

February 24, 1968

Confidential

To All SWP Branch and YSA Local Organizers

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is the letter and report sent to all campaign directors and at-large supporters throughout the country.

Please give this your immediate attention and let us know the plans for your area. We have only eight weeks to take advantage of this election and the branch and local executive committees will have to take central responsibility to get the ball rolling.

It will be possible to take advantage of the interest around Choice '68 to get the YSA 2,000 goal Young Socialist and Militant sub drive off to a fast start. It is important that your trailblazers and the comrades who accompany Fred, Paul or the state candidates to campuses have the sub blanks and pick up subs.

One final point. The importance, as the first task, of getting the schools in your area who are not yet part of Choice '68 officially involved cannot be overemphasized. Our gains from Choice '68 will be increased as the number of schools participating grows and general student interest increases. This includes interest by layers of students we usually have no real collaboration with like student body officers.

Time magazine has committed itself far too publicly to this project to back off. Our vigorous intervention in every way can only push Choice '68 forward.

We are trying to get kits with copies of all the material Choice '68 has put out and we will send it to you as soon as we obtain them.

Comradely,

Jack Barnes
National Campaign Director

February 24, 1968

To All Campaign Directors:

Dear Friends,

Enclosed is a report and sample ballot on Choice '68, the national presidential mock election and Vietnam war referendum that will be held on campuses all over the country on April 24 in the midst of the spring antiwar week, two days before the International Student Strike, and three days prior to the Days of Protest. Fred Halstead heads the list of fourteen presidential hopefuls. (See Enclosed)

Not only is this the first time students have held a national presidential poll of this sort, but it will be the first national referendum of virtually the entire student population on the war in Vietnam.

This is the biggest opportunity the Socialist Workers campaign has had thus far to extend its ideas to new campuses, to combine election campaigning and antiwar work, and to make a big leap in the numbers of Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle. It presents opportunities for campus activity that can keep every Young Socialist for Halstead and Boutelle in the country fruitfully occupied in campaigning for the next eight weeks.

While this national poll offers new opportunities for all aspects of our election campaign, we have only eight weeks to take advantage of them. This must be the central focus of all our campaign work until April 24.

Our participation in Choice '68 will take place around three major axes:

1. Get out the student vote.
2. Vote to bring the GIs home from Vietnam
3. Vote for Halstead and Boutelle

GET OUT THE STUDENT VOTE

We agree with Choice '68 that the central task is getting out the largest possible student vote in this poll. This

common desire to "get out the vote"--an elementary democratic sentiment--will form the basis for working with new groups of students on campuses--the student governments, McCarthy supporter groups, Young Democrats and Republicans, etc. We will stress that because of prejudicial laws, students under 21 have no way to express their political opinions in the national elections even though they are drafted and may have to die in Vietnam. This is their only chance on a national scale to make their opinions as "voters" known.

Halstead-Boutelle supporters are a legitimate part of this entire project. We want to get out the vote to show that the broadest student opinion really is contrary to what Time and LBJ think.

Because this poll will also involve an antiwar referendum, and because Halstead is on the ballot as the only socialist alternative to capitalist candidates, Choice '68 can bring tremendous benefits to the Socialist Workers campaign. The more campuses that participate in the poll, the more students involved, the more publicity, and the more Choice '68 is legitimized, the more attention will be drawn to the Vietnam war question and to the Halstead candidacy--the only socialist alternative on the ballot. An example of this is the original AP press release (see Militant, Feb. 26, 1968).

Thus the first task before Socialist Workers campaign supporters and the precondition to the successful participation in the poll is making sure every campus in each area is officially participating in Choice '68 with a campus coordinator.

STUDENT ANTIWAR REFERENDUM

The fact that Choice '68 includes a referendum on the Vietnam war is the basis for involving the entire antiwar movement in getting out a massive antiwar vote as a central focus of the spring 10 days of antiwar activities.

The Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam is calling for a campaign to publicize the referendum, get the referendum onto campuses that aren't yet signed up, and help to get out the vote. Literature from the SMC national office is planned.

The referendum is a perfect focal point for the antiwar week. Our slogans are: "Vote against the war on April 24th; Strike against the war on April 26th; March against the war on April 27th." The antiwar movement can accept the challenge among students to prove that the "vocal activists" are representative of student opinion on the war in Vietnam. We say: "No matter whom you support for president--even if you are for boycotting the presidential elections--work to GET OUT THE VOTE against the war in Vietnam." Local antiwar committees could, for instance, reproduce the ballot with a big red check next to

"immediate withdrawal of American forces" and "permanent cessation of bombing."

VOTE HALSTEAD AND BOUTELLE

Halstead and Boutelle are the only presidential ticket for withdrawal from Vietnam, the only candidates for black control of the black communities, and the only socialist candidates with an alternative to the system of war and racism. We can urge all socialists, antiwar activists, black militants, and anyone who is for withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, to vote for Halstead and Boutelle. They are also the only candidates that insist on the elementary democratic right of 18 year-olds to vote. By voting for Halstead and Boutelle students can strike a blow to LBJ's pretension that students as a whole accept "legitimate politics," i.e. the capitalist two-party con game.

Above all it is a time when students, even if not yet socialists, will be willing to read the literature of and consider the program of the only socialist candidate on the ballot.

TURNING THE SOCIALIST WORKERS CAMPAIGNERS TO THESE OPPORTUNITIES

The key to our action now is understanding that we are part and parcel of Choice '68 and campaigning accordingly. We are not interlopers. We can tie in building Choice '68 to all of our campaign activities.

Fred Halstead and Paul Boutelle, the Socialist Workers candidates for state offices, and young socialist trailblazers all should use their campus speeches and other activities as part of the Choice '68 project during the next eight weeks. It should be standard for candidates and trailblazers planning to hit a campus to check with the campus Choice '68 coordinator beforehand. They are campaigning as part of the Choice '68 project, and should try to receive help from the coordinator on meetings, publicity, and funds. Our trailblazers are really no longer trailblazers--we now have a contact and can set up meetings on every campus participating in Choice '68.

This is a new opening especially for all SWP state candidates to go to all the campuses in their area during the next eight weeks as part of the project. If a campus is not yet part of the Choice '68 project, our first job is to sign them up as part of the campaign.

Trailblazers and candidates should also always check with the antiwar activists on campus as to how the referendum is coming, if there is anything they can do to help, and if they have Student Mobilization Committee buttons and posters on Choice '68.

The referendum is weak on the question of the black liberation struggle, with the inclusion of four liberal choices and one pro-Wallace choice on the "urban crisis." We are urging a write-in for black control of the black communities.

Although Vice Presidential candidates are not listed on the ballot, we must make it clear in our literature, speeches, etc. that a vote for Halstead is a vote for the Halstead-Boutelle ticket. In this way we can effectively counterpose Paul Boutelle and his uncompromising stance for black control of the black communities and the formation of a black political party controlled by the black community to Martin Luther King.

Publicity possibilities for the Socialist Workers campaign have increased due to Choice '68. The interest by the press has already been shown in the AP release, articles in the Minneapolis Star and the Los Angeles Times, and the fact that CBS TV called the national campaign headquarters asking for an interview on our participation in Choice '68.

Choice '68 opens opportunities to get many more stories into campus newspapers. Campus papers are already carrying articles on Choice '68 (see enclosed). The national office of Choice '68 itself will be sending biweekly press releases on activities of all the candidates to all campus papers and coordinators. In addition, the Socialist Workers Campaign Committee will be sending press releases and sample copies of literature to all campus newspapers where Choice '68 will be on the ballot. YSHB'ers should follow up by contacting the editor of their campus newspaper and make an extra effort to get press coverage for "Choice '68" and the Halstead campaign.

The entire front page of the next issue of the Militant will feature Choice '68, and a front page column on Choice '68 will be run each week. The cover of the Young Socialist will feature the poll.

The Campaign Committee is printing the following new pieces of literature to be used as ammunition in this campaign:

1. A poster and mini-poster reproducing the Choice '68 ballot with big red checks for Halstead, withdrawal from Vietnam, stop the bombing, and a write-in for black control of the black community.

2. A brochure, aimed at Choice '68 and the spring antiwar week, on why to vote for Halstead and Boutelle, comparing quotes by them on the key issues of the campaign to quotes by the other candidates.

3. YSHB is discussing putting out a special 8-page YSHB booklet using the focus of this campaign to explain what is a Young Socialist for Halstead and Boutelle, what Halstead and Boutelle stand for, and why radical youth should become socialists.

TASKS AHEAD OF US

1. The first task is to get Choice '68 signed up on the campuses where there still are no coordinators. Enclosed is a list of the campuses in your area where Choice '68 is still not signed up and that you can contact. This is the precondition to taking advantage of the openings Choice '68 provides.

2. Our state campaigns and trailblazes must use this poll as the axis of our antiwar and campaign work. Several states have not yet announced their candidates and planned their next eight weeks of trailblazing. This opening makes it all the more imperative to do this.

We want to first get out our posters, brochures, and set up meetings to campaign to get out the vote and for a vote for Halstead-Boutelle and withdrawal from Vietnam.

3. Support and build the Student Mobilization campaign among antiwar activists on campuses to get out a massive vote as a central part of the 10 days of protest.

4. Send both to us and to Choice '68 newspaper clippings on our campaign and on Choice '68. They may use these in their releases and we will use them for national publicity.

5. Prepare for election eve: lay the groundwork for symposiums and debates among supporters of the various candidates and plan, if possible, to place ads in campus papers with a sample ballot marked for Halstead and withdrawal signed by student endorsers. We will release a national leaflet like this with the endorsement of hundreds of student leaders a couple weeks before the vote.

Please let us know right after discussion with your campaign committee what the plans in your area are in relation to these tasks.

Fraternally,

Jack Barnes
Jack Barnes
National Campaign Director