its influence and power.
April 15, 1967 was 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, War in Vietnam, a non-confederation of New Left pacifists, and was sponsored by the Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a loose confederation of New Left pacifists, and was sponsored by the Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a loose confederation of New Left pacifists, and was sponsored by the Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a loose confederation of New Left pacifists.

About an hour before the parade started a crowd of young demonstrators gathered on a rock in Central Park to burn their draft cards and Demo scripts. A strong of several thousand people, many of whom carried or wore badges, 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 held a 50-foot-high tower of black cardboard tubing in the center of 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 eyewitness report stresses this fact:

"The march, which estimated at from 100,000 to 200,000 gathered at the Sheep Meadow in Central Park, was the first important event since the antiwar movement was formed. The angry and forceful demonstration against the War Committee for Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam, which was initiated by an announcement that one of the antiwar groups would present themselves in the park as a point of departure, where the advocates of LSD marched and performed their own private ritual. One sign that had appeared between 50 and 100 people were their colored banners and flags. The National Committee on Vietnam was used for what was politely known as "Perhaps the event was being turned on by a non-political group," said a social worker who happened to be present. The National Committee on Vietnam was later distributed by the National Committee on Vietnam, which was formed to protest the draft and to denounce the war."

The Peace Movement in Our Own Country,"
THE NEW LEIT

We are caught in a war that seeks to turn the clock of history back and
reverse the revolutions. The greatest irony and tragedy of it all is that
what is now cast in the mould of today is the result of today's
anti-revolutionists. (National
Prof. Howard Zinn of Boston University told the New York rally

"...The administration has said a social revolution is needed in this
country, which it has failed to make. Here is a
country! In the National Liberation Front
in South Vietnam, a large group has
organized, making this country a
pariah. In the National Liberation
Front, the Communist Party of
South Vietnam has been formed.

According to antitwar spokesmen, the mobilization represented the
broader coalition of "peace" groups. One peace group which did
support the demonstration was the National Committee for a Free
South Vietnam, led by William Price, National Guardian reporter, noted
with local San Francisco. One delegation arrived at 3:00 p.m. at
the State House. In the group was Gay Hall, Communist Party
leader, and others. The demonstration received a warm welcome
from onlookers and those in the background.

The demonstration was held in front of the National Committee for a Free
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
was there to show your support for the Vietnamese people's struggle for
freedom. The time has come to take sides. Today you are on the
side of the Vietnamese people's freedom struggle. The time has come to
support the Vietnamese people's struggle for their freedom. Today you are
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but to "orient it toward..." the revolutionary organization whose program does present 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 unequivocal "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 mass popular 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 decision-making 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 poverty-stricken elements of society, and among them the unskilled, the workers on the 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 of society" (National Guardian, "SDS Aim: To Build New Consciousness", Apr. 15, 1967, p. 5).

The national secretary of Students for a Democratic Society, Gregory Culver, said that "we are working to build a guerrilla force in an urban environment. We are actively organizing splinter groups in the city."

New Left's current infatuation with direct action was nothing
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." The issues and standards of our society, the National Conference for New Politics, which took place in Chicago during the first week of September, 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 approaches the 1966 elections. The group convened on August 31, 1965, 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 Eklof noted that:

"...there is any other concern as the movement grows up, it would be the question of how the movement will be given up. The participants rejected the calls to move "from power to politics." Electoral action, however, should move beyond the streets. If new politics is to mean anything, it means it will move more than the ballot box and into the political life."

(The Worker, Sept 4, 1965, p. 1.)

In a position paper prepared prior to the Chicago meeting, the N. Y. H. Delano Club set forth its own approach. It stated that:

"Our the place of the 1964 ticket on the ballot is assured, then other work may in moderation, and a place ticket in the Democratic primary can be the basis for holding a larger number of Democratic voters to support a 1964 presidential slate in November 1966, after Johnson is renominated. But if there is no place ticket in 1963 the voters against Johnson will have no place to go except the other ticket of the New American Approach to the 1966 Elections."

(The Worker, Aug 30, 1965, p. 1.)

Some of the 2,000 participants wanted to field a third party ticket in 1965, 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 victory of 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 it is "sickening," with no end in sight, and that there is a need for good men to move into a situation in which the 1966-68 elections are made a referendum on the war. The American people must have an opportunity to vote into office those who can bring themselves from militarism, those who hold no faith to a new world but end us to the brink of a dead world." (The Washington Post, Sept 1, 1965.)

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 hard 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.)

Some Negroes found themselves in agreement with the demands of the militant black power advocates. Joseph Dawes, son of Ex-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 Rights, 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 by the late 1960s we shall be able to look back upon this national convention as the beginning of a struggle to the destruction of this nation by those that have been engaged in national politics. This convention may also prove to be the burial ground for our hopes and programs and ideals. It may become a footnote in history recording not our struggles but our missed opportunities. I fear we may look back as a time when the left engaged in national politics upon this convention as being the place where the left and the right engaged in national politics and its result. Where ideological absolutes replaced both theory and practice. (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. Jeffery L. Hodes analyzed this event in these terms:

"Drawn by the Black Caucus, the sponsoring NCNP never was able to pursue its original objectives: acceptance of a King-Spock ticket for SDS. Support for Dr. King dissipated after his opening night speech. He not only failed to fulfills the expectations, but the Black Caucus and while cadres wrote him off as posturing Lyndon and Robert Harris of SDS stated in a position paper that "the Black Caucus' prime objective is to continue the black revolution" and hence could not be trusted as candidates for the "weaker" black candidates. (The New Left, 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 that the revolution must start in the form society, itself. The real power, they contend, lies within corporate, media, universities, and the military. It is in these areas that they claim to be creating an alternative society. They propose to substitute representative institutions, on altering these systems and to be "the people" and to radicalize the poor.

Others in Chicago sharply differed with the SDS approach. Dr. King of the New Action Politics believes the President the focus of American politics. He urged the idea that providing a third choice would intensify the limits of national debate and the existing order.

Two clear-cut approaches emerged. For the first called for local political action, organizing the ghettos and working-class communities, with local cadres opposing the war. The second, supported by New York and California delegations, proposed an independent national ticket, with candidates 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 compromise ticket was held in a statement to tent out a compromise between SDS and the Californians. Mr. Jackson of SDS and Mr. Brewer of the New Action Politics reached the resolution on local organization activities of Birdes proposed linking the resolution to local organizational.