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To All Organizers, NC Members and At-Largers

Dear Comrades,

Before the last plenum of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, the YSA National Executive Committee was asked to prepare a report on the growth and activities of the YSA to be presented at that plenum. Charlie Bolduc, National Chairman of the YSA, presented the report, which is enclosed. This report is being sent out for your information. It should be made available for all YSA members to read.

Comradely,

Larry Seigle

Larry Seigle
National Organizational Secretary

YOUTH REPORT

Presented on February 21, 1969 to the Socialist Workers Party
Plenum, by Charlie Bolduc.

Comrades, the International Report and the Antiwar Report have dealt with some of the general features of the radicalization taking place on the international field and among students and working youth in this country.

The Youth Report will deal with the struggles that have emerged and are developing especially on the college campuses and in the high schools, what the YSA's role in these struggles has been, the evolution of our main political opponents in the youth field, the development of the YSA, and our perspectives for the future.

The last party plenum occurred right after the International Student Strike last April. That strike, which brought out hundreds of thousands of students from colleges and high schools across the country, was an indication of the growing radicalization among students. Other manifestations of this process have been the occupations of buildings and even of whole campuses, such as occurred at Columbia and Howard Universities last spring and in the Berkeley free speech fights last summer.

The deepening radicalization on the campus around the issues of the war and black power ~~has led students to question the basic social role of the university and the high school in capitalist society.~~

Black students, especially in the last year, and white student supporters of the black nationalist fight for self-determination, have exposed the university's failure to meet the educational needs of black people and the university's role in their continued subjugation. At Columbia, for example, students exposed the fact that the university itself was a slumlord in the surrounding black community. One of the main issues in that struggle was the university's plan to build a gymnasium on the site of a community park in total disregard of the needs of that black community.

The university is an institution of society, an institution of capitalist society. Its primary function is to turn out administrators, scientists, technicians, and ideological apologists for the capitalist system. All creative work is subordinated to this primary function.

The needs, interests and goals of radicalizing students run into a direct conflict with the university as a capitalist institution, both on the ideological level and on the level of university involvement with the military machine and racial oppression. Radicalizing students find themselves in conflict with university administrations over basic rights to organize on campus and to participate in the social struggles of society as a whole. The administrations play the role of cops, especially on the high school level.

The most dynamic, politically motivated, and organized struggles with the most concrete and realizable demands in the modern history of the American student movement have occurred in the last six months.

Most of these struggles have been spearheaded by black students

putting forward a set of demands which can be summarized in the slogan "For a Black University" - for a black studies department for the study of black history. These struggles lead to the demands for control over those departments, the curriculum taught, the faculty who will teach and the administration of the departments. These are only some of the concrete demands which are raised. On this level other concrete demands are raised:

1. Recognition of the right of the oppressed national minority communities to control their own public affairs, including education from kindergarten up.
2. Representation of national minorities on all policy-making or policy-implementing bodies of the schools.
3. To combat racism, truthful teaching of the history and culture of oppressed national minorities in all schools, with periodic review by educational committees elected by the oppressed national minorities.
4. Unlimited government financed educational training through post-graduate study for oppressed national minorities.
5. Establishment of adequately financed, independent university level educational facilities under the control of national minorities.

From some of the larger struggles like those at San Francisco State and Brandeis University to the struggles that have occurred at Kent State University, Wisconsin State in Oshkosh, Albany, Sonoma State in California, to the University of Wisconsin in Madison along with even one of the larger southern universities, Duke University in North Carolina, black students have taken the lead in carrying on struggles which have involved and radicalized large sections of the student population. The administrations have responded by calling city cops and in the case of the University of Wisconsin, the National Guard, to suppress these campus struggles.

At San Francisco State, the struggle has not only involved large sections of the student population, but has involved sections of the community in support actions, helped precipitate a strike by the teachers' union, gained support from other unions like the oil workers and painters and led to the development of large support struggles on the Berkeley campus and several state college campuses.

These struggles have become truly national in character in the last several months and indicate what we can look forward to in the coming months.

What has been especially important to the YSA has been that through our intervention in these struggles we have gained some valuable experiences often as part of the leadership, especially in the case of San Francisco State and Brandeis. There are some significant generalizations that can be made about these struggles.

First, they are the most important large scale actions since the ghetto uprisings that have occurred in the last several years. They have done a great deal in radicalizing and educating whole layers of people about the racist nature of the university and the system and have helped concretize in struggle, a group of democratic and transitional demands for black control of the black community on the university level.

Second, the demand for a black studies department, a Black University, or Malcolm X University, along with the demands for control of sections of the university, are the most realizable and concrete political demands that have yet been put forward in the struggle. They are transitional in character and because they are concrete political demands which tie into the general struggle for self-determination, they are the kind of demands that can mobilize broad support from black students, the black community and also large sections of the white students and some sections of the white community. These struggles are thus the most politically advanced black youth struggles - surpassing those identified with SNCC several years ago.

They are the kind of demands that can result in victories and, in some cases, victories have been won. This helps cut across the ultra-left concept that movements are built on setbacks, not victories. Even in those cases where the demands are not met, and periodic setbacks take place, the demands are still the kind that will mobilize people and lead to further struggles aimed at sizable victory.

One of the demands put forward should be explained because it can mean different things depending on the situation. That is, the demand for a black university. What it generally means is the development of a section of the university controlled and staffed by black people which is relevant to the general self-determination struggle of the Afro-American communities.

An example of this demand is the struggle for Black Studies Departments. In those cases where Black Studies Departments have been developed, for example at City College in New York and at Duke University, the struggles take the form of who will head up and be in charge of the finances allocated to those departments. Will black uncle toms, white liberals, or black militants responsible to black students and the black community be in charge?

In those cases where the repressive state apparatus is brought to bear and students are victimized through expulsion, the struggles take the form of a fight to defend democratic rights, especially the right to organize on campus.

In most of these struggles, as I have pointed out, the fight is part of the general struggle for self-determination in society as a whole. It is important to examine all of the demands because they show a high degree of consciousness, especially in the community, to the struggles of all the people in the third world. It is part of an international struggle and this is seen by the black students on the campus who link their struggles to the struggles of students and workers in Africa, Mexico, and the rest of the colonial world. They all draw experiences, lessons and inspiration from each other.

Although it is still too early to draw all the lessons from these struggles, it is clear that they will have a deep-going effect on the general struggle for black control of the black community and especially the radicalization and organization of high school students. They have forced forward issues which have shaken up and sometimes drawn a wild reaction from school administrators, and state legislators, who

in some cases find it hard to come up with more money for scholarships and Black Studies Departments. This forces them to grant no concessions and in some cases use the National Guard.

It will undoubtedly advance the demands by the black community to control their own schools, especially where blacks make up the majority of the school population. The demands put forward on the campuses by the black students are the kind of concrete political demands that we want to see put forward in the Black community on a national scale.

The struggle of Afro-American students in the high schools in the last period has not burst forward in such a dramatic way as on the university campuses, but major struggles lie beneath the surface. The bureaucratic and undemocratic administrations of most high schools allow virtually no forms of political activity or organization to exist. In black high schools or high schools that blacks attend, they are fed a daily diet of white bourgeois values, norms, and ideas. Any black high school student who lives in the ghetto knows that most of what he or she is taught has little or no relevance to him or her, and in most cases is a bunch of pure unadulterated hogwash - or more accurately, whitewash.

This climate has led to the development of struggles, which are at first aimed at white teachers, despised by the black students, who block the holding of classes on Afro-American history. The actions carried out by black high school students in Chicago and in Philadelphia have already given impetus to the activities engaged in by white high school students who attempt to organize against the war and around other issues. The April 6th antiwar action gives us the opportunity to mobilize thousands of high school students if we take advantage of the opportunities.

The student strike against the war last spring in which hundreds of high school students participated is only one indication of what is going to happen. The high school sectors of the radicalization will be a major area of struggle in the coming period.

As I mentioned earlier, the YSA has had some valuable experience in these struggles, particularly at San Francisco State and at Brandeis. Our comrades intervened both as day to day activists, leading the actions themselves, and also as initiators in mobilizing as much support on the campus and in the community as possible.

In San Francisco, our comrades were instrumental in getting a community support group off the ground in support of the strike and in organizing support actions on other campuses. In Boston, our comrades helped to publish an action bulletin aimed at explaining the issues involved in the Brandeis struggle and in mobilizing students and community support for the struggles. Even though we have been limited in our intervention in certain ways by the numbers of black comrades we have, we have still been able to mount an effective intervention and recruit from them.

In all of these campus struggles, the YSA has and should continue to intervene on three levels. In joining, supporting, and leading these actions, we call for the formation of united front type action committees

and mass decision making meetings to lead the struggle. Against all tendencies that proposed adventuristic and individual actions we counterposed mass action. We politically combat ultra-leftist actions and verbiage and propose that the demands of each struggle be clearly defined and pursued under defensive formulations.

The second level of our participation is on the broader ideological plane. Against those who want to limit the struggle to student power demands narrowly conceived between students and the administration, we point to and show the connections between particular struggles and the struggles against the capitalist system itself. We point out why it is impossible to have a truly free or liberated university, divorced from the system that surrounds it. We intervene to help raise the level from student power consciousness to socialist consciousness. We propose the concept of a "red university," in order to turn the campus into an organizing center for the antiwar, black struggle and socialist movements.

The third and most important level of our intervention is through the systematic dissemination of our revolutionary socialist ideas. Our main purpose in intervening in these struggles is to build the revolutionary socialist youth group and party. We now have one of the best opportunities to recruit black militants. This means having gigantic sales of our press - the Young Socialist and the Militant. Sales along with the systematic recruitment are key to building the YSA as a multi-national youth group. Our intervention in these movements is a real test for the YSA. It is another important experience in how to intervene into the mass movement. We must throw ourselves into them and the YSA must utilize the experiences of the older comrades in order to make the right decisions and intervention.

Now, before I move into the growth and perspectives for the YSA, I want to say something about the main political opponents of the YSA and other radical youth groups.

Most of the comrades have probably followed the articles that have appeared recently in the Militant on the SDS National Council meeting and the report that was sent out on it. Even though they remain the largest radical youth group in the country and have probably witnessed some growth, their inability to formulate a program leaves them in the position of reacting, following, and tailending the various struggles going on in a totally contradictory way. Even though there are various political tendencies in SDS grappling with the question of a program, none of them are correct. None of them are able to explain correctly the struggles taking place or how this society is going to be changed. Their continued sectarian attitude toward the antiwar movement is one example.

While many SDSers are looking toward the working class for many of the right reasons, their approach is the same romantic and paternalistic attitude that characterized their community organizing projects. That is, students are going to organize unions, and organize among the working class. Whether trade union consciousness is there or whether the workers are interested in being organized by SDSers isn't a matter of concern. Although there has been a change in the rhetoric of SDS through the use of the term imperialism, etc., there has been no basic change in their politics.

The national politics of SDS, due to PL's intervention in SDS, leads to permanent factional warfare. As the YSA pointed out several years ago, SDSers would eventually be pulled in the direction of one of the working class tendencies. Through the growth of the YSA and through the conscious intervention of PL in SDS, the organization has been forced to deal with some of the burning questions. The all-inclusive organization and lack of program leaves PL, an organization with a program and disciplined members, in the position of exerting a large amount of influence over the national policies and actions of SDS, even though they make up a very small part of the total membership of SDS. This was graphically shown at the last SDS National Council meeting where PL pushed through a position paper with the support of a number of independent SDSers condemning black nationalism as reactionary.

Although this may now be the position of SDS on the national leadership level, making generalizations about SDS across the country is not correct. The main thing to watch about SDS is the struggle taking place within the organization. Eventually the political struggle will reach such a peak that a split could take place. But even if this is the case the objective base for an organization of the nature of SDS will still prevail. ✓✓

The YSA convention reaffirmed our attitude toward SDS. I would like to outline that attitude briefly.

We seek to collaborate with them whenever possible on concrete actions. We recognize that SDS is a significant force in the student movement, and that there is the objective basis for united actions because we agree with them on many of the important issues. We seek to collaborate with any forces, around certain issues on which we can agree, i.e., the antiwar movement. But we reject SDS's attitude that SDS is "the movement". We are opposed to the concept, for example, that people interested in carrying out antiwar work should join SDS and operate through a sub-committee of SDS. There are many people who are willing to carry out antiwar work but are opposed to joining SDS - and some for very good reasons. While we want to work closely with individual SDSers, YSAers do not work inside SDS as SDS members. We're opposed to an entry tactic into SDS because it is, as LBJ would say, counter-productive. In some areas where there are only one or two comrades they may want to participate in the SDS meetings and under some conditions even hold formal membership in SDS. ~~But the key to our work, and the key to our recruitment of SDSers is continuing to carry out independent socialist activity continually as we've done in the past, in our own name.~~ We don't want to be members of SDS taking responsibility for anything that SDS does or says or thinks. We can learn from this by the mistake of the Progressive Labor Party which has operated as a tendency or faction in SDS to the complete exclusion of public independent youth work. Now it's true that they have recruited within SDS. There's no doubt about that, but by being submerged within SDS, they've lost, even for them, the widest possible potential recruitment among the new wave of young radicals who are willing to accept socialist ideas, and are looking for a serious and disciplined organization. Even if they recruited every member of SDS, being submerged in an organization like SDS for a long period of time would make it very difficult to carry out independent activity.

I now want to spend a few minutes on the ultra-lefts, particularly

PL has grown since ~~the~~ last party plenum, reaping some of the gains of the general student radicalization. Most of their work has been carried out through their intervention into SDS. In certain areas like Boston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, they have relatively large groups of members. PL's program on an international scale is clear - they support, identify with, and defend unconditionally only two states in the world: China and Albania. On a national scale they think black nationalism is reactionary because it divides the working class; and they hold that the building of a mass antiwar movement which involves liberals, etc. is totally reformist. Through their position on black nationalism, they have excluded the possibility of recruiting out of the black nationalist movement or organizations for a long period of time.

PL plays upon the inexperience of many SDS members. Their ultra-left verbiage sounds really revolutionary and more attractive than the confusion of most SDSers. ~~It is important for the YSA to go on a campaign against ultra-leftism in the coming period.~~ We are confronted with it in almost every major struggle that we intervene in, from the antiwar movement to the black struggle. Its effect on individuals and movements is devastating. It leads to victimization and defeat. Ultra-leftism is a political disease to which we must apply a political cure. We will especially have to take up all aspects of ultra-leftism in our press, as we have already started. An important point is that even though they have had some growth, the growth of the YSA is so large that there can not even be any comparison.

The CP is still floundering around like a fish out of the water, in the face of the youth radicalization. Their inability at this stage to launch a youth organization is their biggest problem. Without a youth group they are unable to intervene effectively in the new radicalization. Strong disagreements in the CP over the youth perspective paralyzes them even more. Mike Myerson, a CPer who recently returned from Cuba, spoke at a meeting sponsored by the Young Communists in New York, a form which is not consistent with the CP's line of building the DuBois Clubs. This is also true in Los Angeles, I understand.

The Daily World reports that they are again trying to rejuvenate the DuBois Clubs. Unable to recruit any significant number of radicalizing campus youth they have now attempted to turn their recruitment efforts to the trade unions. They held a conference in Chicago several weeks ago which the World reported had 75 people in attendance. The conference was called by the DuBois Club and one of the major decisions it decided upon was to help Brother Reuther in his fight with the AFL-CIO hierarchy. This new turn and attempt to rejuvenate the DuBois Club will probably end in another defeat. If they can't recruit on the campus where the radicalization is rampant - how do they expect to recruit in the unions where the level of radicalization is much lower?

Their continued abstention from the fight against the war can also be added to their gloomy picture. Despite these obvious weaknesses we must keep an eye on them as we continue to move forward, in building the YSA. The expansion of our own youth movement is the best way to

carry on an effective demoralization campaign against them and make sure in the long run that they will be politically defeated.

The social democrats have faced as much deterioration as the CP. The SP lost Norman Thomas. With that, the extreme right wing of the SP took over. Michael Harrington and Max Schachtman are now the leaders. They have gotten together with the reactionary leadership of the teachers' union in New York, Albert Shanker, in opposing community control of the schools. They do not constitute a big threat in the immediate future.

The left social democrats represented best by the Independent Socialist Club led by Draper has witnessed a small growth and has expanded their base from Berkeley to a few other areas in the country. Their politics are essentially the same as the right wing social democrats and thus constitute no real threat.

I would like now to deal with the development and expansion of the YSA and our perspective for the coming period.

When the SWP election campaign was being launched in the fall of 1968, it was not easy to visualize just how many concrete gains could be made out of it. The one clear thing was that the campaign, if properly organized and thought out, could enhance our influence and recruitment. The campaign was a Party campaign, organized and thought out by the Party. It gave the YSA a chance to hook in and greatly expand if we took advantage of it. The campaign was a youth-oriented campaign, an open socialist campaign. We emphasized through the YSHB our clear approach of building the revolutionary socialist youth group. Using the name of YSHB to organize the youth part of our campaign was the key to our growth.

Even the most optimistic of us were surprised by the number of gains that we made. The election campaign more than anything else showed the YSA just how much it could accomplish in a short period of time. Through the tours by the candidates, the trailblazes carried out on a regular basis by the locals, the gigantic amount of literature gotten out, and all the other aspects of our campaign work, the YSA was able to double its size in the last six months of the campaign. ~~From 400 members to 800 members in six months.~~ 200 recruits were made in the last two months of the campaign. Whole new areas were opened up for the expansion of the YSA. The campaign really made the YSA a national organization. It makes me wish that we were again approaching another presidential election year, but the local SWP campaigns being organized will have the same effect. They will open up even further opportunities to recruit.

All of our election campaign work culminated with the YSA convention. All the comrades know what a successful and big step forward that convention was for our movement. At that convention, as in the past, we laid out our clear approach for building the YSA, politically and organizationally. We reaffirmed our political program, our organizational concepts and the YSA's fraternal relationship with the SWP. Along with those political decisions, the YSA projected a major expansion program. The convention approved the idea of establishing National Field Secretaries. This means having leading comrades in the field working with established locals and new areas, plus recruiting members

in areas where we have no members. Derrick will be spending the next few months in the field in this capacity. The convention also approved a big expansion for the Young Socialist. The projection was for a circulation of over 10,000 by summer. With the current circulation being near 9,000 and the idea for a joint YS and Militant sub campaign for new readers this spring, this goal will be met. This sub campaign will be a YSA campaign. Details will be forthcoming right after the plenum. Along with the proposals for Field Secretaries and an expansion of the YS circulation, a \$25,000 fund drive was approved, the largest in the history of the YSA. ✓

For the next period the YSA projects more expansion and activity. Just since the YSA convention, four new locals of the YSA have been established. In St. Louis, Missouri; Logan, Utah; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and in Providence, Rhode Island. There are now 38 locals of the YSA - this is twice the number a year ago. There are also 38 other areas in the country where we have one or more at-large members outside the established locals. From Atlanta and Manhattan to Oshkosh and Austin, along with Los Angeles and DeKalb, the YSA is expanding its influence and recruitment. That means there are 76 areas in the country where young Trotskyists function. ✓

One of the new developments for the YSA since our convention was the trip to Cuba. It is the first time that the YSA has been specifically invited to visit Cuba. Not only were we invited but we had the largest North American political delegation in Cuba. Not only were the Cubans impressed with the trip, but we are utilizing the trip in areas across the country to build support for the Cuban Revolution and to build the YSA. We expect that more trips will be organized in the future which will greatly enhance our relations with the Cubans and our influence in this country. Tours for the comrades who visited Cuba are organized across the country. We have made the biggest advance in this area since the Fair Play for Cuba days. As opposed to the PL and SDS approach, we use the tours in a political way to further help support the Cuban Revolution and enhance our influence.

There are two main areas of work for the YSA in the coming period. One is to build a massive youth turnout for the GI-Civilian action on April 6th. This action offers us the major area of recruitment in the next few months. Our job is to build the SMC as the key organization and component of the student antiwar actions.

The other area of major activity is on the college and high school campuses. Our job is to take the initiative in the struggles that are developing all across the country. We must be an integral part of these struggles.

YSAers will in the coming months, as we have in the past, be part of the leadership and the initiators of such actions, both among black students and among white students

There's no reason why we can't continue to be aggressive in initiating and participating in the leadership of these struggles on the basis of our program for mass action and victorious struggles.

The same audacious and aggressive approach is called for in our work in the high schools. If anything, even more so. Our strategic and tactical considerations are the same, although the forms of struggle are often different. The high school radicalization has been in response to basically the same forces that have affected college and university students. But to grasp the central importance of our ability to win them to the YSA and to socialism, we only have to stop and think where the high school students are going to be next year, or in two or three years. Some, but not many will be participating in the campus struggles. Many of them will be in the armed forces, participating in the struggle there. Many of them will be in the plants or in office work as the newest members of the working class. It is the high school students who represent the broadest potential and the broadest acceptance of our ideas in this period and it is in that direction, both among black and white high school students that we want to move.

The most significant actions in the high schools today are being carried out by the black high school students, often with the support of a section of the white students. The central issue here has been the right of the black community to control the black schools. Chicago has seen the most intense of these struggles. It is a nationwide phenomenon, as shown perhaps most graphically in the developments in New York, where the black high school students have the support in a very active sense of the entire black community. The demonstrations and boycotts, have listed a number of demands of the black students, the most important of which are three: the study of Afro-American history, not in a token way, or as a minor addition to the curriculum, but in a central way, a serious way. Secondly, the right of the black community - of black people - to control the schools, to control the school boards, to have black administrators, black principals, black counselors, and so on. And thirdly the demands on the city governments to improve the physical conditions of the schools, the elimination of overcrowding, etc.

One importance on the strategic level between the black student struggles in the high schools and the black student struggles on the campus is the fact that in ~~most large cities, and in most of the schools in these cities, the black population is a majority.~~ Now that has a lot of implications, in the method of struggle, and the ability of black high school students to carry out a successful campaign.

The high school struggles that have occurred are the opening shots in a war of a new generation of young radicals against the capitalist system. When high school actions develop, we want to take the attitude of throwing ourselves into them with everything we've got, even at the expense of letting some other things slide, so as to mobilize the entire YSA in support of these actions. We want to participate in them, distribute our literature, be there on the scene, and not hesitate, when we're involved in them, for our high school comrades to take the leadership and to take the initiative in these actions, and directing them along the most revolutionary political path.

These tasks will bring our movement another big step forward toward our goal of making the American Revolution.