

# **Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin, No.1**

Vol. 13, No. 4      Dec. 5, 1969

These discussion articles and resolutions were written for the Young Socialist National Convention to be held at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, December 27-30, 1969. They were written by members of the Young Socialist Alliance from around the country.

Similar resolutions and discussion articles will deal with other activities in which young socialists are involved. They are being circulated prior to the convention to assure the fullest possible discussion on political perspectives and activities before the convention meets.

Young socialists from around the country are invited to participate in the written discussion and urged to attend the convention. Contributions to the discussion and inquiries can be sent to the Young Socialist Alliance, P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003.

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By Robin Maisel

## Introduction

In recording the history of the British working class, Sidney and Beatrice Webb noted the agonies of the early trade unions in coming to the realization they had to have a financial expert handle the financial affairs of the organization. After a number of unions went under because their expenses exceeded their income, the lesson was learned and another chapter added to the organizational experience of the working-class movement.

To us the need for a treasurer or financial director seems obvious, but the organizational norms of our movement, both in general principles and specific tasks are the result of years of experience, trial and error, theoretical discussion and practice. We have borrowed what we consider to be the best organizational procedures from our predecessors in the revolutionary movement, but often we do things without thinking about why we do them. As professional revolutionaries we constantly try to improve our working procedures and sharpen our theoretical understanding.

We consider ourselves professionals because there is no job on earth which requires more professionalism than the one we have set for ourselves: making the socialist revolution in the United States.

This essay deals with some of the practical problems of building a local of the YSA; the organizational norms that we have come to use over the years which have proved most useful in getting our work done. The immediate reason for publishing this section is the fact that so many new locals are springing up around the country. These locals can benefit from the mode of functioning followed by the more established locals.

This is not therefore a manual or do-it-yourself book for organizing the "model" YSA local or a handbook on how to be a good YSAer. Within the forms, the insight, ingenuity and experience of the YSAers will determine how well the YSA functions and in the process we will build our organization and train ourselves for making the American revolution.

This essay should be read along with Mary-Alice Waters' discussion article from the Thanksgiving 1968 National Convention on the 'Organizational Concepts of the YSA.' (Vol. 12, #6; available from YSA NO for 25¢.)

Suggestions on how to improve or amplify this article are welcome and should be written up so that they can be

published during the pre-convention discussion period and incorporated into this article when it is published after the convention.

## The Local

The building of a local of the YSA is the most basic and most essential aspect of building the YSA nationally. There are a number of forms and procedures which we have come to use over the years which have proved to be effective tools for constructing the revolutionary socialist youth organization. From time to time some aspects of these forms have varied, but the forms have always kept in consonance with the basic principles of the Leninist conception of organization, both in the formal sense of coinciding with the principles of democratic-centralism and in being the most professional way of doing things, aiming at maximum effectiveness.

The basic organizational unit of the YSA is the local. The basis for organization is the collaboration and teamwork of the YSAers (to maximize their effectiveness) and to balance off the strengths and weaknesses of individual members to produce the most effective fighting team. The concept of teamwork and collective responsibility and decision-making runs directly counter to the "individualism" of capitalism where each individual is encouraged to get ahead at the expense of everyone else.

Where there are five or more YSAers we constitute a local. Even where there are fewer YSA members they should, of course, work together.

The local meets about once a week. Even though all of the members may see each other everyday, we set aside one slot of time each week which is devoted to nothing but taking care of the week-to-week activities and problems of the local. This is the way we avoid the sloppiness which sets in when there is no formal way to plan our work and it is also the most democratic way of doing things.

The informality of groups like SDS is not only sloppy but also has a grossly undemocratic side to it. Rather than having all of the members making the decisions, giving serious collective thought and consultation to problems and taking action together, a small clique of self-appointed leaders set the policy outside of the meetings and behind the backs of everyone else. The seemingly super-democratic informality may seem more convenient than having formal meetings, but the price paid is that the only

way things can possibly be decided in that case is outside the structures of the organization in an undemocratic way. The regular weekly business meeting is our way of making it both convenient and possible for all the members to take their fair share of the responsibility for making decisions.

The local meeting is therefore one of the most important activities of a YSAer and missing a meeting should be taken very seriously. If a YSAer must miss a meeting for illness or job considerations he should call in in advance for an excused absence. The regularity of attendance at meetings is a barometer of the seriousness of the membership.

### The Executive Committee

In the YSA constitution there is a provision for every local having an organizer, executive committee and such other officers as are necessary for carrying out the financial and secretarial work of the local. These are assignments made by the local to take care of the division of labor for the functioning of the local and not ceremonial posts. That is the importance we put upon any assignment in the local, whether of a permanent nature or for temporary purposes.

The executive committee serves a number of important functions. It has the job of providing the political leadership for the local and of making the work of the local as a whole go smoothly. In between local meetings it has authority to make decisions and act for the local. But another aspect of the executive committee, which is the elected leadership of the local, is the training and development of leadership for the YSA.

Again we can look at a negative example from SDS to see how important the executive committee really is. In the "New Left" there has been considerable confusion between leadership and bureaucracy. The two terms are not at all similar but quite opposite from each other. A leader is someone who is followed because of the merit of his ideas and actions. He relies upon persuasion and agreement to lead. A bureaucrat gives commands and functions outside the arena of persuasion and agreement, usually because of his singular inability to lead.

In its anxiety to avoid bureaucracy, SDS made no provisions for the development of leadership, with disastrous results. With no elected leadership, decisions are made by whoever happens to be around, regardless of the rest of the members' wishes. There is no way to either collaborate with, or to correct these "stars" because there is no provision for the democratic selection by the members of leadership on the basis of

their proven leadership ability. Such forms of "participatory democracy" lead to just their opposite, bureaucracy.

In selecting our leadership we take a whole galaxy of factors into account. We want an executive committee to represent the real leadership of the local. Comrades who have taken on and fulfilled assignments in important areas of work deserve serious consideration for the E.C. Comrades who have demonstrated leadership potential should be considered for the training that being on the executive committee gives in working on a team leadership effort.

We are interested in maintaining a continuity of leadership. We don't make artificial rules about who may serve on the executive committee or for how long. As with any assignment (from organizer to financial director to what-have-you), it takes time for someone to develop and learn how to do his job well. Taking various assignments and spending enough time in them to learn them in a professional way helps to develop leadership and professionalism.

The Executive Committee is elected by the local as often as necessary, but we have found that about three times a year is about right. The size of the executive committee is fixed at whatever size the local feels it needs at the time to be both representative and yet not unwieldy when it comes to carrying out the work. A local of five might have two people on the executive committee while a local of 50 may have fifteen or so. Before the election of the executive committee there is a Tasks and Perspectives Discussion. We will take that up further on.

### The Organizer

Every local has an organizer. As the name implies, his main job is to organize the work of the local and this is sometimes the most trying and difficult job. He isn't supposed to do the work for everyone else but rather to develop the collaborative efforts of the local as a whole. Between meetings of the executive committee he has the authority to act on behalf of the local.

Each time an executive committee is elected it goes over the various assignments in the local, and the first it takes up is the organizer. The executive committee usually brings in a recommendation to the local on the organizer's assignment. It is a good bet that the organizer is someone who is already on the executive committee for the simple reason that if a person isn't considered to be enough of a leader to be elected to the executive committee he probably isn't enough of a leader to be the

organizer. But the decision is up to the local. A recommendation from the executive committee carries the weight of a motion, but further nominations can be made from the floor of the local meeting.

One of the key aspects of organizing is the building of teamwork in the local and taking advantage of the talents of the membership. The revolutionary movement will be short-handed from now until the victory of the socialist revolution and beyond. Ours is a hard working organization and the organizer must see to it that as few opportunities as possible are missed through under-utilization of the comrades' talents.

Again we should emphasize the need for continuity of leadership and being super-conscious of the fact that there are no mechanical rules for producing a good organizer over-night.

#### Financial Director

The YSA is the only socialist youth group in human history to pay its own way. This fact is a tribute to the financial responsibility of the YSA and to its seriousness. Among the on-going assignments is the post of financial director.

Later we will take up such things as fund drives and dues but right now we should review some of the responsibilities of the financial director. He is responsible for seeing to it that dues and sustaining pledges are collected, bills are paid and the income and expenses of the various departments of the local are kept close track of. No sloppiness of any kind can be allowed in this area.

It would be silly to take up book-keeping here, but let it suffice to say that the books are a reflection of the health of the local. Itemize income according to its department (Young Socialist sales, Merit sales, dues, etc) and expenses likewise. The better and simpler the bookkeeping system set up initially, the easier it will be for future financial directors and for the local as a whole to gauge how well various aspects of our work are going.

Although it would seem elementary for the local to set up a bank account, it is surprising how many organizations keep their finances in an old sock or someone's pocket.

The local's secretary takes the minutes of the meetings. At any meeting, whether of the local, the executive committee or a fraction, we take down minutes. They are the record of what was decided so if there is any question or dispute in the future, it is down in black and white.

The minutes are read at the beginning of every meeting and are approved as read or corrected. Corrections are simply factual corrections of what took place at the previous meeting, not adjustments to correct a wrong analysis in the light of new evidence or to reverse a decision made previously. They should be complete enough to show what was decided and the major points of discussion. We have used a fairly standard form over the years which makes it simple to see at a glance what took place at the last meeting.

A copy of the minutes should be sent right away to the National Office. This allows the N.O. to keep in touch with the latest developments in the local. Minutes should be typewritten and the name of the local should be at the top of each set of minutes.

#### Literature Agent or Sales Director

Our publications and our books and pamphlets are powerful tools bringing our ideas in a consistent and regular way to hundreds and thousands of people with whom there is no other regular contact. The distribution of our literature is therefore one of the most important tasks of the local. To head up this work the local has a Literature Agent or Sales Director.

The Lit Agent is not responsible for selling everything himself. Every member of the YSA is responsible for the dissemination of our press and other publications. The Lit Agent's job is to collaborate with the executive committee in organizing this aspect of our activity and to keep track of ordering literature, keeping inventory and motivating the local in this work.

He must work closely with the financial director to see to it that this department is not a financial drain on the local and hopefully is a money maker. In a period of expansion like this one, profits can be most effectively used by reinvesting them back into stock and expanded distribution.

In addition to the sales conducted by the local members, keep an eye open for opportunities to get our literature into bookstores and on newsstands.

In addition to the post of Lit. Agent a YSA local should have a comrade in charge of getting articles on important activities into the Young Socialist and Militant.

In the appendix there is a listing of the various publications of the YSA and the SWP and Merit Publishers with the discount schedules for bundle orders.

### Miscellaneous Assignments

We have now covered some of the most basic assignments of a continuing nature. There are of course many other jobs that have to be done, some in an on-going fashion and some for special purposes such as making a leaflet, etc. Assignments are a delegation of responsibility. Freelancing -- that is going off and doing things without the consent or knowledge of the local -- is a violation of the very concept of an assignment and the spirit of a team effort. We can well afford to take the time to hand our assignments in the local or the fractions. This does not mean getting approval for every little detail, but the local has a right to determine which comrades will take on which jobs.

### Fractions

Most of the work of the YSA is in participating in movements which are broader than the YSA itself, such as the antiwar movement, trade unions, campus struggles and the Third World struggles. The comrades involved in such activity are constituted as a fraction. The decisions of fractions are subject to the approval of the local. Their heads are designated by the executive committee with the approval of the local.

By organizing fractions we use a convenient and workable form for centralizing our participation and settling upon our orientation, pulling together the ideas and directing the actions of the comrades actually involved. A fraction, then, is not a miniature version of the local, but rather a fighting unit like a company or battalion in an army, responsible to the local as a whole.

### The Local Meeting

There are a number of formal aspects to a local meeting which ought to be taken up. Some of the procedures may seem a little unusual at first. Sometimes they are simply taken for granted "because we've always done things like that." Actually they are unusual for being the most democratic procedures, unheard-of in almost any other organization, and we have come to adopt them only after a great deal of thought and experience with various forms.

Our procedures are aimed at allowing the fullest democracy and the greatest effectiveness in action. Our formal procedures are aimed at keeping meetings short and to the point. This is in contrast to some "New Left" organizations which make decisions on the basis of who can endure the longest through a maze of irrelevant and unnecessary talk.

By having a certain number of

formal procedures, we are able to level out the differences in age, experience, length of time in the movement, etc. Consistent procedures have the effect of being an equalizer as well as a way for decisions to be made efficiently.

The meeting begins with the organizer asking for nominations for chairman of the meeting. Every member should get the experience of standing up in front of groups of people and speaking. The nominations having been made, the organizer asks if there is a motion to close nominations. Then, having voted to close nominations, each of the nominees is asked if he accepts or declines the nomination. All the nominees who have accepted nomination are voted upon and he with the most votes is the chairman. Such are the standard procedures for elections in the YSA.

There is no need to second a motion in the YSA. We are all equal, and even the ideas of a minority of one deserve a hearing.

The chairman now reads the agenda which has been prepared by the Executive committee (or the organizer) and asks if there are any additions, deletions or changes in the proposed agenda. The local has a right to decide what it will and will not discuss. The agenda is then followed in an orderly fashion, to the point, with an eye toward getting the most accomplished in the most democratic way in the least amount of time.

For example the agenda might read like this:

1. Minutes
2. Executive Committee Report - given by the organizer
3. Antiwar Report - Given by the head of the antiwar fraction
4. Campus Report - Given by the head of the campus fraction
5. Sales - given by the Literature Agent
6. Subscription Drive - given by the sub drive director
7. Announcements
8. Intermission for payment of dues and pledges
9. Educational - Introduction to Marxist Economics, Chapt. 1, given by \_\_\_\_\_.

The reports are prepared before the meetings. The executive committee should be familiar with and approve what will be in the reports. If they are not it means there has obviously been a breakdown in communications, and worse, the leadership isn't doing its job.

Sometimes the reports are primarily informational in character. The

proper procedure then is for a motion to approve the report. We always ask for discussion on each report, even if the report is for informational purposes only. Approval of a report is an action in and of itself and implies agreement, so if there are disagreements or questions or additional comments, they should be made before the vote.

Often a report includes motions for specific action such as a mobilization of the local for a demonstration, taking someone into membership, etc. In every case we clarify the decision of the local through a motion and vote, clearly spelling out the action that the local decided to take.

Announcements are not put on the agenda as a catch-all for actions the local will take which have no other point on the agenda. If there is an action to be taken, it should have a place on the agenda. Announcements are exactly that, announcements.

With a little experience it should be possible to keep the business part of the meeting up to intermission to one hour or less.

#### The Executive Committee Report

The executive committee has the job of overseeing the general work of the local. It should meet once a week to go over the work and prepare the business meeting. In looking at an executive committee report you can get an idea of some of the things which it discusses.

The report may take up the following:

1. The following comrades have asked to be excused from the meeting. John R. and Linda M. are sick. Roger G. has an assignment to attend an antiwar meeting which is going on at the same time as this meeting.
2. Harold F. has asked to become a member of the YSA. The executive committee discussed his request and makes the motion that he be taken into membership. For those comrades who don't know Harold very well, he has been active in the antiwar committee with us and has been coming around the local for a number of weeks now. He has read the Introducing the Young Socialist Alliance pamphlet and some of the basic works like Socialism on Trial and is in agreement, etc. etc.
3. The following communications were received this week from the YSA National Office: an antiwar report which will be taken up under

the appropriate point on the agenda, the latest scoreboard on the fund drive and a report on the activities of our comrades at San Francisco State. All of these reports will be in the files after the meetings and every comrade should try to read them during the week.

4. Phil H. has asked for a leave of absence from December 1 to December 9. He will be taking his vacation then. There is a motion from the executive committee to grant him a leave of absence.
5. In going over the assignments in the local, the executive committee thinks that there is a need to improve our contact work. The executive committee recommends that George R. take on the assignment of contact director to better coordinate our efforts at bringing contacts closer to the YSA.

Now we can go over these points in more detail. Attendance at meetings is one of the most basic responsibilities. If a comrade cannot make a meeting, he or she should request an excused absence from the organizer or executive committee.

To become a member of the YSA a person's application must be approved by the membership of the local. The executive committee goes over requests for membership and brings in its recommendations to the local. In that way the process can be handled in a clear, unambiguous and serious fashion.

The communications from the National Office are for the information of the comrades and special attention should be given to getting the contents either in full or in summary into the hands of the membership.

When a comrade will not be active in the local for a period of time, he or she requests a leave of absence. This is so his or her assignments can be taken care of and so the local knows where the comrades are and what kind of political activity they are doing.

Similarly, when a comrade leaves one local to go to another the transfer must be approved by the local. A letter should be sent to the local receiving the comrade indicating that his financial commitment to the sending local is fulfilled, that is, his dues and pledge. A local cannot refuse to accept a transferee. The YSA is a national organization, not a federation of local groups.

In planning out the work of the local the executive committee should consider how best to fill necessary assignments. The assignments must be approved by the local.

So from a quick look at some of the things that would come up under the exec-



utive committee report we get a general picture of the functions of the executive committee in keeping the activities of the local moving along smoothly. Consultation, taking advantage of the ideas of a number of comrades, is the method the executive committee uses to formulate a recommendation. The discussion in the executive committee should try to clarify the questions before the local meeting so the local's discussion can focus on the main points rather than wander aimlessly.

### Subscription Drives

Under the hypothetical agenda given above is a point on the subscription drive. Periodically the YSA runs subscription drives to enlarge the readership of our press. Each of the locals is asked to take a quota for the drive which usually lasts two or three months. Such campaigns deserve special attention and the assignment of a comrade to head up the work of getting subscriptions.

Various devices such as scoreboards, charts, and competitions are sometimes helpful for keeping subscription-getting in the forefront of our day-to-day work. In making up an agenda for the business meetings, the executive committee should give special consideration to having progress reports for the special campaigns.

### Fund Drives

The expenses of running a national organization are very great and we can anticipate them growing in the years to come. The budget of the National Office has to cover paying for a full time staff, including National Field Secretaries, printing the YS, pamphlets, office machines, postage, travel expenses and a host of other items necessary for the functioning of the YSA nationally. To pay for this fund drives are run about twice a year.

The locals take quotas on the fund drives, which usually last three months. The locals which have organized their finances best have been able to avoid the problem of raising a large amount of money in a short period of time by spreading the payments out over the year through the sustainer system. By sending a given amount of money to the National Office either weekly or monthly, which is credited to their quota on the fund drive, the payments are spread over a six month period rather than a three month period.

Financial commitment is one of the responsibilities of membership and we take it extremely seriously. We have always

aimed at the highest standards of responsibility and over the years our record reflects a consistently high level of consciousness towards our financial commitments.

### Dues and Pledges

In the YSA constitution the minimum financial obligation of membership is the payment of a two dollar initiation fee (for which one receives an introductory subscription to the Young Socialist and the Militant) and one dollar a month dues. Such a small amount doesn't even begin to cover either our national expenses or local expenses. Since the dues go in full to the National Office, that leaves nothing for the local's operating expenses.

Therefore each member is asked to take a pledge for the maintenance of the YSA. The pledge is usually paid on a weekly basis. The size of an individual's pledge depends upon his ability to pay, and, of course, the higher the pledge, the better.

Out of this pledge must come the money to help meet the national fund drives as well as the local expenses. This is by far preferable to making a pledge which only covers local expenses and then having to make a special pledge for the fund drives. It spaces out the payments on the commitment to the National Office over a longer period of time.

Comrades should take a realistic pledge which is neither too low so that the burden falls on others, nor too high so that the pledge cannot be met. Once someone falls behind in his pledge it is very difficult to catch up again.

### Educationals

Our ideas are our weapons and the educational series of the local is used for consistent training in how to use our ideas. The assignment of education director or an educational committee is a top priority item.

In addition to the regular educationals during the year, over the summer the Socialist Workers Party and YSA run a number of summer schools across the country for intensive education. YSAers are encouraged to try to attend these summer schools in preparation for their tasks in the fall. There is nothing in the radical movement which can compare to our summer schools.

### Tasks and Perspectives Discussion

It is a good idea to periodically take a step back to get an over-

all picture of the activities of the local and to map out its tasks for the period ahead. The Tasks and Perspectives discussion is the way we organize such a taking of stock. Having done that, we can elect a leadership (new executive committee and organizer) responsible for carrying out the perspective and organizing the local to meet its tasks.

The outgoing executive committee holds a preliminary discussion and maps out a report to the local on tasks and perspectives which is presented at a special meeting of the local devoted to nothing else. All areas of work, the functioning of all the fractions and various departments of the local are taken into account.

A good time to hold such a discussion in the local is after a convention or a plenum of the National Committee, when benefit can be made of the national picture as well as local considerations. The beginning of the school term is also an excellent time, preparing the local for a campaign in the fall, and spring.

#### Summary

The organizational norms that have been detailed are simply that. Paying attention to following our organizational norms is not the same things as doing things well. Not following the norms is a guarantee that things will not be done well, but the obverse doesn't necessarily hold. It is experience, practice and hard work which makes our organizational practices a living part of our movement. The practices outlined above, and many more, were worked out over years and years of struggle by the working-class movement. The following readings amplify and expand upon the notes given in this pamphlet.

Struggle for a Proletarian Party - James P. Cannon

History of American Trotskyism - James P. Cannon

Letters From Prison - James P. Cannon

Problems of Leadership Selection and Leadership Structure - Socialist Workers Party Internal Information Bulletin, April 1969, Part 1

#### Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

Mobilization - A motion to mobilize the local means that every member is going to undertake a common activity. Missing a mobilization, like missing a meeting requires an excused absence.

E.C. or Exec. - the Executive Committee

T&P - Tasks and Perspectives (discussion)

NC - the National Committee

NEC - the National Executive Committee

Fraction - A section of the membership involved in a certain area of work, e.g. antiwar work, high schools, etc. The working body organized to carry out the policy decided by the local in a given area of work.

Committee - A select body designated to carry out certain work, as opposed to a fraction which encompasses all comrades in a given area of work.

#### Periodicals

The Militant - 873 Broadway, N.Y., N.Y. 10003. Weekly newspaper reflecting the opinions of the Socialist Workers Party. 15¢ a copy, \$4.00/year for subscriptions. Bundle orders 10½¢/copy.

The Young Socialist - P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station, N.Y., N.Y. 10003. Monthly magazine of the YSA. 25¢/copy, \$2.00/year for subscriptions. Bundle orders 20¢/copy.

International Socialist Review - 873 Broadway, N.Y., N.Y. 10003. Bi-monthly theoretical magazine of the SWP. 50¢/copy, \$2.50/year for subscriptions. Bundle orders 30¢/copy.

Intercontinental Press - P.O. Box 635, Madison Sq. Sta., N.Y., N.Y. 10010. 50¢/copy, \$7.50/26 issues for subscriptions. Weekly international news magazine. Bundle rates quoted upon request.

Merit Publishers (873 Broadway, N.Y., N.Y. 10003) handles a full line of books and pamphlets on the revolutionary movement, the colonial and Third world struggles, labor history, etc. A catalogue will be sent upon request. Special discounts are available for bulk orders - write for information and quotations.

#### Socialist Workers Party

Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party - The Education Department of the Socialist Workers Party has issued a number of educational bulletins and course outlines. Write for a complete catalogue. Education Department, Socialist Workers Party, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003.

National Tape Library - The national tape library has tape recordings of speeches and lectures which are extremely useful in setting up an educational program. A catalogue will be sent upon request. Write: National Tape Library, Socialist Workers Party, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003.

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST

A CONTRIBUTION TO A DISCUSSION

by

JOHN HANSEN

Any discussion of the nature of the Young Socialist, its problems, and the road upon which we wish to steer its future course, must, at the beginning, ask one essential question. For whom is the magazine written? Nor can the question be brushed aside with such a diffuse answer as "radicalizing youth." No, we are required to be a bit more definitive than that. For if we are agreed that the YS is written for the "youth," we must still inquire as to whether the "youth" is so homogeneous agrouping as to be reached under such a blanket appellation. If we admit the existence of distinctive sections of youth, we then must ask whether we wish to direct our magazine at high school youth, college youth, or working-class youth actually engaged in the labor force, to cite only three possible distinction, or, if it is possible to do so, all three. If it is not possible, we must then decide upon priorities, based upon current objective conditions, and the prospects for the most immediate dividends.

It is, I would like to suggest, the failure to come to terms with this question which is at the heart of the problems facing the Young Socialist, problems which are reflected in the heavy criticism at last year's convention workshop, the lack of enthusiasm for the magazine among many comrades, and, indeed, the refusal of a very large section of our own movement to even read the magazine at all.

The three sections of youth described above are, I believe, with a certain amount of overlap, essentially valid distinctions. If we examine each, it will become clear, I think, why a revolutionary magazine for the youth as a whole is, at the present time an impossibility.

Working-class youth, that is, that section of youth which, either after high school, or in many cases before graduation, is actually holding full-time employment, is currently the least radicalized section of American youth. Although the impact of the war and youth culture has had, and is having its effect, the overwhelmingly conservative and racist nature of the present working class as a whole is still the dominating factor among the youth as well.<sup>1</sup>

As a general rule, this section of youth will begin to radicalize with the class as a whole; at a faster rate to be

sure, but still as a part of a general working-class radicalization.

It is these factors which must be considered in the assessment of priorities. With our limited forces, the orientation of the YS toward this section of youth would simply not be as fruitful as has the present policy: one directing itself toward the high school and college youth. Not only would it be an error to orientate the entire YS in the direction of this section of youth, a troika approach would be as equally mistaken, for it would merely further the already woefully split personality of the magazine.

Involved here is something far more complex than logistics, selling at factory gates, etc. For in orienting the YS toward any one section of the youth, we are talking about style and we are talking about content.

It is at this point, I believe, that we reach the heart of the problem. The interests, the needs, the political consciousness of working-class and student youth are not presently identical. To reach each section requires different formulations, different transitional programs. Dealing adequately with each section in a single magazine would require such a divergence as to content, level, and style as to create essentially two magazines with a single cover. To attempt to blend the two would result in such a lack of focus as to render both unsatisfactory.

Yet here, I believe is precisely the difficulty facing the YS today. For although the problem of orientation has not been posed in terms of working-class versus student youth, the YS has dealt with the two sections within student youth, that is, high school and college, as if they were identical. The result has been equally unsatisfactory.

The YS has, for the most part, tended to ignore the esthetic, cultural, and intellectual differences between high school and college youth as if they did not exist. The result has been that, with some exceptions, and these mostly reprints, articles which have been directed primarily at college youth have been written at high school level, while specific high school pieces, few and far between, lack any sense of connection to the cultural and emotional high school milieu.

Nor are general articles on anti-war, socialism, etc., any better. For students of colleges and universities, especially those of the humanities, the level of a great many of the essays is appallingly low.

The YS should make the conscious political decision to either direct itself toward high school youth or toward college youth. It is my belief that it cannot presently do both within a single magazine adequately. Again, the decision must rest with priorities and effectiveness. For a whole series of reasons which cannot be gone into here, I believe that the major arena of recruitment will remain on the college campus. The orientation and intellectual level of the YS should reflect this fact.

The choice however must be made, and made consciously, if the YS is to become a fully effective propaganda and educational weapon.

It is, I think, obvious from the above, that I wish to see the magazine become far more theoretical than it is at present. Some comrades raise the objection that they do not wish the YS to become a "junior I.S.R." Neither do I. A "junior" anything is far from what I have in mind. Comrades should be aware that the word "young" in the title "Young Socialist" does not necessarily imply naivete, lack of wit, or a lack of intelligence on the part of either the organization or the readership.

The YSA contains an incredible amount of talent from a great many disciplines. It is time we began to draw upon that talent in the YS.

Concretely, I would like to offer the following suggestions:

1. The YS must expand in size. Twenty-four pages is simply not sufficient for a magazine of any depth. The expansion of the YS should be a priority.
2. Reprints of Militant or I.S.R. articles should be kept at a minimum. The development of YSAers capable of theoretical contribution to our own press should be emphasized.
3. The use of the "YS Interview" as a

substitute for independent analysis should be kept to a minimum. The use of the essay approach to an interview is not only more creative than the question-answer format, but it often conveys information far more effectively. This is especially the case when the object is not only facts but the "feel" of an event.

4. The creative use of art within the magazine should continue to be increased. The strides made in this area have been the most encouraging aspect of the YS in the last few months.
5. The name: Although this is a relatively unimportant point, a change in name might be in order. For many, Young Socialist summons up echoes of the camp fire girls. My own choice would be: "CADRE, THE MAGAZINE OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST YOUTH." The point might be discussed.

Finally, I would like to respond to one aspect of David Keil's contribution to the discussion. (The only one I've seen as of this writing.) Comrade Keil seems to have the impression that esthetics and Marxism are conflicting ideologies. Unfortunately, Comrades Thorstad and, to a lesser extent, Thomas, respective authors of the film reviews "Easy Rider" and "Midnight Cowboy" seem to share this view. Their reviews strike me as social criticism at its worst. It should not be necessary to point out that a film or a novel need not expand on the theory of the Vanguard Party in order to make its point. Keil's criticism of Joslin's review of "Che" is precisely on her strongest point, the personal reflection, the "subjectivism." A film review is not a summary. It is, among other things, the communication of the impact of a work of art on and through and individual consciousness.

It is hoped that future reviews will be written by those with either the training or the sensitivity to do them justice.

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that I am excluding here Afro-American youth who are radicalizing, due to the struggle for black liberation, at a faster rate than either working class white youth, or the working-class as a whole.

San Francisco  
November 26, 1969

THE ROLE OF THE YSA IN THE AFSCME STRIKE IN DEKALB

By Frank Boehm and Sara Johnston

During the two-week strike of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 963 at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, many students became aware of the latent potential of the American working class.

In order to better understand the nature of the struggle at NIU, it is necessary to briefly sketch the political setting in which it took place. NIU's history was one of total political inaction until the fall of '68 when an antiwar march of slightly more than 400 students took place. In the spring of '69 the first political movement around student demands came about. The movement, demanding the rehiring of Peter Roman, a Marxist history teacher, reached its peak when a protest march of over 1000 students and faculty members took place and a sit-in of around 300 students followed the next week.

Prior to the formation of the YSA (November 1968), and prior to the political actions of the year, NIU had a radical base of perhaps 100 totally unorganized and frustrated students. Many of the traditionally respected radicals either vanished or were politically defeated in the course of the struggle. The movement was in new and largely inexperienced hands. Through difficult political organizing and extensive education during the movement, a fresh and relatively healthy base was built. While not securing the rehiring of the first teacher, the Roman movement succeeded in unmasking and exposing the "liberal" administration of the university while involving hundreds of students in their first mass independent political action.

NIU is termed a first-generation university, that is, a school whose students by and large have parents who never went to college and who are thus deeply affected by the illusion of the possibility of upward mobility in our society. In addition, NIU is located in a small farming town, seemingly unaffected by events in nearby Chicago, as well as nationally and internationally. However, the objective reality of youth in every strata of society rejecting the system as a whole and seeking something new has found expression at NIU also. The problem now becomes that of mobilizing and directing those layers of students seeking political expression and in reaching out, educating, and boldly engaging politically fresh students so that they can be mobilized in action.

In order to better understand the situation in which the strike took place, a brief background of the AFSCME is of great importance. The AFSCME is one of the fastest growing unions in the coun-

try, representing many of the most oppressed sectors of the labor force. Although the upper echelons of the union are hopelessly reformist, the blatant oppression and mass pressure of its membership forces them into many militant strikes. The AFSCME led the famous Memphis garbage strike of April '68. When questioned about it during the DeKalb strike, or of the union bureaucrats conceded that the overwhelming majority of the rank and file were opposed to the war and that the war directly affects the workers that he represented. Yet he excused the lack of national AFSCME participation in the antiwar movement by admitting that the national union leaders were tied up in the political machine. However, the dynamic growth and expansion of the AFSCME into previously unorganized areas, such as garbagemen, janitors, maids, kitchen and cafeteria help, has provided the basis for struggles to gain a more just return for their labor.

Local 963 included 450 workers on campus. Even though over 430 workers were on strike, their role in production at the university was not crucial. Supervisors and management took over some of the most vital functions of the workers, although the effects of the strike certainly could not be hidden from the students in the lack of normal functioning of the many services provided by the AFSCME members. It became obvious that in order for the strike to be truly effective, support actions from other areas of the university community had to be built.

On the evening of September 19, a union meeting was called to take the strike vote. Local 963 had begun negotiations the previous April. In July talks over wages deadlocked with the administration offering an absurd 3¢ per hour increase. Bargaining resumed September 15, with the strike deadline set for September 19. At the time of the deadline the administration offered only a 16¢ per hour increase and an additional 16¢ per hour increase as of July '70. The union opened negotiations demanding a \$1.15 per hour increase but by September they had conceded 92¢, asking for only 23¢ immediately and an additional 16¢ as of July '70. Many of the rank and file had considered this a sellout and instructed the negotiators not to go any lower. At one point when negotiators pleaded for two more hours to negotiate before the strike vote, the workers shouted back, "You talk, we'll be out on the streets!" Finally, after seven long hours of stalling on the part of the administration, the angry civil service workers voted to strike. Several YSAers were present, one of whom was allowed to address the workers, pledg-

ing student support and solidarity until victory.

The following morning, the YSA called a meeting and the Student-Faculty Strike Support Committee came into being. A Statement of policy was drafted and distributed around campus reading as follows, "The SFSSC has been formed in an attempt to gain the broadest possible support among the members of the university community for the workers. The Committee supports the demands of the strikers and calls for student workers to walk off their job in sympathy. The union has officially stated that it will not go back to work until sympathetic non-union workers who were fired are reinstated. The only way the strike can succeed is by forceful worker-student solidarity to back up union demands."

Building strike support actions and mobilizing students in these actions presented us with a new challenge. The difference between building a movement in defense of the strike and building a movement of a different nature, completely initiated and conducted by students, such as an anti-ROTC or Third World Studies struggle, was the time factor. The long period of education and preparation was simply nonexistent. The length that the workers could hold out financially (there were no strike benefits), the threat of a straightjacket injunction and the possibility of leadership capitulation forced us to move fast and project big, advancing on a scale far exceeding our immediate real size. However, this paid off. What is normally an unwise procedure was feasible because of two factors: 1) This issue was clear and our demand simple, and 2) the vast resources of the union were available to us, i.e., a strike headquarters, free use of paper, stencils, mimeo machines, etc. However, our main advantage was the clear and easily explainable issue. Our audacious approach astounded both the union and the administration. The dynamic movement began with a meeting of only seven people and within less than a week, we could count on planning meetings of over 100 and easily mobilizing upwards of 500 students in action, some actions at 4:00 a.m.

The SFSSC immediately set out to educate and draw in as many students and faculty members as possible. A massive educational intervention explaining negotiations was carried out. Daily strike bulletins were printed and passed out in an attempt to keep the university community informed of events as they actually happened. We also set out to gain official support from students groups and individuals.

The Student Association (S.A.) held a senate meeting Sunday night which over 150 students attended in support of the

strikers. A resolution in support of the strike was presented by two YSA senators and passed. Another resolution to defend sympathetic non-union workers who were fired and to form a student-workers' union were also passed.

The SFSSC called for a rally the following day at noon to begin building student support for the picket lines. Demands were made by speakers that the university give in to the union demands and met with applause by the 450 students present. Speakers from the SFSSC, SMC, YSA, the American Federation of Teachers, and the President of the S.A. continued to present facts that the administration was attempting to hide and urged students to join the picket lines beginning the next morning.

Student picket lines begin Tuesday morning at 4:00 a.m. at the University Center loading dock with over 70 students present. Since union members were not allowed to picket on university property, we had decided to picket strategic areas inaccessible to the strikers. It was decided at that time, against the wishes of the ultra-leftists, not to attempt to stop the trucks until more students could be mobilized and a more stable base of support among the students could be secured. Around 6:15 a.m. the number of students had dwindled to around forty when the police began their attacks. Five student arrests occurred at that incident, three for criminal trespass and two for disorderly conduct. Also that morning one union striker was arrested for picketing in front of a supposedly private warehouse where the university was storing goods. The tactics that the administration and the police would resort to were becoming more apparent to the growing number of students involved in the struggle. The administration was, of course, hoping that on the very first morning of picketing, we could be smashed while in the process portrayed as a violent group of maniacs, and thereby cut away our base before we could really begin expanding. However, after speaking in lecture halls, in the dorms, in classes, and after distributing over 10,000 leaflets, it was clear that the tide of support was continuing and things were definitely in our favor.

That afternoon the SFSSC called a general strike scheduled for Thursday, which was immediately endorsed by the AFT and the President of the Student Association.

Picketing continued with over two hundred students manning lines the next morning. No attempts were made to deliver at the docks of the large residence hall complex. The crowd was militant, the line large, and over 500 students would have witnessed for them-

selves the police attacks, had they done so, from their windows at 6:00 a.m. that morning, student unity was displayed when the police attempted to arrest a student for harassing the management negotiator as he drove by the loading dock. The students surrounded the police car where they held the student and shouted, "Take one, you take us all!" The police refused to press charges and the student agreed to meet them at the D.A.'s office later that day to discuss the matter. The case was thrown out of court for lack of evidence.

By 11:00 a.m., the day of the strike, over 400 students and faculty members had congregated and stopped a scab truck. The police made no attempt to intervene. A rally held in the "Free Speech Area" at 12:30 was led to a closed and carefully guarded administration building by a union official and YSAers, where over 800 students and many union members listened to speakers in support of the strike. After a series of speakers, the crowd, singing "Solidarity Forever", was led by a popular Marxist professor to the University Center Cafeteria where students helped themselves to a banquet, ignoring the scab workers at the cash registers. This resulted in the closing of the cafeteria for the remainder of the day and the next, further handicapping the functioning of the university. The heightened militancy of the ever-increasing union supporters was becoming quite obvious.

The number of students easily mobilized on a moment's notice to help at the strike headquarters, to leaflet, and to work on the picket lines was doubling daily. Only three of the six dormitory cafeterias were able to function, more and more truck drivers were refusing to cross picket lines, or at least were afraid to cross a second time, and support to the strikers was flowing in from DeKalb county unions, and the community. These factors resulted in the ever-increasing level of militancy of the strikers.

The effectiveness of the general strike called by the SFSSC was difficult to estimate. We do know of at least 100 faculty members who called off classes, in some cases the students voted to suspend the classes themselves. If there was more, we don't know. How many students boycotted classes is also unknown. However, neither did the administration know how many students boycotted classes. A strike had never before been called at NIU, and it was clear that we had them scared.

The following morning, picketing began at 1:00 a.m. with over 300 students at two different docks. By 6:00 a.m. most of the students had drifted off or gone back to the strike headquarters to rest, leaving only 15 students to guard the university loading dock. The police seized this time to blitzkrieg a food truck through the

remaining picketers. Runners were dispatched to the strike headquarters and within five minutes over 75 students were mobilized, to the surprise of the cops. At the sound of the starting of the truck's engine, the students dropped to the ground linking arms. This was followed by a brutal police attack on the picketers. The fighting spilled into the streets resulting in injuries on both sides. That particular truck driver refused to make any more deliveries for the remainder of the strike and apologized later to the union.

Late Friday afternoon a temporary injunction was issued allowing only two picketers per station. Also, Governor Ogilvie's new law stating that any disruption of the normal functioning of the university is a crime punishable by a 30-day jail sentence and a \$300 fine for the first offense, and a 120 day jail sentence and a \$500 fine for the second offense, was issued by the administration with a warning that it would not hesitate to use it. The injunction and the law ended student picketing until further strategy could be laid out. Further SFSSC bulletins flooded the campus calling for more student participation, explaining the new restrictions, and requesting students to engage in a policy of non-cooperation with the administration's plea for the students to clean up the campus.

Letters of support from campus organizations, community groups, and individuals continued to appear. One significant statement was that made by the Afro-American Cultural Organization. "AACO is in sympathy with the struggles of oppressed minority groups. We recognize the bond between struggling union workers and the struggles of minority groups throughout the nation. We feel that it is time for the oppressed to reap the benefits of their exploited labor. It has been customary for the nation to exploit the working class, black or white. AACO feels that it is time for the working class to stand up for their rights and demand the right to live."

Friday night the SFSSC called a meeting at which over 100 students met to plan the new course of action. During the meeting two orientations were presented. The first was presented by a group of ultra-leftists, called for a program of sabotage, saying it was time to "put your ass on the line." The YSA presented a different orientation, calling for the further building of mass student support aiming at a mass torchlight demonstration involving unions from all over the community, and students. We explained that isolated acts in guerrilla fashion would succeed only in repulsing the masses of students which could be involved in future actions providing a real basis for forcing the local rulers to concede defeat. We also

explained that acts of sabotage cannot be effective without the support of the masses of students, faculty members, and union rank-and-file, and that sabotage at that time could have led to the wholesale victimization of the union and SFSSC leaders, thus paving the way for full-fledged union-busting on the part of the state, and an assured defeat of the strike. The ultra-leftists were reminded that the purpose of the SFSSC was to hasten the victory of the strike, not its defeat. After much debate, the orientation of mass action was passed overwhelmingly and a steering committee of two YSAers (one of whom was the chairman of the SFSSC), two faculty members, the President of the S.A., and five independents were elected. The SFSSC began making plans for a solidarity festival the following week in an attempt to build further support and collect donations.

Over \$135 was collected from the 600 students attending the "Strike Solidarity Festival. The plans for the massive torchlight demonstration called for the following Monday were announced. The march was to begin on campus and proceed into the city of DeKalb with working people from all around the county, clergy, high school students, community members, faculty, and students.

The following day a union meeting was called which was closed to all non-union members with the exception of SFSSC members. A settlement offer had been reached and was accepted by the union members. Following the vote, two students were allowed to speak. Both stressed the importance of worker-student solidarity. Asked to speak by the civil service workers, one of the YSAers who had played a leading role in the strike discussed the valuable lessons learned by many students of the necessity and the possibility of involving the powerful working class in future struggles. The arrogant attitude that management had taken towards the workers, the inherent need for struggle against those who own, and the need for future independent action were also stressed.

On the first day of the fall semester, the President of NIU had presumptuously asserted that he could not foresee any reason for student unrest this year. However, within the first three weeks of school, the administration was faced with militant picket lines, defiant student resistance to police attacks, rallies and demonstrations, and worker-student solidarity in a common struggle. The inevitable contradictions between the right of people to determine that their life be a decent one, and the necessity of the ruling class and its apologists to maintain control over people's lives unavoidably pitted the administration and the state against the workers and the students. The lies and the maneuvers that the

administration had to engage in in order to make their position seem reasonable only served to incense both workers and students.

The settlement of the strike, although monetarily actually throwing the workers further back, was in many respects a victory. There were no illusions about the insufficient wage settlement. It took little calculation to find that with the cost of living projected to rise 11% in the next two years, the rise of the state and local taxes, the workers would have required at least a 54¢ per hour increase over the next two years just to hold their ground. And even this slight increase would not have made up for the loss of real wages suffered by the workers over the past years. However, it was a victory for the union and the SFSSC in many respects. It was the first strike of its type in the history of Illinois in which the union has not been beaten with the issuance of a paralyzing injunction. In this respect the union has been strengthened for the next round with the administration. It was also the first strike every to receive official support from the campus student government. Also, and most importantly, it was one of the few strikes where broad layers of students consciously linked up with the struggles of the working class.

The combativeness of the workers was an inspiration to many of the students involved. The pragmatic concept of a static working class, one that is docile and passive, was shattered. The linkup opened up the opportunity to observe the potential power of the working class, even of a tiny and strategically unimportant union as local 963.

Illinois State University, our sister school, had a similar strike that began two weeks prior to NIU's. SDS attempted to organize student support, failing miserably with a terribly sectarian and ultraleft line. Its largest rally attracted only 40 people. Its real aim was an obvious attempt to paternalistically guide the union in the methods of real class struggle. Without any solid student or faculty support, ISU's strike was crushed. An injunction forbidding all support activity and the strike itself was issued, and not even a civil liberties march was organized by the supposedly working-class oriented students. However because of NIU's victory, the workers at ISU finally received the same wage increase. WSA, RYM II, and our local Weathermen attempted to intervene in the struggle with their line. WSA and RYM II went home after selling a few papers and the local Weathermen, after losing their line, denounced the strike as "male chauvinist" and refused to participate.



It is important for the YSA to understand the dynamic and take advantage of struggles such as the one in DeKalb, in which workers are on the move and link up with a consciously-led student movement. It is very important that this higher stage of struggle occur, because it indicates the road of the American revolution and echoes the May-June events. It is very

fortunate that this will occur also, because the YSA is the only political tendency that understands how to consciously lead the linkup and thus facilitate the revolution.

DeKalb, Illinois  
December 1, 1969

## THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

By Debby Woodroofe

The past few years have seen insurgent blacks, students and GIs moving into motion around their oppression. Now women, too, are joining in on this powerful youth rebellion and are starting to demand an end to their status as a subordinate sex.

The movement for women's liberation is challenging the roles women play as worker, housewife, consumer and sex object. Women who work are not considered "workers" in the same sense as men. They are clustered in sex-typed jobs, paid less than men, and usually denied the right to organize. Although most women work out of economic necessity, they are not considered to have the same need men do to support themselves and are further jeopardized by the expense of child care. In the home, as wife and mother, a woman puts in another full day's work for which she is unpaid, and is expected to create a refuge from the alienations of capitalism. This definition of the role women should play in the home, and the very primacy of it, is a part of bourgeois life that cuts across class lines. Women are further exploited as consumers making them prey to advertising hucksters and having their self-image molded to a large extent by the media's definition of beauty and femininity.

The YSA is interested in the women's liberation movement not just because it is attracting thousands of young women to its program, but because of its anti-capitalist thrust. The movement challenges the very heart of capitalism. It is saying, there is nothing inevitable about the nuclear family--it is just a cultural creation. And the democratic demand that women be placed on an equal par with men is revolutionary just because capitalism is dependent on the subordination of women. A burgeoning women's liberation movement, along with third world and student movements, represents a powerful mood of revulsion that can only contribute to the overthrow of capitalism. This is why women's liberation is potentially a revolutionary demand.

### History of the Women's Liberation Movement (1967-1969).

Just as the suffragettes came out of the abolitionist struggle, the women's liberation movement of today has its origins in the general radical movement. It began when women in SNCC, SDS and Resistance realized that although they were active in struggles for human freedom, they were no better treated there than they were in bourgeois society.

They felt that the movement was male dominated, that women were not listened to when they spoke, were not included on steering committees and were generally subordinate within the freedom struggle itself.

Resistance women, for example, had spent long hours picketing draft boards and "saying yes to men who say no." When they saw the male leadership about to be victimized, they decided they'd better prepare to hold Resistance together while the men were in jail. But they realized they had never learned to speak, write leaflets, or organize demonstrations. All the movement had prepared them for was typing stencils and taking care of the men and children. So they decided to break off from "the movement" and form their own organization where they would develop their own talents.

Coming out of radical politics, the original women's liberation members were already radicalized on a broad range of issues--the antiwar, black and campus struggles. The majority of them were white, middle-class and in their twenties. Many had small children and tended to be just divorced, often from leading movement figures.

The form chosen for the early days of women's liberation was "the small group." Here was a place one could express the burden of womanhood and feel she was being taken seriously. In the small group, feelings are regarded as the most important source of political understanding. The assumption is that feelings lead to ideas, ideas to action, feelings about that action to new theory and then to new action and so forth. Most small groups never reached the action stage, however, and got involved in creating "liberated life styles" through communal living and cooperative baby-sitting.

Because the small group was made into a principle, generally all that came out of this period was more small groups. However, some actions were organized--the 1968 Miss America demonstration, Bridal Fair exposes--both focusing on woman's oppression as sex object and consumer. Because of the antileadership approach of WITCH and the Women's Liberation groups in charge (i.e., "Everyone is a leader or no one is"), the demonstrations did not involve as many women as they could have, but they did break women's liberation into the press and create a lot of curiosity. The movement was still too unsure of where it wanted to go to handle a large influx of new

members. Women who asked to join were never called back, and the very persistent were tracked into small groups.

It was the breakup of SDS that cut through this isolation. Early in 1969, as SDS women saw that they were in a rapidly sinking boat, they began to move into women's liberation. But they brought with them the same contradictions that were about to erupt within SDS itself. There were those activists influenced by PL who claimed that unless working-class women are the focus, women's liberation is reformist and divisive. Others were so antileft that they felt men as a group are the oppressors and men, not capitalism, the target. Their principle was "We take the women's side in everything." There were also those who felt that although socialism would be the ultimate solution, women organizing around their own demands could be revolutionary.

The entrance of these new forces set off a period of political debate. Fundamental questions (Is women's liberation a secondary issue? Should it be an autonomous movement? What is the relationship between the personal and the political? Who is the enemy?) were discussed, and the radical press opened its pages to the debate.

Since these women were already radicals, perhaps the key question was the relationship of women's liberation to the larger radical movement. When women had tried to do women's liberation work within SDS, they were told there was no place in the movement for such self-indulgence, or to wait until war and racism had been smashed. They saw that radical men were not about to fight for women's liberation; they didn't even consider it a political question. Last summer, when women at the United Front Against Fascism Conference met as a caucus to discuss the chauvinist handling of a women's panel, they were told by the Black Panthers and the SDS leadership that they were being "objectively racist" and counterrevolutionary. All these things have led many women to the conclusion that if they are to ever get their liberation, they are going to have to form their own groups to fight exclusively around their own demands.

This brings us up to the present period. Women's liberation groups have sprung up spontaneously in every major city. A new type of membership is being attracted. Rather than the cynical expoliticos, the movement is picking up women who were radicalized around women's liberation and are new to politics. Unfortunately, there is no formal national coordination, and there have not been any national conferences of any magnitude. As the political questions involved take form, groups split overnight, and it is hard for

an outsider to keep up with such mitosis.

Although this is oversimplified, there seem to be three major currents in the women's liberation movement this fall. First, there are the small group advocates who insist consciousness-raising is key. They avoid moving into action ("We have to get ourselves together first") and are hostile toward women radicals (i.e., they kick PLers out of their groups). Then there are Women's Caucuses within RYM, various Radical Students Union formations who focus on organizing women around many issues. They have been especially active in high school organizing. And finally, Independent Women's Liberation groups that are anti-radical movement and focus entirely on demands directly related to women's liberation.

#### YSA Intervention at San Francisco State College

The off-campus women's liberation groups in San Francisco have held two successful actions—one protesting the firing of a fish salesgirl for not shaving her legs ("Do you have to sell your body to sell fish?"); another halting the publication of a pornographic magazine that was to raise money for a political newspaper. Yet they still cling to the small group tactic.

The San Francisco YSA decided that in the context of campus politics, a women's liberation group would be more likely to avoid the inertia of the small group and move into action.

Though there hadn't been any women's liberation groups at San Francisco State, it seemed likely several would appear this fall. The axis of our intervention was a new course in the Social Science department, "Women as an Oppressed Minority." The syllabus outlined a purely academic approach; most of the semester was to be spent deciding whether women were, in fact, oppressed!

The YSA took a red university approach. Although hundreds of women tried to register, enrollment closed at 80. We demanded that the class be opened to anyone. We pointed out that, outside of the Home Economics department, this was the only course on women. Our approach was this: "This class represents the majority of the women on this campus and we demand to learn our true history. This class should be an organizing center for a women's liberation movement on the campus. Our work as activists in the women's liberation struggle must be reflected in the course. Classrooms, films, speakers of our choice, mimeograph paper and machines must be made available to us for our organizing." This was the way the YSA opened the class, and the

majority of the women in it were won over to this perspective.

As a result of this aggressiveness, half the class is getting credit for organizing a women's teach-in December 10. The speakers will include an SWP candidate, the wife of a striking GE worker, an abortion expert, a secretary on the campus, and many others. There will be an open mike and all the women's groups in the area are bringing literature tables. Later in the day there will be films and workshops all across the campus.

At the end of the teach-in, a set of demands will be presented which are to be the basis for a nonexclusionary, ongoing women's liberation movement on the campus. The demands are:

1. Institute a state-supported but campus controlled day care center on the campus for children of any student, faculty member or campus employee.
2. Free birth control devices, as well as abortion information, should be made part of the campus health center's services.
3. Set up a Women's Studies program controlled by the students where women can learn their own history and banish the myth of their inferiority.
4. End job discrimination on the campus. Raise the ratio of women faculty to 51 percent.

#### Opponent Tendencies and Women's Liberation

All of the major political tendencies are moving in on women's liberation, and it is becoming an arena where they all are competing for leadership.

Our major organized opposition at San Francisco State has been the Progressive Labor Party. PL, and its understudy SDS/WSA, were quick to sense a fertile ground for recruitment and geared into women's liberation as soon as campus opened this fall. In the document on women's liberation passed at the last SDS convention, chapters were told to set up Women's Caucuses within ("not separated from") SDS. The document went on, "A major role of these caucuses would be to organize those women already in the movement and to reach other women and bring them into the struggle to build SDS and a Worker-Student Alliance." This sectarian approach, of using a movement for their own ends, has been typical of our opponents.

From the SDS position paper, one would conclude that the downfall of women began with the Industrial Revolution. Their program for a campus women's liberation movement calls for students to ally with women workers to lead SDS' fights against imperialism, male chauvin-

ism and racism. Any struggle which is not directed to working people is labeled "elitist." For students to demand more women professors or deans is seen as putting sex over class interests, an attempt to bourgeoisify potential working-class allies and betray those who still have to suffer in menial jobs. If SDS had its way, every woman doctor would resign and go work in a factory. They seem to think it is there, and not in clerical work, that most women are concentrated--a typical PL caricature.

This approach has led PL and SDS/WSA to oppose the idea of Women's Studies. Just as they attacked the will of black students to get a university education as "get aheadism," they see the efforts of women students to unearth their history as anti-working-class. They claim that the course content would be controlled by the Trustees, that it would be staffed by Mrs. Hayakawas--somehow forgetting that if such a program were instituted, there would be a mass movement behind it, fighting to be sure the content was not coopted.

Although we should attempt to work with PL and SDS in aiding women workers who request student support, we must expose their labor fetish and mechanistic model of class relations. When they oppose struggles such as Women's Studies as being "elitist," the YSA must explain the social role of the student movement, its relation to the broader struggle, and how it is that new forces radicalize.

#### Strategy for Young Socialists

In some ways, the current phase of women's liberation is very much like the early stages of the antiwar movement. There is the same tremendous interest, burgeoning membership, lively debate over direction, and no one tendency has programmatic control. There are also certain parallels with the black struggle--the same drive to unearth one's hidden history, the same debate over relation to the general radical movement. The excessive feminism of some women can be compared to cultural nationalism.

But these analogies break down very quickly. We want the black liberation movement to form an independent political party, to raise the demand for black control of the black community. But women are not an oppressed national minority, making both these demands inappropriate for their struggle. We want the antiwar movement to remain single-issue, independent and in the streets. But the "woman question" is not single-issue, and women are fighting around a whole series of demands. Strategy for women's liberation is not totally clear!

There are, however, certain lessons we can draw from our effective intervention in the third world and antiwar struggles. We can use the SMC--a nonexclusive, action-oriented coalition, having the potential of attracting more activists than any single tendency--as a model of how to build a movement that can win.

YSA locals should explore the women's liberation groups in their area. In some places, especially where the small group idea predominates, it may not be worth the comrades' energy to intervene at this point. In other areas, we can intervene very effectively and push for teach-ins and conferences which will draw new forces into the movement. This is still basically a period for education and exposure on the ways women are oppressed. We can also push for demonstrations, pointing out that it is through women moving into action around their own demands, and not through encounter groups, that a movement will be built. The demands of our Canadian comrades (printed in the October YS) can be raised here as well. This should be a period of experimentation, and most importantly, of political discussion among our comrades that will ultimately lead to developing a transitional program for women's liberation.

Since many women become involved around their psycho-sexual oppression, YSAers must continually point to the origins of women's oppression and the inseparable connection between the subordination of women and capitalism. This is the difference between feminists and revolutionaries.

We must also take on reformism. Young mothers, very immediately burdened, are especially prone to accept ameliorative solutions. Instead of demanding that the state provide them with child care, they put the onus on themselves and set up private cooperatives, never raising the fact that children should be the responsibility of society and not of individual mothers. As revolutionaries, we must put the responsibility where it belongs!

Unfortunately, the woman question touches on many emotionally charged areas--sex, personal relationships, division of labor--and even our comrades, living as we must under capitalism often react irrationally. For this reason, our intervention must be very carefully organized.

First, we must be very clear that female comrades working in the area constitute a "women's liberation work" fraction, and not a "women's fraction." It is not their assignment to smash chauvinism in our ranks or demand childcare.

Karl Marx was a chauvinist; read his letters to his daughter! We are going to be up against chauvinism until long after the revolution. But as long as it doesn't take organizational form within the YSA, it is a problem for individual comrades to work out. We are revolutionary socialists first.

Secondly, it is important that women's liberation be integrated into the rest of the work of the local. Through weekly reports, it can be made clear that this is a legitimate area of concern for all our comrades, in spite of the fact that only women can actively intervene.

The most important task is education. The women's liberation struggle is a new arena for YSAers, and our comrades tend to feel uncomfortable about areas they don't understand. To broaden the base of comrades who are knowledgeable about the history and theory of the woman question, internal classes and forums should be scheduled. We may want to hold external classes as well.

#### Barriers to Recruitment

Although revolutionary in its broader implications, women's liberation does not automatically lead to revolutionary consciousness or even an identification with the broader radical youth movement. In some areas, recruitment may require a lot of energy and education.

Many of the writings that are emerging from women's liberation have a strong anti-radical movement tone. Women are discouraged from participating in struggles other than their own. YSA women in San Francisco who helped build a women's contingent for the November 15th antiwar demonstration, for example, were attacked as agents for the master sex and told they should leave the YSA and stop fighting other people's battles.

It is interesting that in attacking the radical movement, these women are coming up with a good critique of the ultraleftism that hastened SDS' downfall. They attack RYM for what they call its "third world analogy." They hear SDS men plotting occupations and guerrilla sieges as if Chicago were Saigon. They are told by SDS men, "When I see you in the role of a Vietnamese woman with a rifle slung over your back, then I'll believe you are revolutionary." These women understand that such blood and guts drama has no relevance for an American movement at this time.

Even though we can understand the origins of this anti-radical movement sentiment, we must fight against its conclusions. The YSA must point to the interdependence of all liberation strug-

gles. Although we agree that the women's liberation movement exists in its own right, we must point out that there is no contradiction in individual women being involved in defending the Vietnamese revolution as well.

Although most of these women are socialists in the sense that they accept our class analysis and have been influenced by Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, they are reluctant to join a socialist organization.

They look at Cuba, China and the Soviet Union and say, if that's all socialism is going to do for women, then we have to fight for something more than socialism. Some women in San Francisco, for example, have decided that since women's oppression still exists where capitalism doesn't, male supremacy should be the target. For if male supremacy were destroyed first, you would be rid of

both capitalism and women's oppression in one blow. This is the kind of thinking that is going on!

As revolutionary socialists, we must help the women's liberation movement understand that although socialism provides the only material basis for women's liberation, the struggle will continue long after the revolution. Cuban women have made tremendous gains, but are up against severe economic backwardness and the influence of religion and machismo, and it may take another generation for their liberation. With the Soviet Union, we must explain that what they see there is Stalinism, not socialism.

Of course, the healthiest of these women will understand that it is through becoming a revolutionary socialist and joining the YSA that they can help bring about the emancipation of all people.

San Francisco  
December 1, 1969

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT ANTIWAR RESOLUTION

By Bill Rayson, Debby Pope, Jim Wysocki, John Van Hyning, Lew Pepper, Ralph Schwartz

The draft resolution bears the apt title, "The New Stage in the Antiwar Movement: A Strategy for Young Socialists." It points cogently to the new, genuinely mass nature of national antiwar activity in recent months. In it we reaffirm our crucial insistence on concrete anti-imperialist action against the main immediate instance of imperialist aggression: the brutal military campaign conducted by the United States in hopes of suppressing the near-victorious Vietnamese revolution.

Our contribution to discussion of the NEC antiwar resolution concentrates on three main areas that we feel require further emphasis and elaboration:

1. The YSA's position on the question of "anti-imperialism" as counterposed by ultra-left sectarians against genuinely mass antiwar struggle.

2. The need for building the YSA in the course of building the antiwar movement.

3. Our revolutionary analysis of the roots and dynamics of the Vietnam war, crystallized in the slogan, "Support the Vietnamese revolution!"

By further developing these facets of our antiwar resolution, we can help to clarify our future tasks in the antiwar movement. We must enter the 1970s as the leading radical youth organization carrying and heading the struggle against the Vietnam war. At the same time, we must make clear that we are revolutionary socialists, and that as such we deem it crucial to play leading roles in all mass antiwar coalitions. Our politics as Trotskyists must be expounded clearly and our efforts must be directed consciously at recruiting militant, radicalizing youth to the program of revolutionary socialism.

I. "Anti-imperialism, Ultra-leftism, and Our Political Tasks"

During the past year, various groups have called for the transformation of the antiwar movement into an "anti-imperialist" movement. Some have even attacked the entire antiwar movement as being "liberal" and have advocated nonsupport of the major mass demonstrations which made up the 1969 Fall Offensive.

It is unnecessary here to repeat all the reasons why these attempts to impose a supposedly more "radical" program on the antiwar movement are wrong. This point is developed fully in the NEC draft resolution, which points out that to make

agreement with a general anti-imperialist program a prerequisite for participation in the antiwar movement would exclude the majority of people now active in that movement - thereby curtailing the objective support rendered to the Vietnamese armed struggle, and to the world revolution.

The logical extension into action of the "anti-imperialist" politics of these groups was visible in Washington on Nov. 14 and 15. While many of the demands expressed at the Saigon Embassy and the Labor and Justice Departments had the sympathy of thousands of antiwar demonstrators, the ultraleft sectarian leadership character of these actions discouraged many from participating. The Labor Department action called by PL and WSA-SDS exemplifies this elitist approach. Although all revolutionaries and many other activists support the striking workers the intent of the leadership of the D.C. labor action was to counterpose such support against building a mass antiwar movement. Small, sectarian actions such as these do nothing to build a movement against imperialism, either as manifested in Vietnam or on a global scale.

Actions such as those of Nov. 14 and 15, although small, succeed nonetheless in drawing in many of the conscious left-wing elements in the antiwar movement. These people have begun to progress beyond minimal commitment to ending the war, and have taken the first steps towards developing a higher level of political consciousness. It may thus be advantageous for the YSA to intervene politically in some of these demonstrations, explaining their true character and presenting a really revolutionary socialist perspective on building an anti-imperialist movement.

Such intervention would not be directed principally at the elitist leaders of these actions, but rather at rank-and-file participants. It would not necessarily imply support for these actions as organized - although we might decide to support them in some cases. We would obviously not intervene in all actions called by the ultraleft groups (the Weatherman "attack" on Chicago being a case in point). Some of these actions raise, however, demands that we do support, and around which we could present our perspective in building the antiwar movement - not only in explaining our position on the demands themselves, but also in explaining what is wrong with the sectarian character of the political actions as called by the ultra-lefts.

Our intervention could take the form of leafletting the participants, relevant articles and analysis in our press, and YSA participation in the action itself. The lack of any such YSA political intervention in the D.C. peripheral demonstrations was thus a missed opportunity to reach newly radicalized, militant youth with our program for building a real anti-imperialist movement capable of making an anti-capitalist revolution in America.

## II. Simultaneous Building of the YSA and Mass Coalitions

We are emerging from a period in which many of the antiwar forces, encouraged by reformists within the movement proper, relied upon "liberal" bourgeois politicians to end the war. In this period, the YSA carried the bulk of responsibility for preserving and rebuilding campus and community coalitions and mass actions. The burgeoning growth of the antiwar movement as an independent force since spring 1969 has once again proved the correctness of our policy of building the antiwar movement as an independent entity.

This monumental movement growth has not stemmed merely from the renewed activity of those pacifists, liberals and reformists who had deserted the broad, independent coalitions in favor of "multi-issue," pro-capitalist election campaigns. Also involved in the current resurgence are strata completely new to the movement: trade unionists and union officials, GIs, bourgeois politicians, and masses of people for whom antiwar action represents a pioneer venture into independent politics of any sort. As the draft resolution points out, this movement growth occasions a threat from the right, which attempts to divert independent antiwar activity into bourgeois political channels. Resolute resistance against efforts at excluding the demand for immediate withdrawal will again be a priority task for the revolutionary socialist vanguard of the antiwar movement.

Fortunately, the qualitative expansion of antiwar forces harbors positive prospects as well. The movement now has the potential to draw in new forces which carry social weight that students lack, such as rank-and-file trade unionists.

The entry of fresh, enthusiastic individuals not previously involved in and worn out by endless sectarian infighting may shift much of the day-to-day organizational burden from the shoulders of YSAers. Much YSA manpower must nevertheless still be utilized in building campus SMCs and community coalitions, and in fighting for continued policies of political independence, non-exclusion, and militant antiwar demands immune to co-optation.

Qualitative expansion of the movement provides, moreover, an unprecedented opportunity to build our role as its socialist vanguard. Bolstered by recent recruitment successes, and partially freed from SMC publicity and coordination tasks, revolutionary socialists may be able to devote increased manpower to building the YSA in the coming period. We must take every opportunity that is given us by our leadership role in the antiwar movement to present the program and ideas of the YSA.

Not only will we be able to recruit many antiwar activists into our ranks, but also one of the best defenses against redbaiting is the fully-open functioning, whenever possible, of prominent revolutionaries within antiwar groups and events. As the draft resolution cogently indicates, our prestige mounts to the degree that YSAers are recognized as leaders and enthusiastic building of the movement. "We are proud to be known as the socialist wing of the antiwar movement," the resolution continues. We should emphasize that a large increase in revolutionary propaganda and YSA recruitment within antiwar organizations is indicated for the months ahead.

Our press must take full advantage of the increased opportunities for bringing a forthright anti-imperialist analysis to thousands of new campus and community activists. One of the key values of mass actions is the opportunity to circulate the Militant and Young Socialist among people in political motion. By devoting somewhat less space to purely descriptive coverage of antiwar activity, we could give more prominence to our revolutionary assessment of the Vietnam aggression. Our broad-circulation press is not our primary medium for theoretical discussion and analysis. It is nevertheless one of our most effective avenues for ideological intervention within an increasingly broad movement against the war.

We have a similar possibility of raising our level of intervention through more consistent use of YSA banners, slogans and leaflets during mass events. YSAers share SMC's demand, "Bring All the Troops Home Now!" Yet we must give equal weight, in our own coalition participation, to advancing such slogans as "Support the Vietnamese Revolution!" Every rally and march also presents a chance to distribute clear and concise YSA leaflets aimed at raising the level of political consciousness of the participants.

## III. "Support the Vietnamese Revolution!"

Although support for the Vietnamese Revolution is one of the preconditions for YSA membership, this aspect of our political line is not made completely



clear in the NEC draft. We devote there a paragraph to our reason for rejecting support of the programs of the NLF or PRG as a central axis of the antiwar movement. Our positive stance towards the Vietnamese people's revolutionary armed struggle is not reflected fully in the draft resolution, however.

Pre-convention and convention resolutions have a circulation far beyond the ranks of present YSA members, reaching radicalizing antiwar activists among others. The draft resolution will help accelerate the current youth radicalization with its clear projection of our strategy for building the antiwar movement as a powerful contribution toward Vietnamese self-determination.

Elaboration is needed, however, on the reasoning behind our opposition to imposing "support for the PRG and NLF" on the mass antiwar movement. By clarifying our attitude towards the main organizations presently leading the Vietnamese struggle, we can avoid possible misinterpretation of our insistence upon self-determination - and not support of any specific organization or program - as the key to building a broad and militant domestic movement against United States aggression in Vietnam.

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In the above contribution to discussion of the draft resolution on strategy for Young socialists in the antiwar movement, we have attempted to explore those areas of work we feel most significant and

productive for YSAers. We have stressed the potential we feel YSA has, as the socialist wing of the movement, to foster and influence the political development and rising consciousness of many newly active antiwar youth. We feel that this role can best be served by continued efforts of YSAers to build the SMC while at the same time identifying ourselves as YSAers and bringing forth our politics, in support of the Vietnamese Revolution against the imperialist aggressor. Now, with the tremendous upsurge in antiwar sentiment and action among all segments of the movement, the YSA can begin to concentrate more heavily on its position as leader of the movement's left wing. This strategy will, as the draft document brings forth, allow us to recruit many of the most conscious antiwar activists to the YSA.

YSAers cannot avoid choosing what weight to give each of our key tasks in antiwar work. Unless we call explicitly for increasing emphasis on our role as the movement's class-struggle left wing - coupled with unremitting involvement in building the broader movement - we run the danger of marking time in the longer-term fight to building a Marxist political vanguard for the coming Third American Revolution. We feel that the tasks of building the SMC and the YSA are inevitably interrelated and that by continuing, in our role as YSAers, to come forward with our clear political perspective in support of the Vietnamese Revolution we can be of aid both to the antiwar movement and to the Vietnamese in their struggle.

Madison  
December 4, 1969

REPORT ON THE NEW YORK CONGRESS TO UNITE WOMEN

By Ruthann Miller

On the weekend of November 21-23, 1969, a Congress to Unite Women was held in New York. Its stated purpose was to try to find a basis to unify the many women's liberation groups on the Eastern seaboard. The conference was called by a coalition consisting of NOW (National Organization of Women), City College Women's Liberation, Columbia Women's Liberation, Daughters of Bilitis, the Feminists, Media Women, New Yorkers for Abortion Law Repeal, Redstockings, Student Homophile League, WITCH, Women's Action Committee of the World Fellowship, Women's Liberation 55, and YSA and the Socialist Workers Party. It was attended by about 500 women, mainly young people newly attracted to the movement, hoping to find out about the women's liberation groups that now exist.

Friday evening's discussion centered around the experiences that brought women present at the conference into the women's liberation movement and the position of the conference on the New Haven demonstration in support of the Black Panther women to be held the next day. Workshops were held all day Saturday on such subjects as family structure; nature and function of a feminist group; how women are divided; class, racial, sexual and religious differences; and others. On Sunday, the conference held a plenary session to adopt the action proposals from the workshops.

The coalition had been initiated by NOW, an essentially liberal organization composed mainly of professionals. Their aim seemed to be to recruit the young women who are becoming interested in the woman question and their plan for the conference was apparently the same as it was for the recent San Francisco conference (see SWP Internal Information Bulletin), i.e., a panel presentation by members of different groups, workshops, and presentation of workshop proposals to plenary sessions.

The YSA's participation in the Congress was on two levels. We had participated in the coalition as the YSA almost from the beginning, and we were considered by everyone to be an integral part of the coalition. (We have also been asked to participate in the continuations committee set up by the Congress.) We were thus able to bring up such things as the need for literature tables to be set up, some proposals on how to better organize the conference, and to attempt to influence decisions regarding the press. Our intervention in the confer-

ence was mainly through our literature and the contributions our comrades made in the workshops. We sold over \$300 worth of literature, including women's liberation books and pamphlets, general socialist works, and the Militant and the Young Socialist. The best seller was Evelyn Reed's Problems of Women's Liberation, of which 130 copies were sold. Fifteen YSA and SWP members attended some part of the conference. The women attending were familiar with the Militant, either from its coverage of the antiwar movement or from the recent articles on women's liberation. All of the comrades who attended were impressed by the participants' openness to revolutionary socialist ideas. During the three days of the conference there were no redbaiting remarks at all.

We were generally impressed with the serious level of political understanding of the people participating, and comrades felt that not only had they contributed to the discussions, but that they had also learned from the women in the workshops about the women's liberation movement and about women's oppression in this society.

The Friday night session was a discussion on "Why I'm Here" with a panel picked at random from the audience, and a general discussion on the same topic. The different experiences, areas of work and manifestations of women's role in this society that brought them to the conference gave us a feel for the broad appeal this movement has. One woman engineer became involved when she realized that there is still only one woman in a hundred men who attends engineering school--the same ratio as twenty years ago. The minister who said, "Just because a woman has a uterus she thinks her hands have to be in dishwasher" and the woman who said, "I've become so angry that I better have company in my rage or I'll go crazy" both emphasized the need to reach out to the thousands of other women becoming aware of their oppression.

During the discussion requests for support to the upcoming Black Panther Party New Haven demonstration were made by some SDS-type women in an effort to get the support of individuals at the conference. One proposed that the Congress support the demonstration on behalf of the Panther women on the basis of supporting the politics of the Black Panther Party. Others proposed support to the demonstration on the basis of the oppression of the Panther women as women (how

their pregnancy was used against them, etc.). The right wing of the conference tried to avoid taking a stand on the question. After a heated discussion in which we participated, we were influential in convincing the conference to support the New Haven demonstration on the basis of their oppression as women.

Comrades were involved in many of the workshops on Saturday. Most of them reported that the discussions attempted to come to grips with the source of women's oppression, did discuss the need for total change in the society, and ending capitalism and were open to our contributions to the discussion. There was also much emphasis placed on the need to carry out united actions with other women to effect some changes now, and some good concrete proposals came out of these work workshops.

The following are some proposals adopted by the Congress:

- 1) Free 24-hour child care centers, available to all parents, with the policy of these centers being determined by those who use them.
- 2) Total repeal of all abortion laws.
- 3) Four-hour work days for men and women.
- 4) Payment for bearing and raising children.
- 5) Industrialization of housework, and the setting up of communal facilities for eating, laundry, etc.
- 6) Make the individual family's responsibility for children the responsibility of society as a whole.
- 7) A mass march on Washington, called by the continuations committee, to demand passage of an Equal Rights Amendment.
- 8) Formation of campus and city-wide coalitions to initiate teach-ins and Women Studies programs on campuses.
- 9) The publication of a newsletter.
- 10) Demonstrations against specific companies for their ads, such as Virginia Slims, Mattell, etc.

The YSA and the SWP were the only socialist organizations represented at the the conference with the exception of the Spartacist League, which played no role. The main opposition, therefore, to a revolutionary analysis of the oppression of women and to proposals for radical demand demands and actions came not from our opponents in the radical movement but from NOW, whose orientation is toward working within the Democratic and Republican parties.

The role played by NOW at the con-

ference was that of attempting to orient it toward working within the capitalist parties and applying pressure for the passage of legislation favorable to women. The degree to which NOW succeeded in doing this was hampered by our intervention, and by the healthy radical spirit of most of the women involved. NOW is the best organized single tendency in the New York area, and while it, as well as we, pushed for a better organized conference (chairwoman, agenda, etc.), the other groups and individuals felt that the lack of visible decision-making bodies (i.e., leaders, planning committee, chairwoman) would prevent NOW from manipulating the conference and allow a more open exchange. In reality, this lack of structure simply allowed NOW to control the conference from behind the scenes. By the last day of the conference, however, most of the women present realized that they had made an error in not having a more defined structure, and asked the planning committee to make itself known.

This points to the very large organizational problems experienced by the Congress, and I feel by the movement as a whole. A major contribution of the YSA initially will be our organizational know-how. The best of these women are beginning to learn that their fear, distrust and misunderstanding of the function of organization only hinders them in accomplishing their goals. This distrust stems partly from the idealization of spontaneity by the "New Left" and partly from their bad experiences with bureaucratic leadership in some radical organizations. Their reluctance to have a structured organization is, in fact, an attempt to have real democracy, and I don't believe that this reluctance will necessarily continue to be a characteristic of the movement as a whole.

The evaluation of this conference, and the experiences of our women's liberation work in general in New York, have led the New York local to assess this movement as a real, growing one. Its political level, its acceptance without rebaiting of our presence in the movement, its goals as we see them all point to the need for us to be involved actively in this area of struggle, to our desire to build this movement, and to the opportunities for us to recruit from it. We have set up a joint YSA-SWP fraction to coordinate our work in this area, intend to assign comrades to work in some of the groups, and to continue the process of educating comrades on women's oppression and the women's liberation movement.

New York

December 7, 1969

# COME TO MINNEAPOLIS



## **YOUNG SOCIALIST NATIONAL CONVENTION Dec 27-30, 1969 University of Minnesota**

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