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The American Youth Movement Today, by Mary Alice Waters

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THE AMERICAN YOUTH MOVEMENT TODAY

[The following is the text of remarks on the American youth movement which were presented by Mary-Alice Waters, National Secretary of the Young Socialist Alliance, in extending fraternal greetings to twenty-second national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. Permission to print these remarks has been granted as a fraternal courtesy by the Young Socialist Alliance.]

This year's Socialist Workers Party convention falls quite conveniently not only on the 50th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, but also on the 10th Anniversary of the Young Socialist, the publication that speaks for revolutionary socialist youth in the United States. It was around the Young Socialist that the first cadres of the Young Socialist Alliance were formed. Today we have the perspective of a decade in which to view the current state of the YSA, its evolution, and its perspectives. It is an appropriate time to review the success of the YSA in the construction of a revolutionary socialist youth organization, and to compare this with the attempts by the other tendencies in the working class movement to win a new generation of radical youth to their ideas.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

The last decade in the U.S., as well as other parts of the world, has witnessed an increasing student radicalization. This phenomenon takes on a greater social importance than at any previous time. In the U.S., a large and growing percentage of American youth from all class backgrounds are now going on to some form of higher education and students comprise a larger percentage of the total population than ever before.

Four major developments in the international class struggle during the last decade have served as the rallying points for student radicals and contributed to the growing realization among American youth that the enemy truly is at home. The first has been the black freedom struggle in this country, beginning in the mid-50's around the Montgomery bus boycott and developing to the present stage of the black power movement.

The second has been the loosening grip of the Kremlin on class struggles around the world and the development of new revolutionary currents. For example, the Khrushchev revelations and the Hungarian Revolution helped spur the dissolution of two of the extant socialist youth groups in the late 50's, while the Cuban Revolution brought a victorious social revolution within minutes of U.S. shores and made a significant impact on American campuses.

The third has been the refusal of the colonial countries to bow to the dictates of U.S. imperialism, from Egypt, to Lebanon, to Algeria, to the Congo, and the Dominican Republic. All these struggles struck sympathetic chords among American youth.

Finally, the Vietnamese war, coming nearly a decade after the first stirrings of change in the American student movement, evoked the fastest, sharpest and deepest radicalization among American youth.

Reactions to these events, and reactions against attempts by academic and state authorities to prevent students from demonstrating their solidarity with the freedom struggle at home and the colonial revolution abroad, have been the prime causes of student rebellions even around free speech type issues. This has been graphically illustrated in the antiwar and antidraft actions of the past few weeks in Oakland, Madison, Brooklyn, and many other cities. These campus rebellions, in turn, help to reinforce and deepen the growing political consciousness of students.

While the current radicalization has been largely a response to developments in the international class struggle, it has not unfolded along class lines nor yet developed a Marxist understanding of world politics. Among middle class students moral revulsion over the brutality and hypocrisy of American imperialism has been the prime radicalizing factor and continues to produce wave after wave of new recruits to the antiwar movement. The radicalization will continue to develop subject to the contradictions imposed upon it by a period of relative working class quiescence, the absence of any mass independent political voice for the working class in this country, the legacy of Stalinism, and the smallness of the revolutionary vanguard.

At the same time, several developments in the past few years have tended to offset these more negative aspects of the current conjuncture. These developments have helped open the minds of a small but important and increasingly larger layer of the new radicals to the necessity of Marxist analysis and class struggle politics.

One of the most important of these has been the example set by the Cuban revolution and the moral authority of its revolutionary leadership. There is greater sympathy now than at any previous time for the Cuban revolution and its leadership. One of the most striking examples of this has been the response to the death of Che Guevara. Thousands of young radicals identified with Che and looked to him for leadership and inspiration. In part it was a romantic glorification of guerrilla warfare, but it was also the realization that Che and the Cuban leaders are not phony revolutionaries. They are for real.

The second development that has helped raise the political consciousness of a layer of the young radicals is the truly heroic resistance of the Vietnamese against the overwhelming military might of the U.S. army. The majority of young radicals solidarize themselves with the Vietnamese revolution.

Third has been the weight of our movement in helping to sustain and lead the antiwar struggle in this country and around the world. The very development of the antiwar movement has added a new dimension to American politics that cannot help but affect the consciousness of radicalizing youth.

These factors have spurred the combativity of rebelling youth, helped deepen the radicalization, and led more and more of the young radicals to think of themselves as socialists.

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

For almost three years participation in the antiwar movement has been the central activity for the YSA. Our deep involvement in it has brought us in contact with many of these youth, enabled us to work closely with them, to discuss with them, and to win a growing number to revolutionary socialism.

After nearly a decade of activity on the campuses across the country, the YSA was in a strong position to help initiate and participate in the antiwar movement as it began to develop on the campuses at the beginning of 1965. The fact that the left wing of the antiwar movement also came from the students meant that we were able to participate as part of the leadership.

The previous years of activity around various issues, and solid internal education had built the YSA into a strong national organization, so that when the antiwar movement developed we were also able to shoulder a heavy load of the organizational work involved. Today more than two-thirds of the total membership of the YSA is involved directly in antiwar committees.

While the fight against the Vietnam war is not the first campaign the YSA has engaged in -- we've been involved in many others from the Woolworth picketing campaign, to Fair Play for Cuba, to the defense of our Bloomington comrades -- it has certainly been the longest, largest, most intensive, and most extensive campaign of our history. It has been a test in action for the YSA, a test of our ability to help lead a whole section of the student movement and fight for our political line within it.

The key to our growth in numbers and influence in the past two years has been our ability to recognize that Vietnam is the central political question in the U.S. today; our ability to comprehend the dynamic of the war issue as the single most important radicalizing factor and understand that it creates the objective base for ongoing single issue antiwar committees; plus our organizational and political willingness to help in drawing many organizations opposed to the war into periodic united front mass actions. This has given us a qualitatively larger periphery than ever before and made it realistic for us to project the goal of becoming the dominant socialist youth organization in the country.

A COMPARATIVE HISTORY

Before going on to discuss where the YSA stands today, it is worth spending time on the other radical youth groups, their evolutions over the last decade, and our current strength relative to

theirs. The YSA is the sole revolutionary socialist youth group in the U.S. today. But more than that, we are the only socialist youth group that is strong and growing.

The experiences of the other socialist youth tendencies over the last ten years have given ample proof that it is not easy to build a socialist youth organization. Even that strange creature called a "democratic" youth group that the Communist Party has tried so heroically to manufacture has not materialized. The course of the last decade is strewn with the remains of defunct and dying attempts to build radical youth organizations. A list of just the national organizations that fall into this category includes Progressive Youth Organizing Committee, Advance, Progressive Labor Youth, May 2nd Movement, American Socialist Organizing Committee, and Young People's Socialist League.

With the disintegration of most of the existing socialist youth groups in 1955-57, each of the three major socialist tendencies began almost simultaneously to form or reform youth organizations. The Social Democrats came out of the '56-'57 period with YPSL reinforced by the right wing Shachtmanites from the Young Socialist League. They were the first tendency to profit from the initial stirrings of student radicalization. By the early 1960's YPSL was the political and organizational leadership of the Student Peace Union, the largest postwar student peace organization, before the anti-Vietnam-war movement. In 1962, the SPU had 7,000 dues paying members. Largely from the SPU, YPSL recruited an organization of 1,500 members. Even recognizing that many of these were paper members, the number was still impressive.

Despite this achievement, however, YPSL's refusal to defend the Cuban revolution, their "third camp" position on the Vietnam war and the question of nuclear disarmament, their policy of exclusion and red-baiting, and our political pressure on them, brought disaster in less than two years. Between the beginning of 1963 and the end of 1964, the SPU disintegrated, and YPSL totally collapsed. Splitting into 13 or 14 warring factions. The left wing was expelled from the Socialist Party.

Today, while YPSL has been reformed, it is virtually defunct and totally outside the antiwar movement. In fact the Social Democracy is so far outside the antiwar movement that in their publication, New America, on October 16, 1967, they attacked the antiwar coalition by stating: "As we noted in an earlier position regarding the Spring Mobilization, this program is not at all clear in its policy for the way the war should be ended or in its position with respect to totalitarian forces in Vietnam. In fact, the greater part of the speeches and slogans at the Spring Mobilization favored unilateral U.S. withdrawal." Just in case this was not explicit enough, they went on to say, " the Socialist Party does

not endorse the October 21st Mobilization, and urges its members to devote their efforts to those activities that reflect the Party position, such as Negotiation Now!"

The left wing Social Democrats organized in the Independent Socialist Clubs and proponents of the view that the workers states are state capitalist or bureaucratic collectivist, possess more life and vitality. But even they have been mostly confined to the Berkeley campus, with only scattered adherents elsewhere around the country. While the Social Democracy has roots, both actual and potential, in the trade union bureaucracy in this country, and for that reason cannot be written off indefinitely, the longer they remain isolated and aloof from the current political battles being fought, the more difficult it becomes for them to regain the ground between ourselves and them in recruiting a young cadre.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

By all odds the Communist Party (CP) remains our strongest and most serious opponent. While they have had substantially more success than the Social Democrats over the last 10 years, their reformist positions on the three major political questions facing radical youth in the U.S. today -- the war in Vietnam, the black liberation struggle, and electoral politics -- have placed them to the right of many of the radical youth and made it difficult for them to recruit the best of the militants. Secondly, they suffer from the illusion that an objective base exists in the U.S. at the present point for a "democratic" or maybe even vaguely socialist youth organization, under their control, that can become a mass youth organization.

After the demise of the Labor Youth League in the late '50s, the CP made several attempts to get a new youth group off the ground. They tried the Progressive Youth Organizing Committee (PYOC), and they tried Advance, neither one of which made much headway. One reason for these failures was explained by Gus Hall, General Secretary of the CPUSA, at a meeting of the Communist Party National Executive Board in March 1967. Excerpts from the discussion on the Youth Report at this meeting were printed in a publicly sold bulletin, Party Affairs (Vol. I, no. 2). According to Gus Hall, "There is an ideological sickness in our Party and the more I think about it, the more I think it's one of our major weaknesses historically. We come up against difficulties. How do we solve them? Liquidate. It's no problem after it's liquidated! This is a weakness against which we have to stiffen up. We are not going to give up positions until we've given the maximum effort in testing them out, and we cannot in all honesty say that about building a Marxist-oriented youth organization these last two or three years."

While the CP was liquidating right and left, our members were picking up the pieces, regrouping, and building a revolutionary

youth organization capable of competing with the Communist youth whenever they decided to make a bold bid to rebuild a national youth group. That attempt came in June 1964, with the founding conference of the DuBois Club which presented itself as a broad socialist organization. The YSA was invited to participate in that founding conference. Our participation clarified for all those present the exact political stance of the DuBois Club, and when a motion was passed specifically excluding YSAers from holding membership in the DuBois Club, one third of the founding conference delegates walked out of the convention in opposition.

The DuBois Clubs survived their founding conference, and were successful for a short time in consolidating a national leadership and clubs in many of the major cities across the country. However, their attempts to cheat history caught up with them quite rapidly, and by this fall they were barely able to scrape together 100 people to attend a national convention. But as Gus Hall said, they are not going to liquidate this time until they have made the "maximum effort." DuBois Club banners have been observed resurrected around the country in the last month and a half, so it is likely there will be efforts to rebuild the DuBois Clubs.

The "maximum effort" course, however, poses additional problems for the CP. From the entire issue of Party Affairs previously quoted, it is apparent that deep divisions exist within the CP on the importance of the DuBois Clubs and the role that CP youth should play within them. Also, experiences over the last year have shown us that the CP youth leaders and the DuBois Club spokesmen often take different positions in public on important questions.

The organizational and political problems of the DuBois Clubs have been aggravated by their inability to confront the YSA successfully on a whole range of political questions from withdrawal vs. negotiations, to black nationalism, to independent political action. The successful formation of a student antiwar united front organization, the Student Mobilization Committee, which the DuBois Clubs and CP youth have been obliged to support, has been an additional source of pressure on them, making it impossible for them to avoid dealing with our views politically.

Today the YSA is unquestionably stronger than the CP youth in terms of political education, tactical dexterity and roots in the most vital political development of the period, the student antiwar movement. This is no minor victory, as the United States is one of the few countries in the world where the revolutionary socialist movement is able to challenge the CP directly for leadership of a growing and radicalizing movement. Our ability to attract and win the best of the young radicals on campus, and train and educate them as cadres of our movement, will be of major importance in our future battles for the leadership of the American working class.

STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

SDS does not fit into the category of our major rivals in the working class movement. But it is the largest radical student organization in the U.S. today and any youth report would be incomplete without some discussion of SDS. More than any other formation, it reflects the strengths and weaknesses, the problems and worries, of many of the radicalizing youth. On the one hand SDS exhibits the positive qualities of an internationalist spirit, a total disgust for the hypocrisy, deceit and brutality of the American ruling class, and a healthy skepticism and questioning of the failures of the Social Democrats and Stalinists. At the same time, SDS's anti-historical, pragmatic bias, rejection of the working class as a force for social change, and attempt to develop a theory of a "new" radical white collar working class, reflects the frustration resulting from the weakness of students and the present relative quiescence of the American working class.

The SDS leadership has also been caught in the contradictions resulting from the fact that they have attempted to circumvent two of the main questions of American politics -- the antiwar movement and electoral action. Their lack of understanding of the imperialist war and the nature of the opposition to it, and especially the importance of the single issue antiwar committees, has led them to adopt a sectarian and abstentionist attitude towards the antiwar united front. They decided they were the student antiwar movement. What many SDS leaders fail to understand is that even if SDS threw itself into the antiwar movement, the character and existence of the war itself would still produce, in addition to the organized socialist youth groups and SDS, organizations of youth around the single issue of the war. While they have tried to cover their abdication on the war question with ultra-left rhetoric about the draft, community organizing, and imperialism, this year's SDS convention carefully avoided any serious consideration of the successes or failures of their various projects or where SDS is going with them.

The second question which the SDS leadership has attempted to avoid is the need for independent working class and Afro-American political action. While unlike the DuBois Clubs leaders few SDS leaders take a conscious class collaborationist position, their refusal to face up to the meaning of the '68 presidential elections, and the role of electoral action, leaves them open and susceptible to all sorts of capitalist and pro-capitalist gimmicks of the third ticket type. They go from a healthy rejection of capitalist electoral politics to the rejection of the use of electoral politics as such. They do not draw the political conclusions that the next steps to be taken by the American workers and Afro-Americans are towards an independent labor party and a black political party, not "building local constituencies."

THE GROWTH OF THE YSA

At the first mid-west conference of Young Socialist Supporters, held in February 1958, there were 150 people present. Two years later, at the April 1960 founding conference of the YSA, there were a little over one hundred in attendance, reflecting the sifting out process that took place toward the end of regroupment. For five years the YSA grew slowly but steadily. By the time of last year's convention, in March 1967, we noted that there had been an important upswing in the pace of recruitment. But by far the most impressive growth of the YSA has occurred in the last seven months.

In the five months between the March 1967 YSA convention and the National Committee plenum in September of this year, our net recruitment was equal to the net recruitment of the entire preceding two years. Then, in the six weeks between the YSA National Committee plenum and the SWP convention, we recruited half again as many! Of the total YSA membership, 41% are on campuses across the country, and only 4% are what we consider inactive, that is, they don't attend meetings regularly and keep up to date on their dues.

There have been many other important indications of impressive growth in the last months. We have recruited many new at-large members, the majority of them in the last six weeks. For the first time not only in YSA history, but in the history of the revolutionary socialist movement, we have an indigenous, home-grown, southern local in Atlanta, Georgia, and while Atlanta was our first real breakthrough in the South, the reports from our southern campaign tour indicate that Atlanta is not unique. They are fast getting competition from Norman, Oklahoma; Houston, and Austin, Texas. It is possible that we will soon have several southern locals. We have established another new local in Kent, Ohio, and expect that we will very shortly have locals at Antioch College and at the University of Illinois at Urbana.

For the last six months, we have been receiving growing numbers of inquiries from various parts of the country, and approximately one tenth of these are requests to join the YSA.

With the development of substantial antiwar sentiment among high school students, and the emergence of numerous high school antiwar committees, we have also made our first real breakthrough in high school recruitment. The majority of our high school members have been recruited since April 15.

Our recent growth has not only been quantitative, it has been qualitative as well. Perhaps one of the best indications of this has been the financial responsibility of the YSA membership, as we depend for our entire budget on contributions by YSAers. Since

the YSA was founded in 1960, our yearly national budget has increased by more than 12 times, and this has been matched by increasing local budgets.

This increased income has enabled us to more than double our national staff, triple the number of national tours we are able to organize each year, and finance many additional special trips such as those made by YSA leaders to Canada, Lowndes, Mississippi, and Europe. It has enabled us also to organize numerous and more regular "trailblazing" trips in many areas of the country which have played an important role in making the YSA known and respected in many areas where we do not have members. These field organizing tours become more and more necessary as our at-large membership grows and more far flung locals are established.

The expanding finances and national staff have made it possible for the YSA to publish a series of printed Young Socialist pamphlets in the last three years. We now have five pamphlets, two more that will be out within a month, and plans for several more. Our basic Vietnam pamphlet has sold over 30,000 copies since the first printing. "Malcolm X Talks to Young People" has sold over 8,000 copies, "GIs and the Fight Against War" has sold 3,000 copies, "Revolution in the Congo" is sold out, and our newest pamphlet, "Zionism and the Arab Revolution," which has been out for less than two months, has already sold 2,000 copies. This latter pamphlet has brought us several orders from Arab students in the U.S. and Canada, and from the Arab States Delegation to the United Nations. One indication of the general interest in our pamphlets has been the orders we have received from libraries and individuals asking for the entire series.

One most important accomplishment in the last year has been the expansion of the Young Socialist from a bi-monthly to a monthly magazine. This has been a real challenge to the YSA, demanding not only the full time efforts of two staff members in the national office, but more regular and larger sales in all the locals. This expansion has been totally justified, and was necessary, in order to give adequate coverage to all the activities we are involved in, making the YS more current and more lively. The improving quality and more comprehensive coverage of the monthly Young Socialist has been reflected in the rising circulation of the magazine, and our expanding subscription base. In the fall of 1965 we had approximately 300 subscriptions to the bi-monthly YS, and today we have more than 1,200 to the monthly.

The last two years have also seen two important victories for the YSA in another vital area, the legal defense of our organization and our members. Several weeks ago, the last papers were signed and the books closed on the Bloomington case. After a five year fight, demanding tremendous efforts on the part of the entire

organization, we were able to win a total victory. Instead of our three comrades being railroaded to jail, it was County Prosecutor Thomas Hoadley who decided to leave Bloomington, Indiana to practice law in balmy Florida. The importance of this Bloomington victory can hardly be overestimated. We successfully defended our members, set a valuable precedent for the entire generation of new radicals on how to fight a civil liberties case, and also made other witch-hunters think twice before going after the YSA.

The Bloomington experience stood us in good stead when we were faced with another major defense effort last spring to defend Pfc. Howard Petrick against the threats of the army to court-martial him because of his political beliefs. The YSA reacted so rapidly and so strongly against these threats, and Pfc. Petrick received such widespread support from the antiwar movement and fellow GIs, that the army has backed off from their attempt to court-martial him. They have now initiated discharge proceedings against Petrick, and it is possible that he will be out of the army in several months. This case has also set some important examples for the civil liberties of GIs within the army and calling attention to the importance of the GIs in the fight against the Vietnam war.

In addition to all our other activities, the primary source of strength for the YSA has been the consistent, serious educational program carried out fall, winter, spring, and summer by every local in the country. This, more than anything else, has enabled us to consolidate a strong nationwide leadership and strengthen our entire organization. It has welded the YSA into a solid, politically homogeneous, revolutionary Marxist youth organization, capable of confronting our rivals on a national scale, and leading growing numbers of youth in struggle against the imperialist war. Given the increase in our rate of recruitment, this educational process will take on even greater importance in the coming months.

The political and organizational strength we have developed over the last ten years has today given us an important vantage point from which we can reach out to increasing numbers of radical youth and recruit them to revolutionary socialism. The period we are entering will be one of exciting change and development -- and an opportunity to strive for clear political hegemony.

PROSPECTS FOR GROWTH AND RECRUITMENT

Last fall the University of Minnesota newspaper, the Minnesota Daily, published a roundup of the various political organizations on campus. They described the YSA in the following terms: "a Trotskyist organization dedicated to revolutionary socialism -- in theory, at least. They distribute more literature than any campus political group, and a good amount of it is meaty, intelligent-if-doctrinaire, well-researched material. Not too many people join this group, but they put up a formidable case when confronted."

Discounting the cynical asides, that is probably close to the image the YSA has among youth on many campuses across the country. We are seen as serious, firm, disciplined, and very political. This image, and the reality behind it, has been a genuine asset to us over the last seven years in building and consolidating the YSA.

Today, given the period we are entering, the main thing we want to change in that description is the idea that not too many people join the YSA. We want every single one of those young radicals who thinks of himself or herself as a young socialist to be in the YSA. While objective conditions preclude, at this juncture, a mass revolutionary socialist youth movement, they do not preclude a much larger YSA, and that is our goal. We want to make it as easy as possible for socialist youth to join us.

The character of the YSA, the image radical youth have of us, cannot be changed artificially. It cannot be done by trying simply to administer breadth and declaring that henceforth all socialist youth shall join us. But our image and character is beginning to change in that direction, and we should do everything in our power to encourage that development and hasten it along. Since the beginning of last summer we have had several discussions in the National Executive Committee on "what makes a young socialist." One of the results of our discussions has been the "Join the YSA" ads that have appeared in several of the recent issues of the Young Socialist. That is, anyone who supports the Cuban revolution and the colonial revolution in general, black power, the antiwar movement, socialist candidates, and thinks the United States should be socialist, should be in the YSA.

In response to these ads we have received numerous letters from young people who say, "Sure, I agree with all those things. How do I join?" There are thousands of youth in the United States who would agree with those basic ideas, and our job is to get them into the YSA. Our attitude must be, the faster they join, the faster they will become revolutionaries.

The main reason why young people who think of themselves as socialists hesitate to join the YSA is not because they think it is difficult to join. It is because they realize, sometimes consciously, sometimes instinctively, that we are serious revolutionaries and the road of revolutionary Marxism is not the easiest one to travel in the U.S. today. What we have to do is bridge the gap, and make it easier for them to take that step.

The candidate program is one way to do that. The candidate program was not initiated nationally but developed local by local over a year or so as the locals found it a useful aid to recruitment. It was a way locals could get to know someone who was interested in joining the YSA, but more importantly, it was a way for that individual to get to know the YSA better and make it easier for

him to decide to join.

We also make a distinction between candidates and members for a very important reason. As a revolutionary socialist organization, we don't have two levels of membership, first class and second class, or those with full rights and those without full rights. We are opposed to any form of membership that implies special privileges for one group. A person is either a member, or not a member, and for that reason candidates are not members. But at the same time, the candidate period has nothing in common with a trial-by-fire or a fraternity hazing game. To the person who says "I think I agree with the YSA on the antiwar movement and the black struggle, but I'm not sure exactly how we're going to make the American revolution," we say, "Good, we want you to join. Why don't you become a candidate for a couple of months, come to meetings and participate in activities, and in the meantime we'll assign someone to work and discuss with you, and try to answer some of the questions you may have. Then you can decide if you want to join." In this way we keep the doors wide open to every youth who agrees with us only on maybe part of our program, but is serious and moving in our direction.

THE 1968 SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGN

In the coming year, our most important vehicle for meeting and talking to the thousands of young people who agree with many of our basic ideas will be the 1968 election campaign of the Socialist Workers Party. In addition to our work in the antiwar movement, forums, educationals, contact classes and other activity, this campaign presents an entire new arena of socialist activity in which to involve our supporters. It gives us even greater opportunities for speaking engagements, rallies, and protest meetings. It gives us a campaign focal point for plastering our political ideas on billboards and blank walls in cities and campuses across the country. It gives us a chance to take our program into every antiwar committee and onto every black campus we can reach. The campaign itself will become a new point of attraction for antiwar and black youth.

The election campaign committee has initiated Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle as one of the major support groups for the campaign. At this point Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle is not an organization, with officers, a program, regular meetings, or a formal structure. It is much more like a mailing list of all those people who have indicated they are interested in the campaign, requiring absolutely minimal commitment. The campaign committee has asked all young people who are fed up with the capitalist parties to join together in campaigning for Halstead and Boutelle. The function of the YSHB is simply to campaign, and for that reason it is quite distinct from the YSA.

I'm sure the YSHB will go through a process of development over a period of more than a year, and it will take different forms in different areas and under different conditions. The Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle that develop in areas where there are no YSAers will be different than the groups that develop in areas where we have large locals. But the key to the success of our election work is an optimistic, creative and experimental attitude on our part, a willingness to think big.

Several days ago the election campaign office received a brief letter from a student at St. Francis College in Loretto, Pennsylvania, which said the following: "Gentlemen: I am extremely interested in the young socialist movement. Please send me the necessary material to join.... Thank you."

In his own way that student captured the spirit and idea of what we are trying to do. We are building toward a mass American section of the young socialist movement that is sweeping the world. And this next year the YSA can take a giant step along this road.