



# YSA

# DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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Anti-War Movement Report to the YSA  
Plenum by Doug J., September 7, 1965

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# Young Socialist Alliance

P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station, New York 3, New York



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The following is the transcript of the oral report on anti-war movement work given by Doug J. to the National Committee plenum on September 7, 1965. The general line was passed unanimously by the plenum.

This material is for the information of the membership and is an internal bulletin. It should not be sold or given to non-YSAers.

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT REPORT TO THE YSA PLENUM by Doug J.  
Sept. 7, 1965

I. Situation in this country for the YSA at the last Plenum  
and at the convention

A year ago when we held our last plenum this country was in the midst of an election campaign that represented one of the highest points in coalition politics in American history. The Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the pacifists, the civil rights leaders, and all the varieties of progressives stampeded into the Johnson campaign against Goldwater. SDS, with their slogan of "part of the way with LBJ," was not immune to this atmosphere of supporting the "lesser evil".

The upshot of this orgy was that no major protests were called that would embarrass the Democratic Party. The civil rights leaders called a moratorium on civil rights demonstrations while the disoriented radicals, pacifists and SDSers could not even muster a feeble protest against Johnson's bombing of North Vietnamese ports and military installations in the Tonkin Gulf.

Consequently, this period was marked by the general decline of the Negro movement and by the absence of any active struggles outside of our own organization in which we could realistically intervene. The perspective at that time was and could only be, considering the limitations of our very small organization, the concentration on finding contacts wherever possible and recruiting them to the YSA. This usually meant that a local sent two or three people into organizations that were either temporary in character or on the decline to probe around for whatever contacts were available.

It was a difficult period and in point of fact an abnormal period for the YSA to go through. It has not been, and will not be, the norm for our movement to go through periods when there are no larger movements outside of ourselves in which we can do fruitful work.

Although the election had come and gone by the time of our New Year's convention, the stupor that had hit the radical movement during the election campaign had not completely worn off. No major struggles had emerged toward which we could orient. There were no clear cut arenas outside of the YSA in which we could work and concentrate our energies.

This problem was frankly admitted at the convention and various suggestions were made before and during the convention to deal with it. I remember a suggestion was made for the YSA to initiate a national committee in defense of the colonial revolution. This was rejected, however, on the basis that it would have to be oriented around protesting a specific U.S. intervention or aggression and it was not clear at that time whether Cuba, Vietnam, the Congo, or some other area would attract the most attention.

Despite the objective situation we faced at the Convention and the consequent lack of a central focus for YSA activity, the convention prepared us to be ready for any openings that should arise. Jack, in his political report, clearly indicated that the question of a focus was left open and that the NEC should be left free to take advantage of any opportunities or breaks that should occur. Most important of all, our last convention marked the coming of age of the YSA as a truly national organization with a number of large locals, a solid cadre scattered across the country, and a strengthened national center.

## II. The Rise and Character of the New Anti-War Movement

While the YSA was gathered at its Convention discussing what it should do in the coming period, the SDS National Council met and decided to sponsor the March on Washington against the war in Vietnam. This was the first real break with the Johnson consensus and marked the first large organized revulsion against Johnson and his dirty war in Vietnam. This call for the March on Washington coupled with the bombing of North Vietnam six weeks later ushered the anti-war movement on to the American political scene.

We've already discussed thoroughly the character of the anti-war movement, so I will not go into much detail here. I think, however, that it would be good to go over a few points.

(1) First, is the anomaly of a serious political crisis like the Vietnam war and a protest against it emerging at the height of economic prosperity. Unlike previous wars in which the United States has been involved, there are no obvious direct economic motivations for American aggression in Vietnam. In other words, the main goals are clearly not the booty of victory in Vietnam itself. This forced the protesters to face up to some of the broader political implications of imperialist war policy from the beginning.

(2) Flowing from this first observation is the fact that the anti-war movement occurs while there is general prosperity for the working class and appalling conservatism in the trade union movement. Even during the Korean War there was more vocal criticism of the war and American foreign policy in the trade union movement than there is today.

(3) Third, the anti-war movement occurs after and in fact partly as a result of the continued resistance of the Vietnamese guerrillas for the past six or seven years. This factor should not be under-estimated. It is the prominence and the continued existence over time of this crisis that has forced the issue to the attention of so many people and provided the base for a real movement.

(4) Fourth, there is division within the ruling class on what should be done in Vietnam that has been manifested by public debate and criticism in the editorial pages of leading newspapers in the country. This has laid the basis for the permissive atmosphere that exists in this country toward the anti-war movement. It is clearly demonstrated in the case of Eugene Genovese, Marxist professor at Rutgers who publicly states that he hopes the enemy wins a war in which his country is participating.

Yet the Board of Regents, the University president, and the governor all uphold his right to speak. In what other war would a university professor have been able to get away with what could be construed as a treasonous statement?

(5) Fifth, is the amazingly widespread anti-war feeling and mood that exists in the country. In some cases, as the Geneovese case indicates, it is classical defeatism. Although we do not know exactly how widespread it really is and to what extent it has reached into the working class, several pollsters agree that at least 25% of the population support withdrawal from Vietnam. So far the main force in the organized movement is students, although professors, especially young instructors, are active in the movement.

There is no question that there is strong feeling in the Negro ghettos against the war. In fact, it is possible that the sentiment against the war among the Negroes as a group is more widespread than among students as a group. That Martin Luther King, who frantically tries to keep the Negro struggle chained to the Democratic Party, would make a statement against the war in Vietnam is symptomatic of the powerful anti-war feeling among Negroes.

It is this widespread discontent, which is still for the most part largely disorganized, that has laid the basis for the largest organized anti-war movement in American history. It is larger than any movement in Europe against the Vietnamese war. It is still climbing and at this time the limit is not yet in sight.

(6) Sixth, this movement is different from past peace movements that we have seen in this country. It is opposing a specific war while that war is going on and is organized independent of, and in opposition to, the Democratic Party. While it includes third campers, coalitionists, and principled pacifists, they do not dominate it or control it. It is the first genuine "non-exclusive" large scale movement the YSA has participated in.

### III. Our Experience in the Anti-War Movement

The experience of the YSA in opposing the war in Vietnam actually goes back several years when we were in the Student Peace Union. We continually brought it up in SPU meetings and urged SPU chapters to go on record against American aggression in Vietnam. At that time, as many of you will recall, we were kicked out of picket lines and red-baited simply for carrying signs against the war in Vietnam.

We supported demonstrations against the war in Vietnam-- the May 2nd demonstrations in 1964 and the few scattered demonstrations last December. We made it one of the central issues in the 1964 SWP election campaign.

When SDS issued the call for a March on Washington last January this was just the break the YSA had been waiting for. We immediately and without hesitancy endorsed the March and took steps to help build it to the best of our ability. The Jan. 17th NEC report that went to all the locals stated: "The concrete anti-war character of the call and the non-exclusive character of the proposed organization of the March makes it potentially the biggest national youth action since the SPU's anti-nuclear test march. It has the potential to be much larger than and more militant than SPU's 1962 March on Washington. Its organization will attract around it thousands of students opposed to America's dirty war. The various radical youth groups will be on trial in the eyes of many newly radicalized youth. Their ability to pitch in and build the action in a non-sectarian manner will be tested."

We published and sold 9,000 copies of a dime pamphlet on Vietnam, and initiated three national tours to propagandize against the war and to help build the March on Washington.

The bombing of North Vietnam in February gave the organization of the March its first real impetus and it was out of the protests against these bombings that the committees were formed to organize the March on Washington.

The YSA learned a great deal from our experience in building the March on Washington and the parallel actions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Berkeley. It is important to review these lessons because many of them are directly relevant to our conduct in the anti-war committees today. When I was working on this report I went back and re-read all the NEC reports on the March on Washington experience and found them very fruitful.

First, the March on Washington was a confirmation of our long time position that a militant call would help rather than hinder the building of a large demonstration against the war in Vietnam.

Second, it was proof that the anti-war mood in this country was much larger than we had even expected.

Third, we correctly recognized the internal conflict within the peace movement over the SDS policy of non-exclusion and redoubled our efforts to support this tendency. This was helped by our policy of not allowing secondary questions such as what slogans and speakers would be solicited for the March override the central and primary fact that a call had been issued accurately naming the war in Vietnam a civil war and calling for a non-exclusive march directed against it. It was more important for us to put our efforts on preventing SDS from watering down their call and in prodding, pushing, and getting out in front and demonstrating to them that it was possible to organize a large militant march, than it was for us to haggle over this or that slogan, or this or that speaker.

We should not underestimate the influence that the YSA had in making sure the March came off as it did. The STUDIES ON THE LEFT article on the March points out that the National Council of SDS voted to co-sponsor the March with so-called "adult peace groups." Clark Kissinger, at that time National Secretary of SDS (with whom we had the most contact and who knew that radicals, and in many key areas the YSA, had begun to organize furiously for the March) bureaucratically changed this decision and refused to relinquish sponsorship of the March. This was extremely important because it has put the burden of proof on the exclusionists at a time when most of the radical students want non-exclusion. They have to come up with good reasons to show why the radical socialists should be excluded now. The role that we played in strengthening Kissinger's hand against the Rustin's, the Steve Max's, and all the other exclusionist currents was probably crucial to the March and therefore to the impetus given to the anti-war movement by the March. There is an important lesson here and that is that it is not pre-determined that projects in the anti-war movement will be a success or a failure. We are not total objectivists and should be continually aware that our intervention here or influence there can make the difference between success and failure.

YSAers began to learn through their experiences in the march how to become the best builders of a principled anti-war protest while at the same time being the best propagandists for socialism. This was demonstrated by the hard work we put into organizing buses, selling buttons, passing out leaflets, and so on for the march and then at the march openly selling far more socialist literature than all of our opponents put together could sell or give away.

Another important fact that we should absorb about the March on Washington was that it marked the beginning of a turn for the YSA. As I outlined earlier, the objective situation in this country for the period immediately prior to the last convention did not offer a large arena of work for the YSA to enter on a national scale. The anti-war movement provided the YSA with the first chance to integrate ourselves into a national movement larger than ourselves since our intervention in Fair Play for Cuba Committee several years ago.

At that time it became the norm for all YSAers to belong to Fair Play for Cuba Committees, to organize them, to speak in the name of the committees and to hold positions in the apparatus - in other words to integrate themselves into the FPCC to the greatest extent possible. However, most YSAers today were not in the YSA then and did not go through that experience. The experience of working in a movement outside of ourselves is a new experience for the overwhelming majority of YSAers including the leadership.

Before going into the question of integrating ourselves into this movement which is really the most important question for us, I would like to deal with (1) the character and development



of the anti-war committees (2) questions raised by activists and leaders in these committees (3) and the role of our opponents in the anti-war movement.

The present anti-war committees emerging from the Ad Hoc Committees that were formed to organize the March on Washington are the most organized expression of the anti-war sentiment in the country today. These committees organized on a non-exclusionist basis have demonstrated their ability to sustain themselves and even grow over the summer months. The fact that committees organized for a specific action such as the March on Washington could sustain themselves after the activity demonstrates more than anything else the depth of the anti-war movement.

The activities of these committees range from propaganda activities such as leafleting, literature tables, rallies, etc. to burning draft cards, stopping troop trains and other forms of civil disobedience. As a result of our intervention in these committees a lot of questions have come up which we have to deal with as concretely as possible. I'm not going to go into most of the questions in detail because I hope the comrades will raise the problems they've had and how they have dealt with them during the discussion period.

I will, however, go into three general questions.

The first is the problem of civil disobedience. For us, first and foremost, civil disobedience is a 100% tactical question. At no time are we opposed to civil disobedience in principle. If we were our movement would never have been able to organize the Minneapolis teamsters, to intervene in the CIO, or to become involved in many other struggles. Whether you knew it or not, you were breaking a Washington ordinance when you sold YS's at the March on Washington, i.e., you were involved in a form of civil disobedience.

However, we are opposed to civil disobedience merely for the sake of violating laws. We are opposed to civil disobedience when there is no political gain to be made by it, and we are definitely opposed to breaking the law when it will unnecessarily victimize YSAers, or the leaders of the anti-war movement for that matter, with long sentences and/or high fines.

On the other hand, some of the leaders in the anti-war movement have encouraged mass civil disobedience projects. There are looked at as devices to attract attention to the growing protest against the war in Vietnam and also as ways to throw a monkey wrench into the war machine by hitting targets that are directly connected to the maintenance of the war, such as troop trains. Professional pacifists, CNVA types, have had this orientation for a long time, and we did not get involved

in their projects. However, there is a different factor present today and that is the tremendous size of the anti-war movement and the fact that hundreds of students can be mobilized for projects like this. The mass arrests in Washington on the last day of the Assembly of Unrepresented People was one of the largest, if not the largest, such event in Washington history. The troop train incidents in Berkeley also involved hundreds of kids.

Another difference is that for most kids who favor civil disobedience in the anti-war movement it is a tactical question. They are not pacifists, they have no real desire to get arrested, but they are desperately searching for ways to bring a quick end to the war. For these reasons it is not excluded that in certain situations under certain circumstances we will become involved in civil disobedience actions. This is a question to be decided by YSAers on the spot according to the magnitude of the given development and the general direction in which it is developing.

We should not attack or criticize committees for these projects, but wherever and whenever possible explain the limitations of civil disobedience and encourage the committees to concentrate on more positive activities such as propagandizing and organizing the growing number of students and others who are opposing the war.

Part of this general question of civil disobedience is the question of the draft. We've probably received more inquiries about this in the NO from comrades around the country than any other aspect of the anti-war movement.

It has risen because, unlike World War II, there is widespread disgruntlement among young people toward the prospect of being drafted and sent to Vietnam. There have been bits and pieces of evidence in the press about soldiers refusing to go to Vietnam, and there has been the recent stampede to get married when Johnson called an end to exemptions for married men from now on. There is also the example of the statement issued by a section of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party calling on Negroes to refuse induction.

First, we are definitely opposed to capitalist conscription. We propagandize against it and point out how it is designed to carry out aggression against peoples abroad. We are opposed, however, at this time, to refusing induction or to signing statements stating our refusal to be inducted. We argue that tactically there is no political end that can be served by ending up in jail for a few years, and isolating ourselves from the political life in the country. This is our position not only for our own people, but for all the activists in the anti-war movement. We point out that every draftee who is opposed to the war in Vietnam should exercise all of his

democratic and political rights vis a vis the army. He has the right to refuse to sign the loyalty oath, and he has the legal right to continue to speak out against the war in Vietnam in the army. The example of Pieter Clark in Chicago, who refused to sign the loyalty oath and passed out anti-war leaflets in the induction center is an example of one approach that we can support. We can urge that committees leaflet induction centers with propaganda against the war and with information on what political rights soldiers have in the army.

The theoretical question has been raised as to what our position would be if there were a mass movement involving thousands of people who refused to fight in Vietnam, and if such a prospect is possible, shouldn't we be pushing for it now. It is a mistake to let the question of our position on the draft get stuck on this "iffy" axis. The fact of the matter is that no such movement does exist today, and if it did it would assume that a different political situation in this country exists, a situation where the radicalization of the working class was at a much higher level. In fact, if there were a mass refusal to serve in the army coupled with mass desertions, the political situation would be such that the question of the draft would be superfluous and larger political issues would be at the forefront.

We, of course, would support all manifestations of opposition to capitalist conscription laws in such a situation, just as we supported the sit-down strikes in the auto plants in the 1930's and their violation of capitalist property laws.

Basically, the question of mass refusal to serve in the army is a mass and class problem and not something sparked in this period by individual acts of the vanguard. In order for disobedience to the draft to be effective, it must be carried out by the mass action of the working class, not by the actions of student activists who are far ahead of the general political level of the country. We should make the point to the leaders of the anti-war movement in informal conversation that we are in a propaganda period in this country, and that the main task is to convince more people to be opposed to the war in Vietnam and to organize them. There is a certain tendency for some of the activists to get too far ahead of the general level and to suggest what are essentially ultra-left or adventuristic actions.

The second major question raised in the anti-war committees is "community work." Quite simply, community work is a fancy way of stating the need for reaching out and broadening the anti-war movement. We can hardly be opposed to this, and in fact are very much in favor of it. The fact that the anti-war militants want to reach out and draw other layers of society into the anti-war movement is a very positive step. However, the committees that have made probes into the community this summer should be careful to draw up accurate

balance sheets of their successes and their failures. It would be a great disservice for them to exaggerate the real achievements of their community probes. Hopefully, comrades in committees with this experience will deal with it during the discussion.

Actually, how successful the organization of the anti-war movement is this fall on the campuses will be an indicator of how deep the feeling against the war runs in the community. The students all come from families that live in the community and are not divorced completely from the pressures and feelings that exist there. If tens of thousands of students flock into the campus anti-war committees this fall and winter it will be a sure sign that things are percolating at home and that organizers should be sent into the communities. Also, we should consider the possibility that anti-war propaganda directed to the Negro people will be successful. Forming anti-war committees at high schools is another form of community work and there is every indication that there is much potential in this area.

The third question that has been raised is that of independent political action. There are two aspects to this question. The first is the negation of coalition politics that has been made by many of the anti-war militants and that was made by Staughton Lynd in his polemic against Rustin. We should not underestimate the importance of this development and to what extent it represents a giant leap forward. A year ago during the election campaign there was certainly no important current outside of ourselves that was opposing the Democratic Party, and its Socialist servants like Rustin, Thomas, and the CP. We hoped for and looked to the time when such a development would occur. Well, it's right here in front of our eyes now, and we should support unconditionally all genuine forms of independent political action that are generated by it.

We should point out at every opportunity our solidarity with Lynd and these new radicals who reject coalition politics. We should not be too impatient or too quick to berate them for not taking clear and decisive steps toward a positive political alternative. It is important that the anti-war militants absorb thoroughly the implications of their break with coalition politics.

The question of a positive independent political alternative is a more open question. There is a certain tendency among the new radicals to brush aside "independent politics" as the ritualistic running of independent candidates. However, we should point out that all actions carried out independent of the capitalist parties and directed against the war in Vietnam are in reality independent political actions. All leaflets, rallies, demonstrations, election campaigns, etc., that refuse to whitewash the Democratic Party and that directly attack its war in Vietnam are positive forms of independent political action.

We should continue to make it clear that we reject the notion of routinely running candidates against the Democratic and Republican Parties without integrating ourselves into the anti-war movement. This is the kind of electoral routinism that is practiced by the SLP. On the other hand, we should point out that running candidates is a very important device in propagandizing against the war--that more publicity opportunities are made available and important political questions can be raised.

There is the possibility that the anti-war committees will either run or support independent anti-war candidates. Our position toward such candidates will have to be determined, as is always the case with independent candidates, by measuring the merits of each individual case separately.

Our labor party slogan is not very meaningful to the kids in the anti-war movement. There is no large section of the organized working class that is radicalizing. Furthermore, a thin layer of the radicalizing kids are thinking in terms of overturning the entire social system, not in reforming it. They raise the question of independent power and the need to draw together all sections of those in the struggle against the system. As for the small layer of new radicals who recognize the need for a social revolution to eliminate once and for all imperialist aggression against the colonial revolution, it should be second nature for us to try to recruit them to a revolutionary socialist organization, i.e. to the YSA.

When Staughton Lynd in his article on "Coalition Politics or Non-violent Revolution," and Stanley Aronowitz in his review of Art Preis' book in the National Guardian, raise the question of coalition politics, it gives us a powerful lever to bring up the whole history of subordination to the Democratic Party and by the Socialist and Communist Parties. The legacy of the Trotskyist movement is powerful on this question, and we should utilize it wherever and whenever possible in conversations with these new radicals.

Next, I will deal with the role of our opponents and with the role of SDS in the anti-war movement. The first and most important fact is that the movement is too big and growing too fast for any of the radical organizations, including SDS, to completely dominate it at this point. In one area the DuBois Club may dominate it, in another the YSA, SDS in another, or yet a coalition may exist in others.

At present, the Stalinists are our main opponents in anti-war work. First and by far the most important is the DuBois Clubs and second is the Progressive Labor Party and their May 2nd front group. The disintegration of the Social Democratic youth movement prevents them from intervening in any meaningful way at the present time, although this is certainly not ordained for eternity.

We must be extremely well informed about our opponents, know what they are doing, visit their local headquarters, etc. In its assessment of our opponents the National Office is dependent to a large extent on the information that we receive from the locals.

We should watch closely any front group tricks that are used by our opponents. The YSAers today do not have the benefit of the experiences of the 1930's and 1940's when our movement-learned every trick the Stalinists could pull and consequently we sometimes do not have as strong an awareness of how Stalinists operate as we should have. Thus, on one hand we should not panic over the fear of any of our opponents dominating the anti-war movement, and on the other hand we should avoid naive or ignorance about them.

SDS, which is not an opponent organization in the sense that it is not competing for socialist youth, rose to prominence in the anti-war movement as a result of the March on Washington. Since then, however, SDS has made two serious errors which has caused it to lose much of the prestige and influence. First was their failure to organize the anti-war movement after the March on Washington at a time when their prestige was highest. Second, was their failure to take more initiative in the formation of the National Coordinating Committee in the Vietnam workshop at the Assembly of Unrepresented People. We've continued to foster the friendly relations with the SDS leadership that we began during the March on Washington period.

SDS is plagued with increasing internal frictions, with frictions with their parent organization, the League for Industrial Democracy, and with financial problems. Their future role and even existence should be left an open question at this point. More than anything else they demonstrate the great volatility in the student movement today.

#### IV. What the YSA Should Do

The last and most important question I want to cover is how we should relate to the anti-war movement and what should be the central points of our activity within that movement. First of all, it should be the norm that every YSAer belong to an anti-war committee. We cannot sit on the sidelines while the biggest anti-war protest in the history of our country is going on. Our contact with the movement cannot only be as literature agents standing at the doorways of the anti-war committees. We must become integrated into the movement. We cannot be afraid to do busy work for the committees, to sit at literature tables, to organize rallies, to call up dozens of committee contacts.

Second, we should not be too formal in our approach to kids in the anti-war committees. One of the problems we will be continually bumping up against is that of how the YSA as an

organization should relate to the anti-war committees when our individual members belong to these committees. There are no strict formulas that can be applied. There are times when we will want to co-sponsor events with the anti-war committees and there will be other times when we will not want to push this question. One mistake that can be made is to try to influence contacts, the leadership, or the membership of these committees only through the use of formal resolutions, leaflets, or whatever. It is often more fruitful to raise questions in personal conversations with the kids in the committee. Not only will those we are trying to reach probably be more receptive, but we can get a better idea of what they really think about our ideas and we can answer their questions and objections on the spot.

It doesn't hurt at all if we mix with the kids in the anti-war committees socially--go to movies and picnics together. This is our movement as much as it is anybody else's. We should think and talk in terms of the first person plural, "we," and not in the third person plural, "they."

Third, we should not be factional or engage in organizational manoeuvring and manipulation in the anti-war committees. There is nothing that can alienate people in these committees more than for us to give the appearance of trying to take over the committees and run them as YSA front groups. When some of us were in the SPU at Carleton a couple of years ago, two YSAers were elected to a three man steering committee. The only problem was that no one knew we were YSAers when we were elected and this coupled with the red-baiting efforts of a YPSL kid raised tremendous suspicions against us, even among some of our liberal friends. We were summarily removed from the steering committee.

This, of course, does not mean that we refuse leadership positions if the opportunity arises. I'm only trying to illustrate the danger of organizational manoeuvring. We want YSAers to become leaders in the anti-war committees wherever possible. If we can get paid positions so much the better. The Stalinists are experts at getting positions in the apparatus and have been doing it for years. Our comrades in the trade union movement in the 1930's did not pass up paid organizing positions. Due to the lack of a homogeneous leadership and the failure of SDS to live up to its potential organizing role, the internal crises of leadership is one of the greatest problems facing the anti-war movement. Our role as leaders becomes very important in this light.

Fourth, when integrating into this anti-war movement it is important to have complete flexibility of tactics. We must learn not to confuse secondary issues with primary issues. The question of speakers, sponsorship, resolutions, leaflets, support to candidates, and thousands of other questions that we are confronted with in the committees are tactical questions,

not principled ones. The YSAers in the New York End the War in Vietnam Committee did not support the Spartacist motion for the Committee to endorse the SWP and PL campaigns, not because we don't want people in the committees to support our campaign, but because it was considered secondary to other questions that we are raising in the Committee. This is hardly the question on which to divide the committees. We should be prepared to accept less than we like sometimes, make compromises when necessary, and stand firm at other times.

Fifth, there is no contradiction between doing contact work and integrating ourselves into this movement. On the contrary, greater integration into this movement will mean better opportunities to meet contacts and to recruit them. You can hold conversations with contacts before or after committee meetings or while sitting together at literature tables. Comrades at Columbia have told me that one of the most fruitful aspects of putting so much time in at the Committee's literature table is the contact work they've done.

Sixth, the YSA should not be afraid of getting overinvolved in this movement. The last thing I'm worried about is that YSAers will get carried away with the movement and become disillusioned if it should suddenly collapse. The mistake that we made in not having more YSAers at the Assembly of Unrepresented People flowed from this fear of getting overinvolved. While this movement is on the ascendancy we should err on the side of too much involvement rather than too little, if we must err at all.

Finally, what should YSA focus on in the anti-war committees? What kind of minimum demands should we suggest for the anti-war movement? First, as new committees are formed and new people join the old committees, the question of exclusion or non-exclusion will continually arise. We should continue to lend our full support to the non-exclusionist tendency pointing out clearly the lessons of the March on Washington and thereby throwing the burden of proof into the laps of the exclusionists. We should not take this question too lightly because it looks like the Social Democrats are about to launch a full scale attack on what they consider the dangerous road of United Front politics. The most recent NEW POLITICS has some interesting material on this. Of course, we cannot be too formal on this question. Exclusion or non-exclusion should not boil down to a question of whether the YSA name appears on a particular leaflet. For example, the YSA's name was not on the call of the SDS March on Washington. But this did not prevent us from initiating and participating in committees to organize the march. As I outlined earlier the question of our signs and speakers was secondary to the struggle between the real exclusionists on one hand, the Rustins, and the Steve Max's, and Kissinger who was strongly defending non-exclusionism and the right of the YSA to participate in the building of the March on the other.



Second, we should continue to push our demand for immediate withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. Not all the members of the committees are clear on the question of Vietnam's unconditional right to self determination. The Stalinists are continually bringing up this or that formula for negotiations, and we should be prepared to explain clearly why a demand by Americans for negotiations is a violation of the Vietnamese right to self determination and why the only demand consistent with self determination is immediate withdrawal of American troops.

When the opportunity arises we should bring up resolutions, etc. for supporting independent political action. At the Congress of Unrepresented People in Los Angeles, the YSA and SWP initiated a resolution on independent political action that was signed by individuals from many groups including the DuBois Club, SDS, and the Socialist Party, and was passed by the Congress. The Resolution states in part:

The time has come for the voice of the unrepresented to be heard from the councils of our cities to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C. To that end we pledge to oppose any candidate for public office who supports the war in Vietnam. We will oppose any candidate who does not support the liberation struggle of the Negro people in this country. We will oppose any candidate who is tied to the twin parties of war and racism.

We call for the formation of a party of the unrepresented people, a political alternative based on the Afro-Americans' struggle for freedom and on the struggle against war. Such an alternative, emerging from the freedom movements and from the people in the communities, would truly represent the interests of the majority.

On an organizational plane, we should urge, prod, do everything possible to make the anti-war committees membership organizations. One of the few positive features of the now dead and buried SPU was the fact that it was a membership organization. The SPU was organized nationally from its very inception on this basis. The anti-war committees have not, however, which means that we have to encourage the idea of getting a committee here and a committee there to set the example for the idea. The Berkeley Vietnam Day Committee is already a membership organization with membership cards, and the Columbia University Committee recently voted to do the same.

Having a membership organization would accomplish two things. First it would make it possible to elect delegates to a national convention on a rational basis. Second, it would make it much more difficult for the Stalinists who manoeuvre around the committees, come to some meetings to vote, but are not really active, to take them over.

Next we should push for an organizing drive oriented toward the campuses. There is probably not a campus in the country on which an anti-war committee cannot be organized. Every local committee should reach out and organize new committees on all the campuses around them. The YSA should look at itself as the organizers of the anti-war movement. We should not let grass grow under our feet waiting for somebody else to initiate committees. Remember how YPSL used to become the organizers for SPU, how they would set up SPU chapters everywhere and then on the basis of their role as leaders get enough kids around them to form YPSL chapters. That's the kind of inside track the YSA should aim at in the anti-war movement.

Finally, there are two focal dates toward which we can orient in the immediate future. The first is the International Days of Protest on October 15 and 16 which are local and regional Congresses of Unrepresented People with demonstrations against the war. We should continue to help build these.

Second, is the Thanksgiving Convention to be held in Madison (since changed to Washington, D.C.). This will be a gathering of hundreds of anti-war activists from around the entire country. Here the plans for a national anti-war organization will be discussed and hopefully where one will emerge. We want to help build this, to organize buses to the conference, to publicize it in our press and tours and to do everything possible to insure that as many anti-war activists as possible are there.

Our intervention into the anti-war movement will not mean that our socialist propaganda activities will be cut down. On the contrary, it will be stepped up with tours, trailblazing, and a YS sub drive.

Thus, we can say that the YSA is making a turn toward totally integrating itself into the anti-war movement, toward building it and organizing it, while at the same time bringing our socialist ideas to as many young people as possible and recruiting them to the YSA.

The following are some of the points brought up in the discussion and summary on the report:

A. Unlike our work in the Student Peace Union we are not confronted with the constant fight for our right to participate in the anti-war movement. We are not placed in the position of constituting the left opposition and we should not carry out our work in the anti-war movement as if we were. Instead we should think in terms of organizing the anti-war movement, of setting up new chapters, of playing leadership roles and striving for political hegemony in the anti-war committees.

B. There are numerous splits and debates occurring within the anti-war movement. This is illustrated by the debate in Liberation, by split-offs here and there from SDS, and other numerous examples. All YSAers should follow closely the discussion in the anti-war movement. Locals should receive copies of Liberation, the SDS Vietnam newsletter, the National Co-ordinating Committee's Peace and Freedom News for the use of comrades.

C. Working in a large national movement outside of the YSA is a new experience for the majority of YSAers and we will be continually making mistakes. We of course want to avoid making mistakes, but we should not let the fear of making them hold us back from becoming as involved as possible.

D. There has been a great deal of discussion on the anti-draft activity among the anti-war militants and there is no reason to see why this will not continue. It has been suggested that we should link the anti-draft activity today with the "come-home" demonstrations conducted by civilians and soldiers alike immediately after World War II.