

Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin

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- Marty May 2014

LITERATURE IN BUILDING OUR MOVEMENT

by Dave Brandt, Geneseo, N. Y., At-Large

Building our movement is an important part of our work at any time. If it is possible, the present situation makes it more important.

Any time there is a chance to open a new community to our ideas and recruitment, it should be done as soon as possible. Along with this, we should realize that our activities usually are not what will convince or recruit a person. This or that activity may make him or her interested in the YSA or SWP, but it is our politics and program that will bring them under our banner. Where possible, they can find out about us by talking to us or going to our forums. This does not go too far. We cannot go up to people on the street and ask them to talk to us about socialism. We can go out to them with our press and convince many more people to buy it than we can talk to. And our press can get to more people than we do. These are important reasons for having other-language press, particularly Spanish.

I have a friend who was not convinced by discussion that what we called for would not result in repressive Communism. He, however, got an introductory subscription to The Militant. It was seeing our consistent support for civil liberties in our press that freed him from this idea. It would have been much harder if he only read Spanish.

From what I can tell our work in the Spanish community can use some extension. Our effectiveness is limited greatly to people who actually talk to our Spanish comrades. Our Spanish-language books and pamphlets are growing in number, and this is good. But many may wish to see a newspaper before buying Trotsky in Spanish. A few pages in Intercontinental Press is not enough, especially at 50¢ a copy. A domestic, Spanish Trotskyist paper is important!

I know there are other considerations. Our Spanish comrades may at first have to work on its sales instead of Militant or YS drives. It may have to start as an 8 or 12 page paper on a bi-weekly or monthly basis. A campaign would have to be waged to establish it. Get it into newsstands and stores. Regular sales times and places would be important. Subscriptions, contributions and reader help in sales would be emphasized. The results could be fantastic. We might help establish it through a fund like the prisoner or Cannon fund, and advertise the fund in The Militant and YS.

Other improvements could be made in our literature.

Some titles for mass distribution (or all titles for economy, considering the state of the economy) could be made from cheaper materials. Perhaps it is more a matter of subsidy than I realize, but look at the difference in the amount of information in The Militant or YS as opposed to the 25¢ Pathfinder pamphlets. By making pamphlets or small books from newsprint and a somewhat sturdier cover, the cost and price could be less. It might not last as long, but I'm sure that much of our literature isn't read so many times over that it won't make that much difference. Pamphlets might be mimeographed (with good quality supplies, of course) and a more attractive cover added.

With people losing faith in the government and the economy (expecting a depression), I think we should have pamphlets to help guide them toward the answers. Perhaps a 'Myths of Capitalism' series. This would include pamphlets like: The Myth of -- Free Press, Free Elections, "Just" Capitalist Wars, "Progressive" Capitalist Politicians, Reformist Roads To Socialism, or whatever. Or perhaps pamphlets supporting certain applicable transitional demands, like: For a Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours. Whatever point the workers were at, we would try to guide to the next steps. However we do it, we should guide these radicalizing people from ambiguous distrust and questioning to the socialist answer.

Pamphlets on gay liberation, oppression of handicapped people and the economic crisis should also be considered.

We should have a struggle-support box in our press to inform people about boycotts, demonstrations, etc. This could be helpful in supporting struggles we support.

I agree with our policy of not totally filling our press with attacks on other left groups, but from reading our press I would think that the CP is the only other working class group in the country. Some mention of other left groups and our differences may be good. The place in our literature for this (Militant, YS, Pamphlet, or what) can be talked about later.

Just let me repeat here that this is by no means meant to replace action, but only to build the movement behind the actions. Now we should discuss our resources and priorities, and decide together what we do with our literature.

November 2, 1974

THE NEED FOR A BETTER STRATEGY ON GAY LIBERATION

by Don Fortenberry, Atlanta local

This article is intended to begin a new discussion on an old topic, Gay Liberation. There has been plenty of discussion on Gay Liberation in the past, but these discussions produced no results at all. I am a new recruit to the YSA, and I joined the YSA as a gay worker. Before I joined, I was searching for an organization that would continue the work the Bolsheviks had begun, and I feel that the YSA is what I was looking for. To a large extent, my expectations have been fulfilled. But in its work on gay liberation, I feel the YSA has failed. It is a failure that is not due to the opposition to gay liberation per se; the YSA's lack of success in this area is due to inertia and to a collective blindspot on the need for correct strategy for intervening in the struggles of gay workers.

Now, I am well aware of the discussions that took place intermittently between 1971-1973. And every time I walk into our bookstore, I am very much aware that these "brilliant" articles produced nothing at all in the way of concrete decisions. All comrades could agree on was a rather bland statement, like, "We support your efforts to achieve your liberation, but until you have the masses in the streets, we will do nothing to help you." Forgive me, comrades, but that argument sounds very much like the way male revolutionaries in the old SDS expressed their support for women's liberation. It may come as a surprise to some comrades that we gay workers are no more willing to wait until after the revolution to present our demands than our sisters. There is a need now to develop a Marxist strategy for gay liberation and a Marxist analysis of the role and significance of the struggles of gay workers.

Now, I am prepared to present a concrete example to illustrate the validity of my point and the extent of the YSA's failure in this regard. During the general radicalizations of the sixties, a large healthy layer of gay workers were radicalized, and waged some very active struggles to gain legal protection of their rights, to organize themselves for protection from police attacks, and to overthrow the stigmas that society imposed on them. Unfortunately they received very inadequate support from the rest of the Left (which showed that it was not completely immune to the virus of queer-baiting), and their isolation was an important factor in the collapse of the first gay movement.

Now, along with the new radicalizations taking place as the recession deepens, there is another movement beginning to arise among gay workers. This new movement is making its appearance in New York City around the struggle for the passage of a bill known as Intro 554. This bill is a municipal gay civil rights ordinance for New York City,

and gays have been fighting for its passage since 1970. Early this year, it was passed from the General Welfare Committee of the City Council by a seven-to-one margin, and was sent to the full council for approval with the support of John Lindsay, Abe Beame, and the seven borough presidents. The bill's supporters even scheduled a victory party. But, as the Advocate, the country's largest gay rights newspaper reported, it was defeated by the last minute attacks by the leader of the Queens County Democratic Party, Matthew Troy. Troy publicly attacked it in vicious, queer-baiting smears and tried to force the entire Queens delegation to the council to vote against it. All but one member did, and the bill was defeated by a narrow margin. This much of the Intro 554 affair can be called act one. Act two now began, and this part brought forth an extremely important development, a development that the YSA is totally unequipped to handle or anticipate.

One member of the delegation from Queens County refused to knuckle under Troy's pressure. As a result, Arthur J. Katzman, the dissident councilman, found himself under attack in the primary by an opponent handpicked by Troy. Katzman would have been defeated too, but for the determined support he received from the gay community of Queens County. Thousands of dollars poured into his campaign, and hundreds of letters were sent to City Hall and the papers, urging Troy's defeat. The New York Times and the Long Island Press rallied to the gay demands, and urged editorially Troy's ouster. As a result, Katzman crushed his opponent in the primary fight with a large majority.

Act three now began. Immediately after the primary, Queens Borough President Donald Manes, whom the Advocate cited as "a supporter of gay civil rights," announced that he would seek Troy's post as the Queens County organization boss. On Sept. 20, with Mayor Beame's support, Manes successfully ousted Troy as county boss by a vote of 40 to 21.

Such electoral actions and mass actions as the gay support of Katzman and the defeat of queer-baiting reactionaries as Troy are extremely significant for gay workers. If the YSA and the SWP fielded candidates who supported these bills like Intro 554, we could win very valuable support from the gay community and could be a great help to the gay liberation movement.

Now the stage is set for a city-wide campaign for Intro 554. If the YSA and the SWP really support gay liberation, then we should publicly support the bill even

as we point that the struggle for gay liberation must go beyond the fight for paper equality. This brings me back to the point I was trying to make earlier. Because of the decision of the last convention, we have no literature and no strategy that would enable us to intervene actively in these kinds of struggles. I believe that the time has come to remedy the shortcomings and omissions of the last conventions.

We need to develop a strategy for interventions into gay workers struggles and to integrate that strategy into our overall tactics and goals. In order to accomplish this goal, The Militant, the Young Socialist, and Pathfinder Press must publicly support and report developments in the gay movement as much as possible. It would be an extremely good idea for Pathfinder to publish some pamphlets on gay liberation written by gay comrades. Pathfinder has pamphlets and books on every topic of interest for every other part of the working class, but it has nothing at all on gay workers. Now is the time to fill the gap. These pamphlets would give gay comrades within the party a very good tool to recruit new gay comrades, and straight comrades could read them and understand our needs and demands better. The result could only be better communication among comrades. That would alleviate the isolation many gay comrades feel.

Another thing that many bookstores could do to increase comrades' understanding of gays is to stock the Advocate,

which is the country's largest gay newspaper and is a serious, well-written paper. The Advocate has an admittedly reformist and liberal outlook, but it is a good source of information about gay struggles.

I feel very strongly that the YSA and the SWP should take advantage of every opportunity to support gay rights. I remember what comrade Novack said in his classes at Oberlin on the character of the coming American revolution. He said the third American revolution would have a combined character, in that it would overturn capitalist property relations and extend democratic rights beyond the limits imposed by the rule of the capitalist minority. Now, translated into concrete terms, that means it is the duty of every socialist to support every demand that extends the democratic rights of the working class. Since gays are found within the working class as well as other classes, it is the duty of socialists to support the demands of gay workers, and just agreeing in principle and on paper is not good enough for gay comrades. We must carry the theme of Oberlin into the gay workers struggles as much as circumstances permit. We must "Educate; Agitate; Organize." We cannot create artificial movements. But we must not ignore the demands of gay workers in America, or we turn our backs on our principles.

November 4, 1974

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC CENTRALIST TENDENCY

1924 Niagra St. (Apt. 5)
Buffalo, N. Y. 14207
November 19, 1974

National Executive Committee
Young Socialist Alliance
Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N. Y. 10003

Dear Comrades:

This letter is to inform you of the formation of a tendency in the Young Socialist Alliance for the purpose of the 1974 pre-convention discussion. The goals of the Democratic Centralist Tendency are to obtain a rejection of the July 4, 1974 expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency, and to establish a principled basis for their re-admission into the YSA.

The Democratic Centralist Tendency feels that the expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency by the NEC sets a dangerous precedent in our movement, since those expelled were not accorded the democratic rights of accused YSA members as contained in Article IX of the YSA Constitution.

Further, this illegal expulsion has undoubtedly served to aggravate the already serious divisions within the world Trotskyist movement, and has thus helped to promote the split dynamic in the Fourth International as a whole.

The basis for adherence to the Tendency is as follows:

1. Support for carrying out the provisions of the YSA Constitution;
2. Support for the three resolutions contained in the document "Two Wrongs Don't Make a Right: On the Illegal Expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency." (enclosed with this letter).

At present, the Tendency has no elected leadership or coordinating bodies. Should the Tendency deem it necessary to establish such bodies during the course of the discussion period, the NEC will be immediately informed of their structure and composition.

We request that the NEC acknowledge the receipt of this letter, and that it be printed in the YSA Internal Bulletin immediately preceding our article.

Comradely yours,

s/Kurt T. Hill
s/Daniel Sabo
s/David Strong
Members of the Democratic
Centralist Tendency

by Kurt T. Hill, Daniel Sabo and David Strong, Buffalo, N. Y., At-Large

The expulsion of the Internationalist Tendency by the National Executive Committee July 4, 1974 is an ominous development. The expulsion is alarming for two reasons: this is the first time in the history of the YSA that members accused of disloyalty were expelled without being permitted the rights of accused members established by Article IX of the YSA Constitution. Secondly, the expulsion is alarming because of its possible repercussions in other Trotskyist groups throughout the world. The expulsion can only have the effect of furthering the aims of the Masseyite IT, and its desire to set up a "true" sympathetic group of the Fourth International in America. The expulsion will strengthen the pro-split wing of the International Majority Tendency (IMT), and further exacerbate the split dynamic in the FI as a whole.

I. The Setting of the Expulsion

In the publication "Materials Related to the Split of the Internationalist Tendency from the Socialist Workers Party" (SWP Internal Bulletin Number Six in 1974), we are provided with convincing evidence of numerous acts of indiscipline and disloyalty by members of the Masseyite groupings in the SWP and YSA. Even if some of these charges can be disputed, there remains much documentary evidence that widespread violations of discipline occurred on an organized basis throughout the United States.

These disloyal acts occurred despite the assurances of the IT leadership at the Chicago YSA Convention that their members would respect the democratic centralist norms of our organization.

The IT reply to the SWP document, "The Myth of the 'IT Split' -- Purge Politics of the LTF," a 24-page mimeographed statement, lends further corroboration to many of the charges. For example, they state: "We will not attempt to challenge the statistics provided by the (SWP) Control Commission," dealing with the IT's non-participation in the work of the American Trotskyist movement, including a near-boycott of Militant sales, systematic low attendance at movement functions, and a virtual financial boycott of the SWP. Sales of the movement's press, participation in the functions of the movement, and financial support of its activities are conditions of membership binding on all members of Trotskyist organizations.

Nor does the Masseyite grouping deny that they refused to follow the democratically determined tactical orientation of the American Trotskyists in implementing the line of the FI in the USA: "As the LTF's attacks on the Spanish and French sections unfolded, as the need to cover up (sic!) the

Argentine PST's orientation became urgent, and especially as the IT's public defense of the positions (sic!) of the Fourth International became more embarrassing in the face of the LTF's failure (sic!) to defend them, the IT came under a new volley of attacks. . ."

Further:

"The IT felt that the Fourth International's line for Chile work in the period following the coup, as expressed in the United Secretariat statement, was to campaign for solidarity with the resistance as long as it lasted, and then with the various struggles of the Chilean workers and peasants, on an internationalist class basis. The IT considered that the SWP's civil libertarian work (sic!) in USLA had nothing in common with that line. . . When their proposals were rejected, the IT comrades confined themselves to defending the general public positions of the FI on Chile. . . They did so with sales of the Old Mole, and distribution of the United Secretariat statement." (our emphasis).

Thus, the Masseyites themselves admit that they publicly presented what they as a tendency felt was the proper means of implementing the FI's goal of solidarity with the Chilean people. They did this through unauthorized sales of the Old Mole, and distribution of their own unauthorized leaflet. These actions were carried out despite the fact that the United Secretariat raised no objections to the tactics pursued by the American Trotskyists.

One could continue to quote the IT against itself, but these examples are sufficient to demonstrate that the IT admits to having engaged in indisciplined activities.

II. The Constitutional Context

The IT grouping, by its own admission, is guilty of indiscipline and disloyalty. However, the method by which the IT group was expelled from the YSA -- and it was an expulsion -- is at variance with the traditional norms of our movement. The method for expelling members who violate the democratic-centralist norms of the YSA is provided for under Article IX of the YSA Constitution:

1. All decisions of the governing bodies of the YSA are binding upon the members and subordinate bodies of the YSA.
2. Any member or body of the YSA may bring charges against any member for violation of the Constitution,

program, or policies of the YSA.

3. Written charges shall be presented to the accused member in advance of the trial. Charges shall be filed in the local unit where the accused is a member and shall be heard by a committee set up for this purpose.
4. Charges brought against members of the NC or members-at-large shall be heard by a committee of the NC or NEC set up for this purpose.
5. The NC or NEC may decide to act directly in a case in which event its intervention shall supercede any local proceedings.
6. Any member subject to disciplinary action has the right to submit a written appeal to the next higher body, up to and including the National Convention. This appeal must be filed with the NEC within fifteen days after the action being appealed. Pending action on the appeal, the decision of the disciplinary body remains in force. (From Organizing the YSA, Nov. 1970, p. 16).

There is abundant material dealing with the expulsion of YSAers for indiscipline, disloyalty, and membership in opponent political organizations. One of the more recent examples was the expulsion of John Zanelotti, formerly of the Washington, D. C. local.

Zanelotti was charged on May 30, 1972, with disloyalty to the YSA. The substance of the charge was that his membership in the Workers League, a rival political organization of the YSA, was "incompatible with membership in the YSA."

Acting under Article IX, Section 5, the NEC constituted itself as the trial body to hear the charges against Zanelotti. The trial was held on June 10, 1972. The NEC found him guilty as charged, and expelled him.

Exercising his right under Article IX, Section 6, Zanelotti subsequently appealed the trial decision on August 20, 1972. The decision to expell Zanelotti for membership in a rival organization was sustained by the 1972 Convention. (See "Documents on the Case of John Zanelotti," Young Socialist Discussion Bulletin, v. 16 no. 3, 1972).

In an October 26, 1972 statement (also contained in v. 16, no. 3), the National Executive Committee said: "John Zanelotti was expelled from the YSA on August 7, 1972 by the National Executive Committee, having been found guilty of disloyalty to the YSA, based on his membership in the Workers League. Zanelotti has appealed his expulsion to the National Convention. . .

"The charges brought against Zanelotti and his subsequent expulsion were based on substantial evidence submitted prior to and during the course of the trial. . . which conclusively proved that Zanelotti was a member of the Workers League. . .

"Zanelotti was not expelled on the basis of his political disagreements, which as a member of the YSA he was free to raise during the discussion period. . .

"Zanelotti was expelled for belonging to an opponent organization whose aim is to destroy the YSA, a position Zanelotti agrees with, as he stated at the trial conducted by the NEC."

Thus, although there existed substantial evidence even prior to the trial that Zanelotti was a member of a rival political organization (which could definitely be said to "place him outside the Constitutional provisons for membership in the YSA,") he was not immediately expelled. The following procedure was implemented in accordance with the Constitution of the YSA:

1. Charges were brought against him.
2. Written charges were presented to him in advance of the trial.
3. A trial was held to establish his guilt or innocence. He was permitted to answer the charges at the trial.
4. He was found guilty, and expelled.
5. He exercised his right to appeal the decision of the trial body.
6. His appeal was considered by the National Convention. This highest decision-making body of the YSA sustained the decision of the original trial body.

Let us contrast this scrupulous adherence to democratic procedure with the treatment accorded the members of the Internationalist Tendency -- a group which, we might add, was clearly as guilty as Zanelotti.

In a July 4, 1974 mailing to all members, Comrade Andrew Pulley, YSA National Chairman, stated:

"At its July 4, 1974 meeting, after careful consideration of the documentary material gathered by the Control Commission of the Socialist Workers Party and made available to the NEC upon our request by the SWP Political Committee, the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialist Alliance passed the following motion:

"That the Internationalist Tendency's status as a separate, rival organization to the YSA be recognized and that members of this rival organization be informed that this status places them outside the constitutional provisions for membership in the Young Socialist Alliance.

"In compliance with this motion, each local is instructed to remove from its rolls as of this date all known members of the Internationalist Tendency party listed in the enclosed letter."

Thus, while the NEC possessed 146 pages of documentary material indicating that the IT was guilty of indiscipline and disloyalty, they did not present written charges against the ITers for violating the Constitution, program or policies of the YSA. They did not set trial dates for the accused to concretely, and Constitutionally establish their guilt. THEY IGNORED THE PROVISIONS OF THE YSA CONSTITUTION AND ILLEGALLY EXPELLED THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY AS A BODY

Comrades, this NEC action sets a precedent of the most dangerous kind! Evidence of guilt, no matter how overwhelming, does not replace the Constitutional necessity of presenting written charges to the accused. Evidence of guilt, no matter how fully documented, is never finally established except by the Constitutional provision of a trial. Evidence of guilt only establishes the basis for formal written charges, and for the trial of the accused. The trial itself, whereby the accused is afforded the opportunity of answering the charges, is the only mechanism which can Constitutionally establish guilt or innocence.

This illegal, and unconstitutional action of the NEC must be overturned by the membership!

III. The International Context

The illegal expulsion of the Masseyites has resulted in more than the violation of the YSA Constitution. It undoubtedly has helped to deepen the existing factionalism within the world Trotskyist movement, and therefore, it has exacerbated the split dynamic among certain groups within the Fourth International.

The IT was (and we presume, continues to be), an ideological supporter of the International Majority Tendency (IMT). One can imagine that supporters of the IMT in other countries have received a very distorted and one-sided version of the events leading up to the expulsion of their co-thinkers in the YSA. Undoubtedly the Massey group has sought to concentrate on the illegality of the expulsion as a means of winning sympathy in the world movement, using this issue to obscure their violations of YSA discipline.

The IT is presently in the position of claiming to be the

offended party, professing that they were expelled without formal charges or trial because of their opinions.

If the Constitutionally mandated procedure had been followed by the NEC, there could be no question in the minds of IMT supporters that the IT had been disloyal to the YSA, had been charged, tried, and convicted of disloyalty, and expelled as punishment for their violations. In short, the blame could have been placed unambiguously where it belongs -- on the shoulders of the Internationalist Tendency.

In addition, the SWP "Materials..." document contains much evidence (from secret IT internal publications) pointing to the complicity of some leading IMT members with the Masseyites violations of our democratic-centralist norms.

The Political Committee of the SWP has correctly called for a special world congress of the FI to deal not only with the IMT's interference in the internal affairs of the party and YSA, but also to deal with the world-wide activities of a secret IMT faction operating without the knowledge of the United Secretariat. We feel that it is very important for YSAers to support this call, for only a world congress can take up the question of violation of the statutes of the FI, determine the facts, and punish the guilty.

However, how can the YSA fraternal observers demand that action be taken against the violators of FI statutes, when we ourselves have violated our own Constitution? Such a stance could only be interpreted as gross hypocrisy by members of the IMT.

IV. What Must We Do

In order that Constitutional framework of the YSA be preserved, and in order to help stop the present split dynamic in the world Trotskyist movement, our Tendency calls upon the National Convention to adopt the following three resolutions:

1. THE NATIONAL CONVENTION REJECTS THE JULY 4, 1974 NEC EXPULSION OF THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY WHICH WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT THE PROVISIONS OF ACCUSED MEMBERS AS STATED IN ARTICLE IX OF THE YSA CONSTITUTION. THIS ARTICLE STATES THAT ACCUSED MEMBERS SHALL BE FURNISHED WITH WRITTEN CHARGES, SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO A TRIAL, AND THE RIGHT TO APPEAL THE TRIAL DECISION.

No doubt there are some who will use the July 4, 1974 expulsion of the IT as the basis for an attack on the essentially sound democratic nature of the YSA, and its elected leadership. We do not agree with this position.

No political leadership is always correct in its decisions.

This is why the National Convention, representing all YSA members, is the highest decision-making body of our organization. It possesses the ultimate authority and supervision over all elected bodies of the YSA. Consequently, it is the job of the National Convention to make all final decisions, and to review all actions of its subordinate bodies -- including the NC and NEC.

By rejecting the NEC expulsion, the National Convention can say to the world Trotskyist movement: "Our leadership made a mistake, and we are acting to correct it." By doing so, it has the opportunity of distinguishing between the very substantial contributions made by the NC and NEC and its political mistakes.

The present leadership of the YSA is, without doubt, the finest of any socialist youth organization in the country. The Democratic Centralist Tendency feels that the NEC expulsion order represents an undemocratic aberration by an otherwise dedicated, democratic leadership body. We feel that it was the result of a series of massive provocations by the Internationalist Tendency group; provocations which temporarily blinded the NEC's political judgment. Therefore, since the expulsion is not symptomatic of a general anti-constitutional thrust by the NEC, a simple rejection of their action by the National Convention is sufficient to correct this situation. Because of the massive nature of the IT provocations which triggered the NEC response, we do not feel that the NEC should be brought up on charges of violating the Constitutional norms of the YSA. However, a repudiation of their action by the membership -- regardless of the purity of the NEC's motives -- is necessary.

2. THE NATIONAL CONVENTION EMPOWERS THE INCOMING NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY GROUP TO ESTABLISH THE BASIS FOR A PRINCIPLED RE-UNIFICATION OF AMERICAN TROTSKYIST YOUTH CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONS:

- a. That the Internationalist Tendency group agrees to engage in joint work with the YSA in such areas as support for the presidential campaign of the SWP, defense of the Chilean people, and sales of the American Trotskyist press.
- b. That the Internationalist Tendency group agree that this joint work and discussion of differences proceed for a period not to exceed six months.
- c. If at the end of this period a political reconciliation is reached, the Internationalist Tendency group shall be readmitted into the YSA on the following basis:
 - 1) The Internationalist Tendency group shall agree to

recognize the democratic centralist nature of the YSA;

- 2) The Internationalist Tendency group shall agree to abide by the democratically-made decisions of the YSA, including the decisions of all elected bodies and leaderships;
- 3) The Young Socialist Alliance shall agree to recognize the rights of political minorities under the provisions of democratic centralism, including the right to form political tendencies or factions;
- 4) The Young Socialist Alliance shall agree to grant representation to the Internationalist Tendency group on the National Committee of the YSA.

If the IT had been innocent of the charges raised against them, or if there existed substantial doubt of their guilt, the only remedy would be to immediately readmit them into membership.

However, this is not the case. The Masseyites, by their own admission, have violated the democratic centralist norms of the YSA. It is only prudent to establish some safeguard to determine if they really have had a political change of heart. By putting them on "probation" for up to six months, under the watchful eyes of the NEC, we will be able to determine if there is any real basis for a principled re-unification.

In addition, if the IT refuses to participate in a re-unification process on this principled basis, they would stand exposed throughout the world Trotskyist movement. They would no longer be able to use the expulsion as a weapon against American Trotskyism.

No doubt, their rejection of a principled re-unification process would also expose their true nature to many of their own members. As the SWP documents revealed, the IT is actually a collection of various clashing groups. If the IT leadership were to reject an offer of principled re-unification, this would probably split their ranks, and lead some of their members to seek re-admission to the YSA on an individual basis.

3. AT THE END OF THE SIX MONTH PERIOD OF DISCUSSION AND JOINT POLITICAL WORK WITH THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY GROUP, THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A WRITTEN REPORT TO THE YSA MEMBERSHIP OUTLINING THE RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSION AND JOINT WORK, AND STATING THE POTENTIAL FOR A PRINCIPLED RE-UNIFICATION.

At the end of this probationary period, the NEC report will establish if this is to be a permanent split. In any event, the report will be a record of the YSA's attempt to

resolve this issue, and would be an important statement to the world Trotskyist movement.

If the attempt at a principled re-unification is successful, it may serve as a model for other countries which presently have two public faces of the Fourth International. If the attempt is unsuccessful, it will at least demonstrate to the world movement that the YSA sincerely attempted a political reconciliation and re-unification; that it was the IT grouping

which rejected unity.

* * *

The National Convention is the highest decision-making body of the YSA. We urge all members of the YSA to support and vote for these three resolutions. By doing so, the National Convention, which reflects the convictions of the membership, will reaffirm the democratic centralist nature of the YSA as reflected in the YSA Constitution.

November 19, 1974

HIGH SCHOOL WORK

by Betsy Gilson, Twin Cities local

This fall, for the first time in the Twin Cities local, we established a high school and junior high school work fraction. In this contribution I would like to discuss some of the gains we made and make some observations about high school work in general.

At the beginning of the school year, we had three high school comrades in the Twin Cities. But we weren't taking advantage of the situation. We weren't selling at the schools comrades attended or regularly at other schools. We had thought about it, but had never implemented our ideas. Also we weren't doing any consistent contact work. We just let high school students find us, and didn't go out and consciously work with them. The Minnesota SWP campaigns for Governor, Lt. Governor, and 5th Congressional District were not brought into the schools at all. We felt that this was an important field of work for contacts and recruitment. So after seeing these things, we decided that we needed a strategic approach to high school work. We began a discussion in the local on how to organize high school work, and decided that the best way was to set up a high school work fraction. The work fraction would take on the responsibility of planning and carrying out our work. On the original work fraction there were three high school students and an Executive Committee comrade who was not in high school. We then made some initial projections on what was possible to accomplish in the schools. These were: regular sales to all high schools and especially those with comrades at them, getting campaign speaking engagements, posting leaflets for forums and political events in the schools, putting our comrades on the school newspaper staffs, and running socialist student government campaigns. All of these projections were carried out somewhat, but not as expected.

Some of the problems we had were that the original projections were set too high. They were too hard to accomplish. High schools are not like college campuses in that the students aren't as free. You can't just go into a high school

and set up a literature table or build a meeting. Everything you want to do has to be OKed through the administration office. They can, at any time, stop political activity without consulting the student body. Even leaflets for posting must be signed by an administrator.

Some of the successes we have had were in sales; over the past three months since the beginning of school, we have sold a total of 103 YS's at seven high schools and one junior high school. We have had 15 high school campaign speaking engagements, all in the Twin Cities and surrounding suburbs. Also speakers on national tours spoke at some of our schools. We recruited one high school comrade and three junior high school comrades since the beginning of the school year. Posting of forum and special event leaflets is a weekly activity in the schools with comrades. One of our junior high comrades is on the school newspaper. And one high school comrade is in student government. In general, we did most of the things we had projected.

I would suggest that in locals with one or more high school comrades, you should set up a high school work director or a fraction. This would help to think out all areas of high school work better than just leaving each high school comrade on her or his own to decide what to do in their school. You should involve the whole local in discussing high school perspectives and get their ideas on possible work for a high school fraction.

Even in the absence of any concrete struggles going on in the high schools, sales and talking to students has indicated that students in general are very open to socialist and radical ideas. High school students, like most people in our society are looking for concrete alternatives to the system. We should take an ambitious approach to winning them over to socialist ideas and to the Young Socialist Alliance.

November 20, 1974

THE NEED AND POTENTIAL FOR REGIONAL GROWTH IN THE COMING PERIOD

by Norman Chagnon, Worcester local

We are witnessing the start of a new wave of radicalization in the United States. The rise of CLUW, the increased strike activity, the struggle in District 1, and the increasing receptivity of people everywhere to our press and campaigns are all positive signs that the American working class is in the first stage of an important period of radicalization. A key factor influencing the course that workers will take as they enter into struggle will be the ability or the inability of the American Trotskyist movement to grow with the radicalization. This document is an attempt to begin a discussion on the role regional locals can play in this period and the importance of that role.

It is my contention that qualitatively and quantitatively the regional local can and must become a much more important component of the YSA. Too often in the past, from the N. O. on down to the regional locals themselves, the regional locals have been seen only as recruiting tools and support bases for the regional centers. We have tended to forget that regional cities like Worcester have proportionally greater proletarian populations than Boston, contain important industries, and that it too is an important area for political work.

The work of the Worcester local since the last convention is indicative of the expanding role regional locals can play. Some of the activities carried out by the local have been:

- 1) We obtained 25 radio, television and newspaper interviews, talk shows and news spots for the 1974 campaign. Some of these media spots reached one million people.
- 2) We were able to establish contact and work with the Worcester Gay Union on a Gay Rights Ordinance in Worcester.
- 3) We helped the local UFW support committee build a rally of 150 and a dinner of 400 for a visit by Cesar Chavez.
- 4) An appearance before Local 495 Municipal Employees Union of two of our candidates.
- 5) A campaign rally at Clark University which attracted 20 independents.
- 6) The building of a forum on the Middle East which attracted about thirty people from the Arab community.
- 7) The recruitment of a Black worker and two women members of the IBEW.

- 8) The local is now participating in building a CLUW chapter, running a campaign for city council, and has at least four more contacts who will probably join by the convention.

The importance of the continuance and expansion of such regional work is based upon three simple but fundamental facts:

- 1) The YSA is THE voice of Trotskyism in the regional areas and has the main responsibility in these areas of presenting people with the socialist alternative.
- 2) If the YSA is to become a national organization in the fullest sense of the term, it must expand into the medium-sized industrial cities as well as the larger centers.
- 3) It is in the regional areas that we have the largest leads over our opponents. We have the most highly developed regional apparatus on the left. If we take advantage of and expand this lead, we can cut off our opponents from vast numbers of potential supporters.

What are the concrete means by which we can expand regional work?

- 1) Obviously we must continue and expand the sales of our press and our educational and propaganda work in the regions.
- 2) Regional locals should be aware of political developments in the region and participate in important political activities.
- 3) Close cooperation between the region and the center and constant exchange of information, material, and support. Visits by regional comrades to the center and vice-versa. Especially important are frequent visits by the regional organizer.
- 4) Finally, experienced comrades who wish to stay in the region should not be pressured into centers. Often the lack of successful regional work is due to a lack of experienced comrades, not a lack of opportunities. Much of the work of the Worcester local could not have been accomplished without the experience of some of the comrades.

This document by no means exhausts the reasons why regional work is important, nor the ways in which it can be made more effective. Hopefully, it will serve as an impetus

for discussion in regional locals and centers, which will lead to a strengthening of the role of regional locals across the country.

The coming period must become a period of growth and

strengthening for the YSA. That growth must be healthy, balanced, and truly nationwide. We must realize that an essential and indispensable component of this growth will be the regional local.

November 20, 1974

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE YSA

by Mark Friedman, Brooklyn, N. Y. local

The worldwide development of capitalism and the need for highly educated and skilled labor internationally has been a major factor in the influx of hundreds of thousands of international students into the U. S. Some come to get an education, perhaps paid for by their mother country, only to return home with their new skills, while others immigrate on a permanent basis. But for whatever reason or goal, the existence of such a massive number of international students in the U. S. is of very important concern for the YSA.

In 1960, there were only 34, 000 international students in the U. S. Today there are more than 135, 000, from the following major areas: Far East (51, 000), Near and Middle East (18, 000), Europe (16, 000), Latin America (29, 000), Africa (10, 000), Oceania (2, 000). These figures do not include tens of thousands more who have been given citizenship, or permanent residency status, or are here without papers. These international students attend 1, 734 different schools in all 50 states. About one-half of them are graduate and one-half undergraduate students.

If we added the number of international workers in the U. S., there would clearly be at least 500, 000 people of international origin who we want to reach with our ideas.

Our involvement in the anti-war movement, the Hands off Cuba movement, supporting the rights of Soviet dissidents, the Palestinians' fight to regain their land, and defense of the democratic rights of Chilean political prisoners, are only one aspect of our internationalism.

Another side is our propaganda work, the sales and distribution of The Militant, Young Socialist, Intercontinental Press, and Pathfinder Press, which tell the truth about worldwide events. Still another focus of our work that has been weaker than the above mentioned activities, is the YSA's approach to international students in the U. S.

The rise of the world revolution and corresponding youth radicalization is witnessed by the recent developments in Ethiopia, Portugal, Greece, Thailand, France, etc., and the leading role played in these countries by the students. The political activity of students internationally has had a tremendous effect on American students and international students in the U. S.

The development of the anti-war movement in the U. S., while not involving large numbers of international students, had a profound impact on their consciousness and for many began their radicalization.

In the past couple of years we have seen international students move more into action on the campuses and high schools. First, international students have responded more rapidly and aggressively to such events as the Mideast war, the Coup in Chile, the African liberation movement. Second, governmental attacks on international students such as financial aid cutbacks and the refusal to grant work permits have put them in motion and enabled them to form links with the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and socialist movements. International students have shown their ability to draw other sectors of the American population into action against the U. S. or any other government, particularly the oppressed nationalities and radicalizing youth.

These actions can have a tremendous impact on the U. S. government as well as forcing the U. S. government to adopt a certain attitude toward foreign countries.

For the YSA, the recruitment of international students to Trotskyism is of paramount importance, it is our obligation as supporters of the Fourth International and the world revolution. Our work in this arena is very important because it affords us an opportunity to do international work right on our own high school or college campuses, or in regional areas through the YSA regional teams, regional locals, and regional at-large YSAers.

We must broaden our approach to international student work, think out how we can involve international students in our activities, educate them about our movement and recruit them to Trotskyism. Here are a few suggestions on how to do this.

1) International Defense Campaigns

Our work with the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) and particularly our Chile defense work; working with the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (CAIFI); and various ad hoc committees such as those that we helped organize for the defense of the Haitian Refugees facing deportation, the African Independence struggles, and democratic rights for Soviet Dissidents, are ideal instruments for the involvement of international students in the activities of the YSA. Through these committees we can explain how a defense campaign is built on the basis of civil liberties, why revolutionists support democratic rights and help defend and extend them, the difference between united fronts and popular fronts, the international role of Stalinism, the need for a revolutionary party, etc.

2) Defense of the SWP and YSA

The Political Rights Defense Fund teaches the lessons of how a revolutionary party defends itself from government and right-wing attack, the use of defensive formulations, and the reliance on the masses of people to defend the revolutionary party.

3) Campus Activities of the YSA

International students can and should be involved in almost every activity that the YSA carries out on the campuses and in the high schools. The use of forums with international students speaking with our members are valuable means of extending political dialogue and of portraying the type of organization we are -- multi-national, and supporters of internationalism. Campus struggles against financial aid cutbacks, tuition hikes, right-wing Zionist attacks, or struggles for day care, bi-lingual education, etc., are the best means that we have for showing exactly how a revolutionary youth organization operates on a day-to-day basis. Through our campus work we can further explain the need for a revolutionary youth organization, the importance of the student movement, how to deal with opponents on the left and right, the administration and at times the state apparatus. These actions will also have the effect of dispelling any illusions in the "quality" of American schools and their "free, intellectual and unbiased atmosphere."

4) Election Campaigns

The student government election campaigns and municipal and national election campaigns run by the YSA and SWP respectively help to expose the Democratic and Republican parties off campus and their counterparts on campus as well as teaching the futility of lesser-evilism. The critical support tactic and our attitude towards independent campaigns provide valuable lessons in the dissemination of propaganda. International students should also be encouraged to help in

translations and planning interventions into gatherings of international students.

5) Special Classes and other Activities

The development of a layer of international student sympathizers should be taken as seriously as new YSAers. If the sympathizers are unable to attend YSA meetings for security reasons (and most of them are), a special series of classes should be organized and held on the campus or at someone's home. In Brooklyn, we tried both and found the former to be better, later we incorporated these special classes with YSA contact/new members classes given on campus. These classes are the means by which we can really recruit these people to Trotskyism. Individual discussions are crucial for the theoretical development of these sympathizers who are often unable to hear our best educators or participate in our internal discussions and activities.

It is important for comrades doing work with international students to be aware of their immigrant status. In most countries of the world, it is not safe for these students to directly join radical organizations. They may be victimized by the U. S. government working in collusion with their home countries. This is especially true of colonial and semi-colonial countries and countries with right-wing dictatorships.

The recruitment of international students to Trotskyism (and not necessarily to the YSA because of security restrictions), will undoubtedly increase our insight into our work with international students -- the best forms and techniques of integration, etc. The task for us remains now, the conscious orientation of the YSA to international students, their involvement in our work, and their recruitment to Trotskyism. Herein lies a major contribution to the worldwide socialist revolution that the YSA can make.

November 20, 1974

YOUNG SOCIALIST: PUBLIC FACE OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE
ON MAKING AN EXCELLENT PROPAGANDA FORM EVEN BETTER

by Brian Johnson, Upper West Side, N. Y. local

In October of 1972 the political force of the YSA was strengthened by the inception of the monthly Young Socialist. We had a printed face. Through selling our press we were able to explain basic philosophy, methods and actions of our organization more efficiently than before.

This contribution is not a balance sheet on the YS because I do not believe that there is any need to debate its value as an organizing tool. No discussion of the politics expressed in the YS is put forth here. The goal of the contribution is to correct some blemishes in the editorial policy which inhibit the impact of the politics upon the reader. Criticism will dominate only because affirmation is not included.

It is not possible to convince masses of the desirability of a socialist revolution simply by explaining society and how to change it. The response of people is dependent upon their degree of consciousness and their material conditions. However, anything which is written for masses at a given time with correct politics is not necessarily the best propaganda possible at that time.

When the October 1974 YS came out, I felt awkward about selling it. At the beginning of the month I kept wanting to sell The Militant to the exclusion of the YS. This was not a feeling I have always had. Sometimes I have had a clear preference for selling the YS over The Militant. I noticed the same tendency in other comrades in the Upper West Side Local. (Of course what we do sell is a local-wide political and not a personal decision.) This tendency disappeared in November. I looked over some issues of the YS from last year and discovered that the feeling was the result of the proximity to elections bringing out an unusual concentration of what are, to me, ineffective ways of presenting our views. Three suggestions are made for improving the form of the YS.

1. The Young Socialist should be a clearly distinct and independent voice of the Young Socialist Alliance.

One of the debates before the last YSA convention revolved around the existence of youth groups separate from the revolutionary parties of the Fourth International. We affirmed this dichotomy. A youth movement independent from the party but in political agreement with it acts synergistically in political effect, especially for recruiting. This distinction is sometimes blurred in the pages of the YS. Some examples follow below.

In the June 1974 YS "In Perspective" column, Rebecca Finch, SWP candidate for U. S. Senate from N. Y., de-

scribes her experience as a poll watcher in the May 14 school board elections in District 1. The article is excellent in content but out of place on the editorial page of the YS. Either this article should appear in The Militant of the SWP, or a YSA comrade who was a poll watcher should have written this article in the YS.

This type of contradiction occurs with the most frequency of the year in the October YS. The front page editorial "Vote Socialist Workers in 1974!" is appropriate since this is the most important position of the YSA for the month. Many excellent articles show off the leadership of the YSA in the struggle for socialism, as usual. Support for and work with the SWP are correctly shown. Other articles are out of place. On page 5 an article about YSA member Ollie Bivens, a leader against the fight against racism in Boston, makes no mention of the YSA. Instead, Bivens is constantly referred to as a member of the SWP. This text belongs in The Militant. The goal of the YS is to recruit to the YSA. This goal is more effectively carried out when our work is attributed to us. A caption indicating that Bivens is SWP candidate for Lt. Governor of Massachusetts is adequate to let people know that they can vote for him. But the text of the article concerning the struggle should be written around the work of our YSA comrades.

On page 10 is a great factual article on District 1. No mention of YSA support to or participation in the struggle is made. A statement by the SWP follows. Again, this article belongs in The Militant, campaign paper of the SWP, not in the YS, public voice of the YSA.

These are only a few examples of a marked tendency. The point is that the YS should consistently express the views of the YSA. When articles which appear to be for and by the SWP appear in the YS, an image of a youth group dependent on, and following the line of, the SWP is projected, rather than an image of an independent youth group in political agreement with the SWP. The political content of articles should not be changed, but they should clearly project the ideas of the YSA.

2. Ideas should be presented in a dialectical manner.

The way people think reflects the structure of society. Newspapers generally adapt to the dialectical thinking of people by reporting on actors with their own bias. The reader observes the position of the actor, the position of the medium, and reaches a synthesis; the idea she/he comes away with from the reading. When one reads an article in the N. Y. Times, one often "reads between the lines" which

means adding one's insight to the account of the actor, viewing the Times bias in reporting, and synthesizing the information into one's own view of what occurred. One does not need to be so suspicious of our press since it contains the truth, but it is read in the same way as any article in a bourgeois paper. The thinking process in a reporting article is still a dialectical conflict between the bias of the actor and the medium resulting in a reader's opinion.

When a statement appears in the YS it is also evaluated dialectically. For instance, in an article like "Behind the Energy Crisis," the capitalist view is common knowledge. After reading the socialist perspective, the reader reaches a synthesis.

This structure is violated by certain reporting which tends to occur in the YS, especially around election time. Articles such as "Socialists campaign in East L. A. barrio" on page 4 of the October YS or "Boston socialist slams racist anti-busing drive" on page 5 lose some of their potential readers because they are not constructed dialectically. Raul Gonzales, who clearly agrees completely with Tank Barrera and Mariana Hernandez, reports on their views. He frequently quotes extensively. As a result an important, dramatic struggle appears flat and cold. This is truly "one sided" reporting because there is no conflict between the actor and the medium. If Tank Barrera had written a statement of his views, from the heart of a fighter, a clear dichotomy would be set up between the oppressor and the resistor. The article would be more interesting and the synthesis of the reader might be different.

Similarly, in the article concerning Boston, the reader must see Randi Dolph as a person who slavishly noted the opinions of Ollie Bivens. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our policies are constructed from democratic centralist discussions and decisions. But this is not known by most readers. There is a socially-formed impulse in the reader to fill in the role of the opposition regardless of their opinion on the situation. The dialectical vacuum created by the absence of an antithesis draws the reader into opposition due to the form rather than the content of the article. Why not let Ollie Bivens write "The socialist position on the anti-busing drive"? Ollie Bivens should have no problem explaining his ideas and actions on this situation in a clearly anti-racist manner. But if he does this the reader will compare the racist views, the YSA idea, understand by her/himself that Bivens has attacked the racist position, and decide which position is best. Rather than reading that the "racists" have been "slammed," the reader should see that the anti-busing forces have been discredited and conclude that their position is racist.

The column "YS on the move," had the same one-sided tone. It is self-congratulatory. Anecdotes about how sales went belong in local sales reports or the weekly national

sales letter, but not in the YS.

We have clarified to people that our press is biased just as all media are. While a conscious bias is important in our press, we should never have one-sided reporting simply because it is not effective in conveying our ideas. The two sides in every YS article should be delineated and divergent.

3. Using alienation.

One of the most oppressive aspects of life in capitalist society is alienation. This feeling is created in the individual during socialization in the family unit and perpetuated throughout life. A mirror of the fragmented, unorganized, divided state of the working class; alienation is a powerful and omnipresent means of social control.

The psychic structure of alienation is well stated by Franz Kafka.

"... the world was for me divided into three parts: one in which I, the slave lived under laws that had been invented only for me and which I could, I did not know why, never completely comply with; the second world, which was infinitely remote from mine, in which you lived, concerned with government, with the issuing of orders and with the annoyance about them not being obeyed; and finally a third world where everybody else lived happily and free from orders and from having to obey."

Consciousness raising was effective for the women's movement because it attracted alienated women's attention and it destroyed this structure by showing oppressed women that they were all in the same situation. The next logical step is to fight together to change the situation. The YS needs to attack alienation in the same way more consciously than it has in the past.

An excellent example of using this technique is Jerry Freiwirth's article in the June 1974 YS: "H. S. students speak out on summer job crunch." Unemployed people are constituted by the nature of their position in society to be disorganized, fragmented, alienated. Everybody knew that high school unemployment was widespread but the victims were made emotionally real in the article. Other readers felt less alienated, more in the same "world," and probably read the adjoining article "Socialist solution to youth unemployment," much more carefully than if it had been presented alone. Pairings like in-depth interviews with unemployed workers and an explanation of sliding wages and hours or irrelevance of college courses and the red university strategy might be used. Long articles are desirable. The further down the writer plunges into alienation,

the more the alienated reader identifies with the writer and feels that YSA solutions are answers to her/his problems. We can capitalize on this reservoir of feelings to show how practical a political approach is.

This discussion has been abstract, as I have tried to point out exactly the mechanisms of a sometimes awkward style, but the conclusion is concrete. The Young Socialist is our paper. We want to fill it with our ideas; carefully reasoned politics overlaid on fierce rebellion and resistance to intolerable conditions. We have so much to say about the struggles of youth that we do not need articles from the SWP or articles that belong in The Militant to fill our 16 pages, though we will always make our political support of the SWP clear. We want to have two kinds of articles in our paper:

reports on struggles and statements of policy or analysis. We do not report on our statements because we speak directly to people. We don't draw conclusions for people in headlines or editorializing articles because the plain facts speak for themselves. We don't find it necessary to congratulate ourselves in our paper because we are confident that others will approve our actions when they are presented. We know what oppression is about because we are the oppressed. Our articles reveal an emotional sympathy of the victimization of people coupled with serious, pragmatic transitional programs for solution.

I submit that these changes in the YS will increase its impact upon our readers.

November 23, 1974

A SUGGESTION ON THE USE OF MAPS

by Ben Harris, Nashville local

"The question of maps in our situation -- i. e., in a situation of imperialist encirclement (of the USSR) and growth of the world revolution -- is a very important question of general education." -- Trotsky (Problems of Everyday Life, p. 127)

In our attempts to educate, agitate, and organize we should be conscious of the many tools that can help us communicate both internally and to non-comrades. Geographical maps can be such a tool to aid in our propaganda work -- our work of getting our views out to each other and to other radical young people. While a map may seem like just another "visual aid," it is actually a basic tool of political education that can have an impact beyond that of the miscellaneous charts and diagrams that we tend to associate with the high school or college classroom.

Internal Education

In educating our own cadre in international politics we must place historical and current events in a materialist perspective to make them intelligible. We do this in many ways: we use wars and revolutions as reference points in historical accounts; we may describe a country's policies with reference to its leaders and the class they represent; we often remind the readers of our press of a nation's GNP when discussing its economic life; and we often reference countries by their economic and military alliances such as NATO, the Common Market, or the Warsaw Pact. These efforts at putting international events in perspective take the subjective and objective aspects of the countries involved in an event and structure the information in a way to make the relationships between the countries as comprehensible as possible. One type of information that often needs to be stressed in this way is geographical information -- information about a country's borders, its size relative to other countries, the location of its cities, the location of different nationalities within the country, etc.

The need for geographical information is an obvious feature of any attempt at political education, but certain circumstances may increase this need. The Bolsheviks, for example, made a great effort to inform the masses about their geographical and economic encirclement by the imperialist powers after the October revolution. This task necessitated the use of maps, since a single clearly drawn map of the USSR and its neighbors would allow a person to comprehend a large amount of political information about the relations of the Soviet Union to the rest of Europe. Trotsky spoke of this process by which even an illiterate

peasant could use a map to understand the significance of, say, a report about a European country's changing policies toward the USSR. By seeing concretely the geographical relation of country A to the Soviet Union (and to countries B, C and D), one could more easily understand the changing political relations between these states.

For members of the Young Socialist Alliance in the United States, the need for geographical information is also an important one. Because of a number of factors (the United States borders only two countries, there is a comparatively much longer distance between the U. S. and other non-contiguous countries than there is between European countries, and the U. S. dominates the continent in size, politics and economy), most Americans know very little geography of the rest of the world, especially of the geographical relations between other countries. This often makes it hard for us to understand world political developments either because we are not reminded by geography of the political inter-relationships between countries (e. g., Spain and Portugal), or because we cannot remember within a thousand miles where countries (e. g., Sri Lanka or Kuwait) actually are. This lack of geographical education of all young people in the U. S. is a benefit to the U. S. ruling class since it allows them to manipulate our political perceptions by either fostering a chauvinistic ignorance of other countries and thus of their political crises (e. g., Puerto Rico, Haiti), or by suddenly confronting us with geographical and political realities (e. g., Cuban "missile crisis"), as an attempt to whip up a nationalist frenzy.

Most importantly for us as members of the YSA, geographical education is crucial for our ability to relate to current events. Two examples have recently highlighted this need for me, and I think that they may be familiar to other comrades. First, after the coup in Chile last year, I read some articles about the increasing encirclement of Argentina by countries with reactionary governments. This analysis brought up the question of the relationship between the geography of Latin America and the overall imperialist strategy of isolating progressive or even superficially anti-imperialist countries. Unfortunately, my conception of Latin America did not include the knowledge needed to see this sort of pattern as it existed. By contrast, some foreign-born students I encountered seemed to have a much better grasp of the political relations between countries like Brazil, Chile, and Argentina because they could visualize their geographical inter-relationships.

A second example of what I believe to be a common geo-

graphical ignorance came up in relation to the coup in Greece. On consulting an atlas I was amazed to see how close Greece is to the workers states of East Europe. Because I knew little about European geography and because Greece had been under a reactionary regime for as long as I had been politically conscious, I had somehow ignored its proximity to the workers states (e. g., Albania). Although I knew something of its political history, I had missed seeing the instability of the now overthrown regime because I was unclear about its relation to the rest of Europe. While the examples of Greece and Argentina may be idiosyncratic to me, they are meant to illustrate the need for use of geographical information (especially shown by maps) in our internal education.

Propaganda Work

Besides their importance for internal education, maps can be an important part of the YSA's propaganda work. We can use maps to communicate our understanding of world politics to radical youth in the U. S. who have often been insulated by the chauvinistic education dispensed in schools and by the lies of the bourgeois media. In contrast to many of our opponents on the left, we are truly international in our perspective and our propaganda techniques should show this. Maps are one way of indicating our understanding that U. S. capitalism is international, that imperialism and inter-imperialist competition are international, and that the revolutionary movement must be international.

One example of the impact that maps can have in our propaganda work is provided by the Pathfinder Press edition of Israel: A Colonial Settler State, by Maxime Rodinson. In the appendix of that book there are four maps of the Arab East, from before 1947 to 1967. On these maps the expansion of Israel is clearly shown as a dark mass getting larger and larger on each successive map. By taking the historical development of Israel back before 1947 and by representing it on a map, this book produces an image of increasing physical growth that conveys a political message in a very powerful, visual manner. The usefulness of this representation of Israel's expansion was shown in Nashville by an Iranian student that we see occasionally on campus. After last year's October war, this student carried Rodinson's book around with him and would often pull it out and use the maps in the back to help him make political points in arguments with Zionists around our literature tables. While our analysis of Israel is much more than a summary of its physical growth, we should take a lesson from this Iranian and use maps to help us get this aspect of our propaganda across.

Besides Israel, a number of countries whose outlines are already familiar enough can be used to dramatically represent the country itself -- the U. S., Vietnam, Korea. Also, the continent of Africa is easily recognizable in outline. Because of people's ability to recognize these areas, their

silhouettes are effective symbols for the countries or continents that they represent and often can be used as such (e. g., our recent "Portugal Out of Africa" button, some of our recent convention banners, and the May 1973 cover of the YS). Because of the often greater impact of visual symbols versus verbal ones, they can be an effective tool in our public work, helping to get our ideas across in the clearest manner and with the most impact.

A Suggestion

In considering our internal and external education, it seems as if both of these areas of work could greatly benefit from increased attention to the use of maps. Two recent major regional educational activities in Atlanta are cases in point. The first was an educational conference that included one talk on the prospects for African liberation. While this talk was very well presented and was a comprehensive review of current African politics, the lack of a simple map of Africa made it unnecessarily hard to follow and made it impossible for most comrades to visualize the inter-relationships between the many African countries discussed. With countries whose politics range from those of Rhodesia to those of Algeria or Tanzania, the geographical relations in Africa are very important (e. g., liberation movements in country A are usually based in countries B or C, and this effects the countries' relations), and could have been easily seen from a map hung near the speaker.

During this last summer there was another major regional educational event that pointed out the need for maps -- a special weekend of the Atlanta summer school. This weekend featured a series of talks on the post-war transformations in Eastern Europe, given by the National Education Director of the Socialist Workers Party. Although these classes were very informative and politically important, the lack of maps to accompany the presentation seemed to reduce many comrade's ability to process this information. This seemed to be a result of first, the difficulty of keeping straight the detailed information about the history of five or six closely related countries, and second, the difficulty of integrating this information into an understanding of Eastern Europe as a whole. If this conference had included a map simply showing the outlines of the countries discussed, it seems as if the information would have been better understood by most comrades. For example, if one could associate information about a country's history with an image of the country itself, it could help to keep the histories of half a dozen countries straight in one's head. Also, if one could see the geographical relations between East European countries and between them and the USSR, some political events would begin to make sense just on the basis of this geographical information.

I would like to suggest that large, easy-to-read maps be included in presentations on subjects such as the two mentioned above. In Nashville we have recently tried including

maps where useful -- for instance for a talk on "Which Way for the Middle East." We used large scale copies of the maps in the appendix to Rodinson's book, plus a larger-scale map of the area from Libya east to Iran, including some of the north shore of the Mediterranean (Greece and Turkey). Although it took some trial and error to get the maps large enough and the borders drawn broadly enough, the result was helpful to our speakers in getting some of their points across. From this positive experience of ours and the negative experience of sitting through talks that were unnecessarily confusing because of the lack of maps, I would urge comrades on YSA educational and forum committees to consider using maps when possible and appropriate. It is our duty as a revolutionary youth organization to breathe some new life into often dull educational conferences that we hold in conjunction with the Socialist Workers Party.

In using maps for political education there are a couple of mistakes that should be avoided. The first is the mistake of emphasizing maps to the extent that they detract from the political presentation that they're supposed to assist. This can occur if maps are used in an overly intellectual or elitist way -- e.g., if they say "You can't understand this talk unless you can understand this complicated set of maps."

Comrades who prepare maps should remember that maps need to illustrate important geographical relationships in as simple a manner as possible rather than making political points in themselves. Thus, if someone doesn't understand a particular map at a forum it wouldn't detract from understanding the forum speaker's presentation.

Another mistake that can result from over-reliance on maps and on geographical information is the over-emphasis on objective political factors at the expense of the subjective. Maps represent countries by representing their borders, cities, roads, etc., rather than by the combativity of the country's population or the existence of a revolutionary party in a particular country. Because of this expression of objective factors, maps often exaggerate the extent to which events such as changing the name of a country (e.g., Zaire), or the winning of formal independence for a country (e.g., Mozambique), are a sign of revolutionary change. This feature of geographical information increases the need for maps to be accompanied by a political evaluation of wars, coups, and other events that can change the features on a map but often do not coincide with changes in social relations in the relevant countries.

November 23, 1974

ON THE YSA'S LABOR SUPPORT WORK

by Rich Stuart, San Francisco local

At our last convention in Chicago, the YSA reaffirmed the document, "The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International." The June 1973 plenum of the National Committee adopted the general line of Andy Rose's balance sheet of the youth radicalization, reprinted in the international discussion entitled "The Red University Strategy vs. the Irreversible Turn" (IIDB, Vol. X #19).

The events of the past year have more than confirmed our orientation and perspectives for the youth radicalization. This is particularly clear with regard to the relationship of students to the struggles of the labor movement. We have consistently held that the YSA has played an important role in answering the questions hotly debated during the rise of the youth radicalization: "What should be the direction and objectives of student struggles?", "What program should the vanguard put forward for the student movement?", and "What kind of relationship should the student movement seek with the struggles of the working class?"

The marked rise in labor struggles this year, aimed at holding off the attacks on the standard of living, has given us a new opportunity to again aggressively answer these questions.

This rise in labor militancy has important implications for our work on the campuses and in the high schools. As Rose's document points out:

An upsurge of the working class does not mean that other oppressed groups will step back in deference to its power. Quite the contrary. An upsurge of the working class inspires and spurs on others who have an interest in fighting capitalism. It stirs their feelings of revolt and hatred against their oppressors. It gives them renewed courage and a sense of power and breaks down their hesitations about fighting back.

Rose continues:

There can be no doubt that, as the working class does radicalize, its actions will be decisive in orienting and heading its allies in other layers of the population. But there is no basis or reality for forecasting that, as big workers' struggles unfold, the radicalized students, women, oppressed nationalities, layers of the petty-bourgeoisie or

other groups will lose interest in fighting for demands of specific concern to them (IIDB, Vol. X, #19 p. 14).

Students have without a doubt felt the crunch of inflation, cutbacks, and declining living standards, either through holding down a job (which more and more students are doing), increased difficulty in parents' ability to subsidize school costs, or the drastic tightening of loans, grants and other forms of student financial aid. We don't have to spend as much time explaining that things are bad and getting worse. While the capitalist apologists are trying to convince people that the system can work, we have to explain the socialist alternative as the only alternative to the decaying and irrational capitalist system.

The worsening economic situation and subsequent battles between labor and capital have opened the eyes of millions of students to the fact that workers and students are lining up against the same enemy. Students are beginning to see the sleeping giant awakening and flexing its muscles. And unlike previous years, there are fewer discussions about whether the working class has any power, and even fewer on whether there is a working class at all. The sight of workers battling the bosses is an impressive and inspiring one to radicalized students, women, Blacks, and Chicanos. The formation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists adds to the respect the labor movement is winning.

The strategy of the red university links the demands and struggles of the students to the overall class struggle. The job of the YSA is to convince students to side with and struggle alongside the working class. The worldwide youth radicalization document says:

The revolutionary youth vanguard, to be effective, must put forward a program that transcends the campus in its goal, but at the same time includes it; that connects student demands with the broader demands of the class struggle on a national and international scale, that shows students how their own demands relate to these bigger struggles, are an integral part of them, and can help to advance them. The program put forward by the revolutionary youth must tie together the long-range perspectives and daily work of a revolutionist in the school arena. The program put forward by the revolutionary youth is one that mobilizes for struggle around the basic

issues of the world class struggle and the needs of the student population itself.

The YSA in San Francisco was able to take advantage of two developments in order to educate students and win them to the side of the trade union movement.

The city workers' strike last spring won wide support and verged at one point on spreading to a citywide general strike. Support for the strike was widespread, in spite of a campaign by the media to turn the 'public' against it. Picketing was very effective. Pickets hit city transportation, the Bay Area commuter busing, the docks, city offices, hospitals, sewage plants, museums, etc. The strike was a real display of the power of the organized trade union movement.

In spite of the impressive solidarity of labor, it was never clear that the strike would be victorious. The media repeatedly stepped up its campaign against the strike. They blamed the strikers for totally disrupting the city and causing great inconvenience. This hysteria succeeded in causing some confusion on the part of students and some resentment toward the strike. Many students rely on public transportation to get to school, so they were often suckered by the lies of the media.

The YSA called for an outdoor rally at San Francisco State to win support for the strike and do a lot of educating on what the strike was all about. We got the Associated Students (student government) and the campus local of the United Professors of California to cosponsor the rally, along with the Young Socialists for Rodriguez, and called it for the following day. We invited the unions on strike to send representatives to the rally, and both the city workers (SEIU) and the bus drivers (TWU) sent speakers. The rally was literally built in a matter of hours and 400 people came. Following the scheduled speakers we opened the microphone for discussion from the crowd. Students asked a lot of questions to clarify the issues of the strike, rightwingers attacked the strike, and comrades spoke as YSAers and SWP campaign supporters defending the strike, linking the strike to issues concerning students, and urging students to support the strike.

Although the YSA didn't try to dominate the rally, before it was over it was clear to anyone with a head on their shoulders that the YSA had produced the rally. The representatives of the unions were impressed with our sincerity and the success of the rally. Our opponents were stunned. The whole thing hit them like a bolt of lightning. While they stood on the sidelines mouthing empty workerist rhetoric, the YSA had done something to concretely defend a workers' struggle.

The city workers strike lasted ten days and ended in a big victory for the strikers. This fall the Chamber of Commerce retaliated by having the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco put a measure on the ballot (Proposition L) that would have destroyed collective bargaining for city workers.

The unions initiated the Citizens United Against Proposition L, whose sole purpose was the defeat of Proposition L. The Chamber of Commerce waged a big campaign for a "Yes" vote on L. The theme of the bosses' campaign was that city workers were paid inflationary wages by the tax money of other lower paid people in San Francisco. The myth of the \$17,000 a year streetsweeper was created. The billboards of the Chamber of Commerce read, "For 'Sweeping Reform', Yes on L." The labor bureaucrats did little to mobilize their ranks in a massive way against this demagoguery.

Proposition L would have meant the difference between stronger city unions or driving back the union movement. A large number of city workers are Blacks and women who, according to the Chamber of Commerce, were overpaid at \$500 a month.

The YSA decided that a campus debate on Proposition L would give us another opportunity to explain to students the relevance of this labor struggle to their interests. The Proposition L campaign took place in a much different atmosphere than the spring strike. The tension and sense of urgency did not exist. It seemed to many students that Proposition L didn't affect them much, if at all.

The debate was set up between a representative of the Chamber of Commerce, the research director of the SEIU, and Nat Weinstein, the SWP candidate for Congress. The debate was billed as "Labor vs. the Chamber of Commerce." The publicity was paid for by the labor movement. It was designed and distributed by the YSA. The leaflet explained the effect of Proposition L on Black workers, women workers, the unions, and we explained the necessity for students to oppose Proposition L as part of the fight against the attack on the living standards of students and workers by big business.

The debate was broadly sponsored and very successful. The Chamber of Commerce speaker repeatedly burst into loud harangues against the audience for being biased, close-minded, and not conducting the debate in an "academic atmosphere." He made our job very easy. The SEIU representative patiently explained why students should help to defeat Proposition L. He urged students to base their decision on who they wanted to run the city of San Francisco. Virtually everyone was won to the side of the unions, and the Chamber of Commerce representative left in a huff.

One week after the debate, a member of SEIU working in the anti-Proposition L office called the YSA for help in

getting publicity in the campus press and more literature out on the campus. He had been told by the campus paper that if he wanted help against Proposition L he should call the YSA. The YSA was one of many sponsors of the debate, but it was once again clear who was seriously behind the fight against Proposition L on the campus.

The rise in labor militancy will continue, and our task is to establish the YSA in the eyes of radicalizing students as the best defenders and supporters of workers struggles. Our ability to do this will put us in a greatly strengthened position to build and intervene in even bigger battles that are on the agenda as capitalism continues to deteriorate.

The edge we now have on our opponents could prove critical in future struggles. But in order to maintain this edge we have to have more comrades on campuses across the country. To do the most effective labor support work, to best build student struggles and link them to the fight of the working class, and to build the YSA, we need a strong campus base. In San Francisco we could have done more work around the city workers' strike, the Proposition L campaign, and the miners' strike had we had more comrades at San Francisco State.

The situation will demand a more and more aggressive orientation to the rise in labor militancy. The work of the YSA and the SWP in the antiwar, women's, Black, and Chicano movements has earned us great respect among some sections of the trade union movement. We should not underestimate the openings that we will be able to take advantage of, or the willingness of the union movement to welcome our support on the campuses. The truckers' comments about learning how to protest from the student movement were no fluke. That is a common sentiment now among more and more workers. We are the strongest radical organization on the campuses, and we should think that way. When the labor movement flexes its muscles we should flex ours too, because as the worldwide youth radicalization document says:

Whoever succeeds in winning the allegiance of the most intelligent and devoted activists among the rebel youth holds the key to the future. For they will play a major role in making history and deciding the destiny of mankind for the rest of the twentieth century.

November 28, 1974

SOME QUESTIONS AND CRITICISMS ON THE STUDENT ORIENTATION OF THE YSA

by Darren Crown, East Lansing local

I. Roots of the YSA's Student Orientation

The events of the late '60s and early '70s verified the American Trotskyist movement's contention that students are playing an ever increasing role in the class struggle. The YSA's response to this student radicalization was to center its work entirely on those campus struggles and to link them with the struggles of the working class.

Because of this work our movement experienced new growth and expansion, while the small groups of sectarians, Maoists and abstentionists were yapping at our heels, reciting their workerist lines, dooming themselves to becoming even smaller.

Our movement understood that students were coming closer and closer to the working class, and that with the aid of the YSA and the SWP, we would link their struggles to those of the working class. The creation of the red university strategy laid the foundation for just such a linkage to occur.

However, the working class was slow to respond to the student radicalization, and by the time the union movement's pro-war stand had been broken down, the scope of the student radicalization had greatly diminished, thus testifying to a coming lull in both of these struggles. It did, however, foretell of just such a linkage to occur during the next upsurge.

II. Role of Students in the Socialist Revolution

This role of students is still relatively new. Since the beginning of capitalist society in America, students were deeply rooted in the ruling class. They were, in fact, the sons and daughters (only much later) of the bourgeoisie.

However, with the advent of greater technology in production, it became necessary for the ruling class to keep the working class technologically in step. So the universities were opened to the sons and daughters of the working class. Students were no longer the elite group they once were. On the contrary, they had come much closer to the working class, in composition, in combativity, and in their basic opposition to this system.

This meant that, for the ruling class as well as the working class, students had a greater social weight. But, this of course did not make students a class, revolutionary or otherwise, but they had become a powerful potential ally of the workers. The error of the student powerists lay in their be-

lief that students would be able to change society without the working class. They were found lacking when, at the height of the student upsurge, no revolution materialized.

III. The American Situation Today

Students today are continuing to radicalize, even though this radicalization is not being reflected as much by the mass mobilizations characteristic of the beginning of the '70s. However, a new factor has been added: this time the working class is beginning to move, and this motion is centered mainly around the young working class.

The Yankelovich survey showed the birth and development of this young worker radicalization. It reported on the growing consciousness among the young workers, but it also told of their lack of clarity in regard to their struggles; they know why they want to change society, but they don't know how. The radicalization of these young workers shall prove fertile ground for the Trotskyist movement and the YSA, if we are willing to approach their struggles and assert our revolutionary program. However, we are at the moment, "ham-strung" by an orientation striving to make the YSA a strictly student organization, an orientation which would allow these opportunities to pass our movement by.

IV. The YSA Student Orientation

As I have said, our work in the student movement was, and shall continue to be a chief factor in expanding the YSA's influence in radical politics, in the student movement itself, and will help maintain our growth in numbers. The decision to immerse ourselves entirely in the student struggle was a correct one. We observed where the radicalization was, and we decided our action from there.

However, now the radicalization no longer rests solely on the students. Again, we must reevaluate our situation, and the character of the radicalization and, again we must decide our activities accordingly.

A number of arguments have come out against such a re-evaluation, among them the belief that the YSA is an organizer of students, and the role of the SWP shall be to organize the working class. The perpetrators of this argument have let show their lack of historical vision. The YSA is not an organizer of students, that is, it is not beyond a certain point. Our role is to organize and educate radicalizing youth, unsure if they are going to dedicate the rest of their lives to

the emancipation of humankind. The YSA is the youth cadre builder of the revolutionary party. As a result, a good proportion of YSAers join the SWP, the organizer and the nucleus of the vanguard of the proletariat.

Therefore our labors cannot be limited to a certain section, or milieu of youth. It would be equally an error to do the reverse of our present orientation, to pass over the students, and center our work in the young worker's movement. We must strike a balance, placing our emphasis on where we can make the most gains at a given moment. In the present period our work is with the students, but the present period demands that we do preparatory work in the young proletariat on the scale that we have done with high school work. As the situation changes, we can decide where to place the most emphasis accordingly.

However, I am told that we can help radicalize the young working class by strike support from the campuses. What shall happen to the young worker we may recruit? Do we ask them to come back to campus, as we have done in numerous other occasions? The idea of student support of workers struggles is a correct one when part of a whole plan of action. I consider it necessary to regard support from students as only a part of our work because I don't believe that it is the YSA's policy to do things from the outside. I think we should be a part of those struggles, to recruit from them, and not to window shop; giving our support to the struggle, and then leaving after it's over, leaving no lasting influence there. Any worker comrades should remain in their work places, talking politics, selling our press and building our campaigns.

Our role is not one of student organization, just as much as it is not of worker organization, we are a youth organization; young worker and student alike. This trifling over words is of extreme importance.

V. Some Proposals

If one is convinced, to a certain extent with the theoretical side to my argument, then how does the YSA implement this idea?

We can start by preparing ourselves for work in the young working class, keeping a watchful eye on recruitment. Some of the ways we may be able to recruit some of these radicalizing young proletarians are to do strike support work and in the meantime talk politics with younger strikers, sales of our press at a plant where there has been a strike, etc.

I am not calling for the YSA to center its activities on the young working class. Our eyes should now look to the students as our best recruitment ground. We should not, however, consider the student milieu the end-all and be-all area of our work. We should consider it in the light of present circumstances.

There is the case of the Detroit YSA, which out of its approximately 30 members, has less than 10 comrades on the Wayne State University fraction. This should be corrected. We should build up those locals with little or no campus base.

Obviously I am not calling for the YSA to withdraw its forces from the campuses. I am only calling for the YSA to build up our young worker base as that milieu begins to radicalize. Before this is possible, we must cease to consider the YSA a student group (or trying to be so.) We must consider it a revolutionary communist youth organization aiming to build the revolutionary party, that is building the worker's conquest of power -- the Socialist Workers Party. We must consider our work as the building of working class and student struggles.

November 29, 1974

by Andy Farrand, Upper West Side, N. Y. local

One of the gravest tests of a revolutionary organization is its ability to shift gears and adjust to changes in the political climate. One by one our opponents on the left are becoming trapped in stagnant pools left on the wayside as the mainstream of the radicalization shifts its form. None of these organizations could find their way to the masses during the antiwar movement. None of them were able to absorb the political life of the masses into their blood. If they could not locate the masses of American people when one million were marching in the streets then how can they now hope to find them when their political movement has become a bit less covert?

The story of the YSA is the exact opposite. Through the antiwar movement we cemented an infant bond between the YSA and the radicalizing American youth. By means of this bond we entered the mainstream of American political life and we have proven since that we are here to stay. It is precisely because we absorbed the antiwar movement into our whole existence that we know where the masses are today, that we are able to speak with them, organize and struggle with them. Our transition in work and organization from the antiwar movement to the present period, being done as smoothly and professionally as it is, is historically one of the most exemplary actions. We, together with the Socialist Workers Party, have shown the way to constructing a revolutionary vehicle which can shift its gears and progress with the masses over any and all political terrain.

While the YSA has made a smooth transition in its work, it has not been problem-free. Adjustment to a new political period must be measured not only in terms of the organization as a whole but also in terms of the individual membership. Certainly it is well understood throughout our ranks that mass upsurges do not continue forever; that they run their course and are followed by a period of decline in mass activity. But this understanding should not be translated into a feeling that the period following the upsurge is cast in a negative light. Individual comrades have sometimes drawn a comparison between the antiwar movement and this period and have viewed this period as an unfortunate stage through which we must go. This is certainly understandable. The massive mobilizations of May 1970 and April 24th cast large and impressive shadows on their aftermath. But we, as scientific socialists, must use the light of Marxist analysis to illuminate the shadow and examine closely what goes on beneath it. We must cut through the comparison with the antiwar movement and understand that this period is not merely an "aftermath;" it is not a hangover produced by the heights of the antiwar movement. It is, instead, a period of decisive, literally decisive, developments in the political consciousness and organization of the American people.

While Marxists have always understood that the best school for the masses is in the street, we have never maintained that mass actions form the totality of the revolutionary school for the working class and its allies. Just as history decisively demonstrated the folly of spontaneity so too it has shown that it is impossible for the masses while in action to absorb all of the necessary lessons posed by a political movement. The activity and speed of events during a mass upsurge tend to accelerate past the accumulation of knowledge by the masses. A great unevenness in development occurs between the first hand experience of a mass upsurge and the depth in consciousness of the masses. This is most graphically seen in the contrast between the strike activity of May 1970 and the level of the students' understanding of their role and the university's role in society and political movements. Certainly another example is that while millions of American people actively opposed the bipartisan Vietnam war, the majority of these activists remain chained in the electoral arena to the two war-making parties.

It is this unevenness which to a great extent constrains a certain mass movement within particular boundaries and determines just how far it will go. For the radicalization to progress and launch new mass movements which drive even deeper into the heart of the capitalist state it is necessary for the masses to overcome the boundaries imposed by the unevenness. This can only be done by the masses sitting back, sifting through the experience of the movement, drawing conclusions and absorbing them deep within their consciousness. This is a crucial process; the foundation of the radicalization is being extended and the basis for new mass movements built. If the correct lessons are not absorbed the radicalization will step out into a shaky foundation, always in danger of being thrown back. Very simply, the degree of accumulation of knowledge during such "study periods" will determine the future of the radicalization and whether it is strong enough to march into a revolution. Such is how Trotsky viewed like periods in the progression of events leading to the Russian Revolution.

"The immediate causes of the events of a revolution are changes in the state of mind of the conflicting classes. The material relations of society merely define the channel within which these processes take place. Changes in the collective consciousness have naturally a semi-concealed character. Only when they have attained a certain degree of intensity do the new moods and ideas break to the surface in the form of mass activities which establish a new, although again very unstable, social equilibrium. The development of a revolution lays bare at each new stage the problem of power, but only to disguise it again immediately afterward -- until the

hour of a new exposure." (History of the Russian Revolution; Vol. II; p. 243).

Thus history and our analysis of it demonstrates that it is incorrect to view the present period as merely a quiet aftermath of the mass upsurges. The radicalization is not marking time; it is taking very careful but crucial steps forward. And such a development deserves, requires, our talents and energy as much as the antiwar movement.

This learning process, however, is not guaranteed. Blind or sighted fate will not insure that the masses become armed with the correct ideas during this period. As such the role of the party and the YSA is indispensable. We are the only ones who are capable of providing the masses with the answers they are seeking. The degree to which we are able to reach the American working class with our analysis and proposals will be directly responsible for the degree to which this period is successful in strengthening the radicalization. Every particle of education, agitation, and organization which we do during this period will extend the boundaries of the next mass explosion just that much further.

We intervened in the antiwar movement with the entire guts of our organization because we understood the importance those mass mobilizations played in the schema of the world radicalization. Our orientation has been and should continue to be no less aggressive in the undertaking of the tasks presented by this period. Our entire cadres should become sharpened as professional propagandists of the socialist program just as our entire cadres became professionally skilled as activists in the antiwar movement. Active sales and campaigning are by necessity the central trademarks of a Bolshevik doing his or her work in this period. If there is correct comparison to be drawn between the antiwar movement and the present period, it is this. The figures which tell the story of our victorious sales drive and tremendously successful election campaigns are every bit as important historical landmarks in the march to the third American revolution as the figures which tell the story of May 1970 or April 24th.

There is yet another aspect which needs to be spoken of in order to present an adequate picture of this period. When the masses are sifting through the lessons of a political movement they do not study in a library. Their education occurs in the midst of the political mainstream. Impression and insights gained from past political movement are constantly being refined by their collision with the great and small events of the present day. As the distillation process continues, the masses constantly take their consciousness into forays against the capitalist class, testing it, equipping and

strengthening themselves. Through the numerous small and localized actions the masses extract and absorb the deepest lessons, step up their organization and train leading activists for the next major mobilizations. This is one of the very crucial aspects of struggles like the construction workers' fight at CCNY, the Boston busing struggle or campaigns against cop terror. Through our intervention in these "backyard" struggles we are able to directly influence literally thousands of potential leading activists in the coming mass explosions. This is a tremendous advantage which we, as Trotskyists, and the working class as a whole now possess. Such an advantage, produced by our intervention in the antiwar movement, was not present prior to the mobilizations of the '60s.

There is no better way to express the tasks of this period than the theme of the Oberlin conference, "educate, agitate and organize." We need to continue to professionalize our propaganda offensive from our national apparatus to each individual comrade's participation. We must insure that every inch of fertile ground in the American proletariat is sown with the seeds of our ideas. Our talents must be energetically applied and sharpened at every outbreak of the class struggle with a determination to push the struggle forward and deepen their impact on the participants.

There is no better way to express the optimism this period deserves than to say that never before have revolutionary socialist ideas made so much sense to so many people. This is not an unfortunate period, an aftermath, which we must wade through until the real business of revolutionaries begins. In fact it is a fortunate period, very fortunate. We are fortunate that the radicalization is marching forward; that the masses are strong enough to produce a period in which they can so carefully equip themselves. Our comrades in Chile have not been so fortunate.

As activists instead of windbags there is no doubt that nothing could move YSAers more than the sight of millions in the streets in independent action against the capitalist state. But as conscious Marxists instead of romantics we must also realize that the masses take some of their most crucial steps forward in bland and almost silent ways. The American working class is now presented with the opportunity to make giant strides toward becoming in terms of ideas and organization the most heavily armed working class in history. That is precisely why revolutionaries should embrace this period and not wish it away.

November 29, 1974

SOME CRITICISMS OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST

by Steve Millen, Bloomington local

The Young Socialist newspaper has shown numerous limitations in its usefulness to the building of the YSA. I feel that comrades tend to overestimate its quality, and that many of their arguments in defense of the YS, beside being poor, often imply that the role of the YS is neither well defined nor well thought out.

A common argument used in defense of the YS, is, "It's our newspaper, it emphasizes the YSA and its activities, etc., etc." Actually, every YSAer I talk to in Bloomington and most of those elsewhere seem to rely on and identify with The Militant far more than the YS. This is no mere aside, for the Young Socialist in actuality offers very little which cannot be found in considerably better form in The Militant. The problem is that the newspaper format works quite poorly for a monthly periodical, especially when there is a weekly periodical, twice its size, covering basically the same topics and events with much greater currency and detail. When one looks through most new issues of the YS you get a strong sense of *de ja vu*, mostly because you've read about most of the things written about in the YS in an issue of The Militant two or three weeks ago.

That the YS often covers much of the same ground as The Militant but is written for and aimed at an audience on a lower political level than The Militant seems to be generally accepted throughout the YSA. Comrades justify this on the grounds that the role of the YS is different from that of The Militant, that the YS is for introducing our ideas to people new to them. As a result, these comrades continue, the YS is easier to sell and serves as an excellent recruitment tool. But, to the contrary, not only can the same be said about The Militant (it's good for introducing people to our ideas, is easy to sell, is a good recruitment tool), but these assets appear to be exaggerated out of proportion. Just from the Michigan-Indiana region, for example, I have noticed that the locals with exemplary YS sales have had poor recruitment records, while Bloomington, with its abysmal YS sales has had an exemplary recruitment record (11 since Oberlin) and none of it in any way from sales of the YS. Granted, the other locals have "exceptional circumstances" but I think it should be pointed out that the YS is only one of several recruitment tools the YSA has and its real record has been mixed.

Deliberately gearing the Young Socialist to a lower political level than The Militant is a mistake. Our press is supposed to be a collective educator, organizer and agitator but I'm afraid that current YS policy tends to mute its role as organizer and educator and consequently blunts its role as agitator. True, we should always gear our press and propaganda with the political novice in mind but in the case of the YS we too often use this as an excuse to substitute sloppy and simplistic formulations for the type of analysis and argumentation needed to win people to our ideas.

Another problem, a problem largely arising out of the Young Socialist's monthly schedule and 16-page format, is that the average issue is mostly filled with short (1/4 to 3/4 page) articles concerning various political issues, giving the YS the appearance of being a capsulized version of The Militant. While size inevitably poses many of these dilemmas, I think that the YS should remain as a newspaper but get away from most of this problem. I think it would be a great step forward if the Young Socialist were to become "more like The Militant" in terms of tone and rhetoric while "less like The Militant" in matters of content, types of articles, topics and themes. Articles of greater length and depth, they should constitute a basic core of the Young Socialist, although not its entirety. The February, 1974, and, to a lesser extent, July-August, 1974, issues are concrete examples of what I'd like to see more of. While reporting on the burning issues of the day, the YS should try not to cover as many different topics as it can stuff into one paper, but focus in and highlight on issues from a different angle, in a way that they provide "something you can't get in The Militant." Examples of what the YS needs as the rule rather than the exception is the September article on the Supreme court ruling on busing, the October issue's centerfold on the student movement today and Cannon's article on the significance of the October revolution.

Finally, the criticisms and recommendations I raise here is only a small part of a wider and broader discussion necessary to adopt or reject any changes in the Young Socialist. What is really needed is to have a questionnaire on the Young Socialist given out at the convention similar to the one on The Militant we received at Oberlin.

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