

August 3, 1958

National Chairman, Young Peoples' Socialist League  
303 Fourth Avenue  
New York City

National Chairman, Young Socialist League  
114 W. 14th Street  
New York City

Dear Comrades:

This is an official letter to both the YPSL and YSL and we request that the national bodies of both organizations take up the points in this letter and send us an official reply.

In view of the pending dissolution of the YSL to be followed by the individual joining of the YPSL by most of the YSL members, we wish to clarify certain points as to the relation of the "merged" organization with the rest of the socialist youth movement in this country.

The YOUNG SOCIALIST, America's only nationwide socialist youth newspaper, its supporters, and some 15 youth clubs throughout the country to which it gives expression, have from their very birth sought to unify all socialist youth into a common organization. We stand at this moment, as we have from our very inception, for the unity of the Young Socialist League, Young Peoples Socialist League, the supporters of the Young Socialist, independents and former members of the Labor Youth League into one organization.

We stand ready at this time to enter into immediate negotiations with the YSL and YPSL as a move toward this end. We specifically ask the YSL and YPSL to enter into negotiations with us prior to taking any final steps on their own merger. We, on our part, desire such negotiations in order to clarify the situation in the youth field prior to the holding of our National Conference in December.

Should it be impossible at this time to bring about the organic unity of all socialist youth, it still may be possible for the different youth organizations, publications and local youth groups to work together on those issues where there is agreement. We favor a united front of all socialist and working-class youth, including young members of the Communist Party as well as any other party, in order to advance the struggle for peace, for integration, for civil liberties and for socialism in our own country. We seek a formal statement from the YSL and the YPSL as to their willingness to so cooperate with other young socialists and workers.

The desire of the YPSL, which is affiliated with the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation, or the YSL which supports politically the SP-SDF, for united action is put somewhat in doubt by the actions of the SP-SDF recently against the YOUNG SOCIALIST. The SP-SDF leaders have characterized the YS as having "no greater claim to the name 'socialist' than the Communist Party or the National Socialists of Germany." Since there is the clear implication that we are in effect "fascists" and since socialists are

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opposed to united fronts with fascists, it seems clear that the SP-SDF for one is opposed to united action with us. It is hoped that young people sympathetic or affiliated with this organization do not hold a similar view. We therefore seek a formal statement as to the views of the YSL and YPSL on this question.

One of the issues most frequently discussed among socialists these days is electoral action. There is a growing awareness among radicals of all shades of opinion of the need for united electoral activity in opposition to the two major capitalist parties. The YOUNG SOCIALIST strongly favors such electoral action and its supporting club in New York City, the Young Socialist Alliance, is one of the main supporters of the United Socialist Ticket movement in New York State.

We note with sadness that at its last convention the SP-SDF came out against united electoral action with those who it considers to be "Trotskyists or Communists" and opened the door for support of the capitalist parties by members and locals of the SP-SDF. We hope that the YPSL does not agree with this position and therefore seek clarification on this point from the YPSL.

The YSL held a referendum at the time of the 1956 elections in which it voted in favor of support to all socialist parties running in the election by a large majority. Since, to our knowledge, no national convention has since overruled this membership decision, we therefore assume the YSL still holds this view. If such is the case, we hope that the YSL will enter into discussions with us at the earliest possible moment on ways and means of furthering united electoral action to oppose the two capitalist parties.

We hope to hear from you on the above questions as soon as possible. We promise to consider with utmost carefulness and seriousness your answers to these questions. The possibility of a united socialist youth movement hangs in the balance.

Fraternally,

Tim Wohlforth, for the editorial board  
of the YOUNG SOCIALIST