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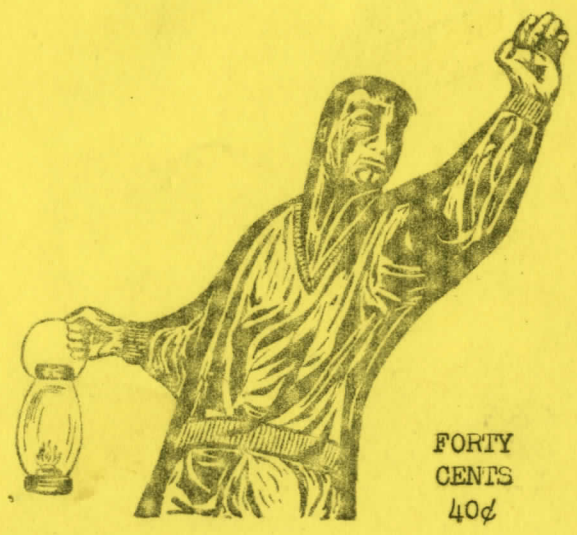
YOUNG SOCIALIST FORUM

April
1960

To the Delegates
at the Founding Conference
of the Young Socialist Alliance,
Comradely Greetings!

Volume III - Number 3
(Whole Number 9)

Young Socialist Forum
box 471, Cooper Station
New York 3, N.Y.



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CENTS
40¢

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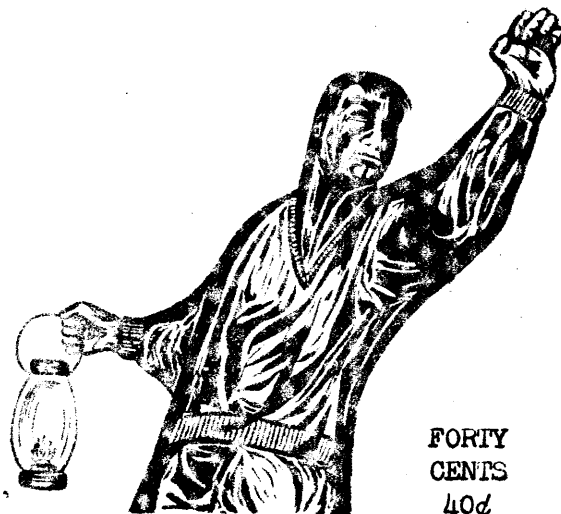
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(draft) CONSTITUTION OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

Article I. NAME

The name of this organization shall be the YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE, hereinafter referred to as the YSA.

Article II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

"The Young Socialist Alliance is founded in response to the need for a nation-wide youth organization capable of bringing revolutionary socialist ideas to a new generation. This is necessary for building a revolutionary movement which can lead the working class to socialism. The YSA bases itself on the traditions of marxian socialism pioneered by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Liebknecht. We believe that socialism can be initiated only as the result of struggle, international in scope, of the working class against the capitalist class - the struggle culminating in the creation of a new type of state, a workers' state. Socialism means that for the first time in history man will control his own creation - society - rather than be controlled by it. The dynamic of socialism is of a continual expansion of human freedom in all spheres: in politics, economics, culture and in every aspect of personal life."

from the (draft) Founding Declaration of the YSA

Article III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership in the YSA is open to those young people who agree with the Statement of Purpose and who accept the program and policies of the YSA. *Repeal of the wording of non-membership in any unit political party.*

Section 2. Applicants for membership shall be voted on by the local unit in their locale. In those areas where no unit exists, applicants shall be passed on by the National Executive Committee (NEC) and if accepted, be given the status of member-at-large.

Section 3. Every member shall belong to a local unit if such exists in the area. Exceptions to this policy may be made only by the NEC. Members-at-large shall be directly responsible to the NEC for the conduct of their political work. *Repeal*

Section 4. Each new member shall pay one dollar initiation fee which shall be forwarded to the National Office. Membership dues are a minimum of fifty cents a month and all of this minimum amount shall be forwarded to the National Office.

Section 5. Any member more than one month in arrears in dues ceases to be in good standing. Only members in good standing may vote or hold office in the YSA. Any member more than three months in arrears in dues shall be dropped from YSA membership after a ~~warning~~ *notification*.

Section 6. Members shall be guided in their political work by the program and policies of the YSA. In pursuing their work they may not take action which is in contradiction with YSA program or policies.

Section 7. YSA program and policies in all areas, institutions and organizations shall be carried out by the members in that situation acting as an organized body and subject to the decisions of higher bodies of the YSA.

Article IV. NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Section 1. The YSA shall meet annually in a delegated National Conference. The National Conference is the highest body of the YSA.

Section 2. The National Conference shall be called by the National Committee (NC) which shall provide for a pre-conference discussion period of at least ninety days in issuing the conference call. The ninety day period shall begin only when the principal majority resolutions have been published.

Section 3. The pre-conference discussion shall include the publication by the NEC of national membership bulletins containing all resolutions and discussion material submitted by members and bodies of the YSA. Local units have the responsibility of providing adequate time in meetings for discussion on all material submitted for conference decision.

Section 4. In the event a special, emergency National Conference is called, the length of the pre-conference discussion period may be reduced.

Section 5. The election of conference delegates shall take place in local units. The ratio of delegates to members shall be set by the NC in the conference call. Only those who were YSA members before the conference call and who are in good standing at the time of delegates' election may vote for or run as delegates. Units may elect alternate delegates.

Section 6. Where there is a political division in electing delegates, election shall take place on the basis of a proportional representation system as set by the NC in the conference call. A political division shall be considered established and defined by the presentation for vote of a written document as the basis for representation.

Section 7. NC members and alternates not elected as conference delegates shall be fraternal delegates with voice but only a consultative vote.

Article V. NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Section 1. The National Committee shall be the highest body of the YSA between National Conferences. The NC shall have final authority between National Conferences over all YSA publications, public or internal, local or national, and over all YSA bodies, local, district, regional and national.

Section 2. The NC shall consist in size of such members and numbered alternates as is set by the National Conference. In electing the NC, if political divisions are present, the National Conference shall use a proportional system with the limitation that a conference majority is entitled to a minimum of three fifths of the NC seats.

Section 3. The NC may co-opt members to itself in the event its list of alternates is exhausted; or if it is so required in order to maintain the proportional political representation established at the preceeding National Conference; or in order to maintain the size of the NEC.

Section 4. During its annual regular term of office, the NC shall meet at least three times, including immediately after and before National Conferences.

Article VI. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The NC shall elect from among its members a National Executive Committee to serve as its resident executive committee.

Section 2. The NEC shall act on behalf of the NC between its deliberations and shall be responsible for such work as is delegated to it by the NC. The NC has the right of review of all NEC actions and decisions. Among the normal functions of the NEC will be the supervision of the National Office and national publications, and the appointment of the national staff.

Section 3. Minority tendencies shall be entitled to the same proportion of seats on the NEC as on the NC.

Section 4. The NEC shall meet at least twice monthly and shall send minutes of its meetings to all members and alternates of the NC.

Article VII. NATIONAL OFFICERS

Section 1. The National Officers of the YSA shall be directly responsible for their work to the NEC and shall be elected by the NC from among its members on the NEC. The NC shall elect a National Chairman, National Secretary and such other National Officers as it deems necessary.

Section 2. The National Chairman shall be the political spokesman of the YSA and shall be the convener of the NEC.

Section 3. The National Secretary shall be responsible for the administration of the National Office.

Article VIII. LOCAL, DISTRICT AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Five or more members in a locality upon application to the NEC may be chartered and known as a local unit. The maximum size of a local shall be fifty members.

Section 2. A local unit shall be administered in a regular fashion. Each local shall elect a chairman and such other officers and working committees as are required to carry out the local's responsibilities including financial, secretarial and educational functions and the circulation of the YSA press. Normally a unit will elect an executive committee to act on the local's behalf between the latter's meetings and undertake such other work as assigned by the local. Local elections shall take place no less often than twice a year.

Section 3. Where more than one unit exists in a locale or where a single unit has grown unwieldy, a district organization may be set up, subject to the approval of the NEC. A district organization shall include a district executive committee, elected by the entire district membership meeting in conference, and such officers as the district executive committee may select. Between district conferences, the district executive committee shall be the highest body within the district organization. District conferences shall take place no less often than once a year.

Section 4. In geographically larger areas regional committees may be set up, subject to the approval of the NEC. Between delegated regional conferences, the regional committee shall be the highest body within the regional organization. Regional conferences shall take place no less often than annually.

Article IX. TRIAL PROCEDURE

Section 1. Any member or body of the YSA may bring charges against any member for violation of the constitutional articles, program or policies of the YSA. The charges must be initially presented in writing to the highest body of which the accused is a member. That body may constitute itself as the trial committee or may refer the charges to a lower body of which the accused is a member. Charges may be dismissed at any time by the body having jurisdiction at that time.

Section 2. No body shall meet as a trial committee unless all members have been informed in advance of the business at hand. The accused must be given notice of the trial date and a copy of the charges at least 15 days preceding the trial. Failure to appear or to send a letter of defense in the absence of excuse for such failure shall be grounds for conducting the trial in absentia.

Section 3. The disciplinary measures which are available in the event the accused is found guilty are, in increasing order of severity: censure, private or public, suspension and expulsion. These measures may be applied only as a result of the trial procedures outlined in this article. To censure or suspend a simple majority vote is needed, to expell a two thirds vote majority is required.

Section 4. The accused or accuser may appeal the decision (dismissal of charges, guilt or innocence, or the severity of discipline) of any body to the next higher one, up to and including the National Conference whose decision shall be final. An appeal must be filed within 15 days after the action being appealed.

Article X. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Amendments to this constitution may be made only by the National Conference. All members of the YSA shall be provided with a copy of the constitution.

Section 2. All decisions in the YSA shall be by simple majority vote except when otherwise specified by this constitution. No second shall be required for motions in any body of the YSA. The chairman of all meetings and committees has a right to voice and vote. The nay vote shall be taken first in calling the question.

Section 3. At all meetings of the YSA Roberts' Rules of Order (Revised) shall govern the proceedings, except where they are in conflict with this constitution.

Section 4. Members of a higher body of the YSA shall have the right to attend and speak at all meetings of lower bodies within the jurisdiction of the higher body.

Section 5. Local units and other bodies may adopt such bye-laws supplemental to this constitution as they deem desirable, providing such bye-laws are not in conflict with this constitution or the decisions of higher bodies.

###.

approved by the Editorial Board
March 28, 1960

AMENDMENTS TO "THE TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES RESOLUTION": (The resolution is printed in YSF Vol. 3, No. 1) The following three-part motion adopted by the Editorial Board is taken from the Board Minutes of Feb. 15, 1960:

"1. The Tasks and Perspectives document adopted by the last Plenum, along with the National Report [to the Conference], will be the section of the conference agenda that deals with our campus work. 2. The National Report and the Tasks and Perspectives document, with amendments, will be submitted to the Conference for vote. 3. The [two] amendments are as follows: in paragraph seven, replace second sentence with 'While organizational fusion is not a realistic goal in this period our regroupment activity in the past period will continue to bear fruit for us today.' [And] paragraph eleven is deleted from the document."

A PROPOSAL ON SECTION 1 OF THE "WHERE WE STAND" DECLARATION:

To the Editorial Board

Staten Island, N.Y.
March 28, 1960

re: the proposed Founding Declaration
of the Young Socialist Alliance

Under number one of the proposed Founding Declaration we may find this statement:

"The YSA bases itself on the traditions of marxian socialism pioneered by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht."

This sentence contains the names of five of the most prominent socialists that the world has produced and with this I have no quarrel. However, I regret that the Editorial Board did not include the name of one American for us to base our traditions on, also.

This is a situation that I would like to see remedied at the Second National Conference of Young Socialist Supporters. I suggest very strongly that we include the name of some native American socialist.

Any one will do, but I am partial to the inclusion of the name of Eugene Victor Debs.

Comradely,

Arthur M.

A CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION ON THE DISCUSSION BULLETIN: The following was proposed for inclusion in the draft YSA Constitution by comrade Mage at the Editorial Board meeting of March 28, 1960 and was voted down. It is being introduced by its maker for consideration by the National Conference.

"The YSA shall publish, at intervals of three months or less, an open discussion bulletin entitled 'Young Socialist Forum'. All material on any topic submitted by YSA members for publication in the Young Socialist Forum is to be published in its entirety and in order of receipt."

Failed

ON "POLITICAL SUPPORT" OF THE S.W.P.

By Peter Allan, Los Angeles

I propose to the Young Socialist supporters April convention the following paragraph in substitution for Article 11 in the "Where We Stand" Resolution:

11. The YSA recognizes that alone of all existing political parties, the SWP has consistently represented the cause of revolutionary socialism and alone is capable of giving the working class political leadership on class struggle principles. The YSA therefore looks to continued close fraternal relations with the SWP in the development of a political program for the YSA.

The motivation for Article 11 is of course incontestable. After saying what we think of the Stalinists, the Social-Democrats, and sundry defunct groups in-between, it is only proper that we state very specifically our attitude to the party which has provided unstinting support, encouragement, and the bulk of the youth leadership to the YSA.

However, to call at this time for the YSA to announce its general "political support" to the SWP -- as the Editorial Boards draft does -- is to presuppose that all of us in the YSA have already gone through a period of intensive educational discussion where the SWP program was thoroughly considered and where we all were very clear what that program was and what obligations such political support demanded of us.

We SWP youth certainly recognize that the YSA's eight programmatic points summarized in the "Where We Stand" draft are in principled accord with the main outlines of the SWP program, which, as the basic statement of a political party, is of course much more fully worked out and covers many other, though less fundamental, questions as well. But the non-party youth in the YSA, who joined because they agreed with the YSA program on its own merits, are not necessarily aware that they also stand in fundamental agreement with the SWP program. These youth must first come to understand that they cannot, as socialists, actually remain politically independent of the three main ideological currents in the socialist movement. They must undergo some more experience in an organizationally independent youth movement before they can appreciate the profound difference between organizational and political independence, which they often tend to lump together. They have to discover for themselves the nature of the SWP program and party organization and we cannot assume that all of them have done so. Personal experience in Los Angeles and San Francisco tells me that this is the situation with many of our newer members. These youth, and the newly-politicalized people who will join the YSA in the coming period, must have an opportunity to investigate the ideas, the practices, the leadership, and the history of our party -- before being asked to give "political support" to it.

Neither the youth members of the SWP nor the party as a whole has ever wished to pressure the non-party youth which makes up 50% of the YSA into hasty adoption of the party program or to take them for granted as quasi-members of the SWP. This point was especially stressed by several SWP youth leaders at the July 1959 plenum of the YS National Committee. Those of us who belong to the SWP readily proclaim our desire to recruit anybody we can to our party and we have especially high hopes of those of whom we collaborate most closely, the non-party youth in the YSA. At the same time, we do not intend to make unbearable gadflies of ourselves over the matter because we are quite confident that in due time our common experiences and educational discussions in the YSA will demonstrate more and more the validity of the SWP program and organization.

Blanket "political support" is not required to justify wholehearted backing of the SWP election campaign as the only meaningful socialist alternative to the militaristic, racist, and imperialistic policies of both capitalist parties. Every member and sympathizer of the YSA will be able to defend the YSA'S support of the SWP platform instead of the sectarian isolationism of the SLP stand and the rank class-collaboration of the SP-SDF (if they ever run!) on the intrinsic merits of that platform. As individual issues, campaigns, and projects may be put forward by the SWP, the YSA can consider and decide on their suitability for its co-operation and support. This process will help to clarify the character of the SWP and its program for everybody in the YSA and will give rise to the programmatic discussions among the youth in a natural way and at a natural tempo. In this manner, the youth will be working out their own revolutionary program, starting, to be sure, not from scratch but from the body of Marxist-Leninist teachings now championed solely by the SWP. Thus the stage would be set to define more fully the relation of the YSA to the SWP at a later date, when the personal experiences and acquired knowledge of the non-party youth would be a living part of the YSA decision.

Because of the leadership position and greater political education and experience of the SWP youth, we could obtain a decision for "political support" from the April convention without much trouble. But it is our concomitant responsibility to use our leadership and influence wisely. A mere convention "resolution", for which the ranks have not previously been prepared and the significance and extent of which is not too clear even among SWP youth, will not spur a qualitative advance of political consciousness in the YSA. There is no urgent reason now to hurry on the definition of our "political support" in my opinion. Ours is a young movement as yet, but already we have at hand a developed cadre of extremely capable and devoted revolutionary youth leaders, a lively and well-edited revolutionary youth paper that is making a proud name for itself among thousands of youth and an enthusiastic membership eager to learn, ready to struggle, and determined to build the YSA. Most important of all we have formulated an unassailable revolutionary program to guide us in action and help us win to our socialist banner the youth who look forward in anger at capitalism.

At present, the YSA has close and fraternal relations with the SWP, amid a general atmosphere of friendliness and mutual trust between party and

non-party youth. If we want to describe the reality of these relations, I believe that the amended Article 11 offered here would correspond closer to the actual situation. No hedging on the truth of SWP-YSA connections is involved here, because the non-party youth of the YSA, many of whom have joined just this past year, have not had a chance to consider the question of general political support. Especially for many possible new YSA members, the need to decide on political support to the SWP may well constitute a serious barrier to joining our youth organization.

There is no need to worry about snickering from behind the Social-Democratic and Stalinist bushes. The only way we could "prove" to these opponents of ours that the YSA is not a helpless prisoner of SWP totalitarianism would be to expel all SWP youth, hang Trotsky, Cannon and the YS Editorial Board in effigy, and all apply as ushers without pay for the Democratic Party Convention.

It would be preferable right now to pay attention to the reactions and the needs of the non-SWP members, both present and future, of the YSA. I propose the amendment to Article 11 in anticipation of both.

* * *

Received March 31, 1959

ON SECTION ELEVEN

by Tim Wohlforth and Jim Robertson

As was expected when the Editorial Board drafted the "Where We Stand" document, rather widespread questioning and opposition has been voiced to that part of the resolution which sets forth the relationship of the YSA movement to the SWP. This has traditionally been a delicate point with us -- but something even more important is involved. To a large extent the actual nature of the youth movement we are building is related to the way in which this movement relates itself publicly to the SWP.

It is not so much the political identity of the youth movement that is involved. By and large most of the critics of this section do not do so because of their own opposition to the SWP -- in fact in most cases the critics are members of the SWP. What is really at issue is the type of youth movement we are creating and the political maturity of that movement in dealing with what at times can be rather touchy questions.

But before we go any further with this point let us put section 11 into its proper place in the structure of the document as a whole. It would be too bad if, in the heat of the controversy over this one section, the document as a whole is not given proper attention. The Editorial Board commissioned the writing of the document as it felt the compelling need and responsibility for a political declaration to clarify the nature of the new organization being founded and precisely why such an organization is needed. The resolution therefore falls into a certain historical framework in the brief but busy history of our youth movement.

In the very first issue of the YS we declared ourselves in favor of such a youth movement. We then went through an intensive sifting and testing process to allow as many young radicals as possible to experiment with differing socialist ideas, feeling that out of this process a strengthened revolutionary youth movement could be built. This period reached its height in the February 1958 Midwest Conference in Chicago -- a conference which allowed for much discussion but which was incapable of anything but the most elementary expressions of political beliefs. In December 1958 we took the process a good deal further at our Detroit Conference where we were able to formulate a minimum revolutionary program and a functioning national organizational structure.

It is the task of this coming Philadelphia conference to consolidate the organizational and political steps taken in Detroit. In a certain sense we have to catch up with reality -- as the real political basis of the present YS movement is more fundamental than the Detroit Conference decisions (more fundamental, but not in contradiction with). If we had contented ourselves with expressing no more than is given in the Detroit political program or being no more than a supporting group for a newspaper we would have been unable to grow during the last year. This "Where We Stand" document does the job of catching up on the political front that the Constitution does on the organizational side. Both documents merely formulate the basic political and organizational ideas which motivated the core of this youth movement from the very beginning and which are largely responsible for its growth.

The declaration breaks down into three parts which are logically closely related. Section 11 cannot with justice be abstracted from the document and

have the document remain as a coherent and politically sound statement. The three parts are:

(a) sections 1,2,3 -- which make a positive declaration of principle and briefly sketch the history and give continuity to the new YSA. These are quite important, especially section 1 which is identical with the Article II of the Constitution and is therefore a condition of membership in the new organization.

(b) sections 4,5,6,7,8 -- which by criticism of the principal opponent tendencies to the revolutionary socialist youth give additional definition and justification to the YSA. These are absolutely necessary in a founding declaration of an organization for without these sections there would be no stated political basis for us founding this new organization as against joining another. In effect, these sections state that the principles sketched in section 1 and the politics in section 2 have been negated by the other socialist youth forces necessitating our own history (section 3) which is culminating in the organization of the YSA at this conference.

(c) sections 9,10,11,12,13 -- which place the YSA in its proper context within the revolutionary movement as an evolved national youth formation, hence deal with its evolution, and its "division of labor" with the adult and international movements. These last sections are all closely inter-related. Section 9 states our opposition to youth vanguardism -- by simply stating that the youth cannot lead the revolution, that this is the task of the revolutionary party. Section 10 sketches our attempt to help in the creation of a new revolutionary party out of the regroupment process. This section is the only place where we evaluate this process and state that it has come to an end -- an end which did not produce any new political parties.

Section 11 states positively what section 10 states in the negative:

"11. The Young Socialist Alliance is in basic political agreement with the Socialist Workers Party. It recognizes that only the SWP of all existing political parties is capable of giving the working class political leadership on class struggle principles. It therefore offers its political support to the SWP."

-- that is: since no new revolutionary party emerged from the regroupment process, and the older non-revolutionary parties further disgraced themselves, we must support that party which emerged from regroupment with a revolutionary program and organization -- the SWP. To do otherwise is to call into question either our own revolutionary outlook or our seriousness about it.

Section 12 spells out in a quite categorical fashion our adherence to the organizational independence of the YSA and section 13 our internationalism. These last five sections taken together are our answer to the demands implied in section 1 of fashioning a youth alliance that can play its role in the struggle for socialism.

To omit section 11 is to leave the document with an immense and obvious hole in it. We carefully explain that a revolutionary party is needed, that the youth movement can be no substitute for a revolutionary party, that the CP and SP-SDF are not such parties, that no new one has arisen and----? To not stick in the punch line is to either suggest that we must set ourselves the task of creating a new revolutionary party as none exists or it is simply an evasion and one which has as a lesser objection the fact that it would fool no

serious political element. It is or should be a home truth that the revolutionary movement is built and goes forward through the fusion of class-struggle with revolutionary consciousness.

Such an omission can hurt us much more seriously than an open statement of political support to the SWP. It gives the impression that the YSA is simply an SWP front-group which is to be manipulated from behind the scenes. Nobody joins our organization these days without being well aware of its close association with the SWP. We have only two alternatives -- either to deny this association and fool no one or we can openly formulate this relationship between these two organizations and by so doing clear the air.

We have nothing to be ashamed of! The SWP is the only party in this country to really fight for socialism. We declare in section 1 that we are committed to the traditions of Marxism. The whole history of the Trotskyists in this country should be a matter of study and of pride: the defense of truth and revolutionary integrity through years of Stalinist abuse and worse; a militant role in labor strike struggles; intransigence in the face of imperialist war and witch hunt.

The role of the SWP in the coming elections will be one that we should be eager to associate with. There is much we can do concretely to help the SWP in this campaign and there is much that the SWP's campaign can do for us through the impact of its national presidential campaign. Both to gain and be of greatest aid, the relationship of the YSA with the SWP must be clear. We need to be in a position to say to those many youth who will be attracted by the SWP campaign that they should come to the YSA which is an organization of young people with the same kind of approach and a bond of solidarity with the SWP. Section 11 lays the political basis for the tasks of the 1960 election campaign which are now opening up to us.

We are not the ones to be ashamed. Let the YPSL explain away its SP-SDF and its support to the Democratic Party. Let the young Stalinists explain away the fossilized spineless sect that runs their groups and its line of support to the Democrats. We have no reason to share vicariously in the guilt reactions of Stalinist and Social-Democratic youth toward their parties.

In the most basic sense, the question of the YSA openly debating and defining its attitude toward the SWP flows from the fact that if the YSA is to be an organization of young revolutionists it is necessary for it to deal honestly and with the greatest possible consciousness with "touchy" questions when they are posed before it. Otherwise, we risk ending up training and having to live with the graduates of the "front-group" school of youth orgs.

To those who would attempt to use such a public statement to prove that the YSA is simply an SWP tool in which there is no room for non-SWP members or criticism of the SWP (they will accuse us of this regardless of what we say) all we have to do is point to the very discussion which produced section 11. Here we find, not a monolithic bloc of SWPers imposing support to the SWP upon non-SWPers -- rather we find that the most articulate critics of this section were themselves SWPers! This discussion itself is proof enough of the type of organization the YSA really is. The conclusion of this discussion with the passing of section 11 will prove not only that the YSA is organizationally independent but that it has reached a level of political maturity necessary for the struggles that lie ahead.

March 29, 1960

Postscript ON SECTION 11

Several points have emerged in the course of discussion which help to clarify the alternatives before the YSA on section 11.

Section 11 is not a statement which aims to reproduce a subjective feeling necessarily shared by every member of the YSA, as if any policy statement could or should aim to achieve this. Rather this section legitimizes the actual relations with the SWP which we as an organization have come to have and which virtually every member does expect to continue. For example: we often seek able teachers, members of the SWP, to lead our classes. It is for good reasons of political loyalty to the YSA program that we draw so heavily from this source for instructors. (But note that it is the YSA which chooses, specifies subjects, etc.) If some comrades are opposed to this kind of practice of using SWP personnel, then what would be in order is not some evasion of the basic tie between the groups, but a counter statement and a different practice. Indeed, if we were to avoid the question of relations, but continue them nonetheless, then how could critics within the YSA argue counter -- the terrain would be too swampy. It is in this sense that section 11 has meaning as an objective statement of current and projected YSA policy.

It would be well for those who want to avoid or degrade the question to consider and explain why the entire national and international history of party-youth relations among revolutionists is for the YSA void. We are not slaves of the many decades of experience cited, but they do raise the question of what smooth streamlining has been discovered so that it is possible to gloss over one of the biggest things in the life of the youth movement and the future of many of its members -- the revolutionary party.

Perhaps the most disingenuous position which could be advanced as a substitute for the intent of section 11 would be that sort of statement, smack in the middle of a revolutionary Marxian declaration, which suggested approximately "That from time to time and on particular issues we support the SWP and that we note that our programs tend to be rather similar so it is reasonable to expect that this will probably continue in the future." But about this: 1. we support the actions of all working class organizations when stands on "the issues" coincide; 2. what is needed is an explanation why we find empirically (as if it couldn't be deduced) that with a unique frequency the SWP and YSA share a common line in action. Couldn't this be a symptom of a bond of a deeper sort? Doesn't this bond consist in both groups being revolutionary socialist, both in the Marxian tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, etc.?

Finally, there is apparently one misconception about section 11 which can and will be easily remedied. On reading the section some comrades brought into clear focus only "political agreement with the SWP" and "political support to the SWP" and with this, assumed that this meant not principled agreement which it does, but programmatic identity which it does not. A hostile reaction to this latter proposition is understandable, but misplaced. The distinction between principle, which is basic, and program which seeks to realize principle, must be grasped. There are yet many gaps and superficialities in the program of the YSA. These must be worked out in the YSA, not borrowed en bloc from the SWP. The section 11 discussion itself is an excellent example of such clarification from within the YSA. Possibly if "basic political agreement" were changed to read "basic political solidarity", the confusion between support to an organization as a principled class-struggle party and an imposed, automatic "support" to a particular programmatic point or tactic of that party would be cleared up.

TW & JR 4-3-60

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A Program for Correct Organizational Tactics in Student Orientation

by Pete C. (Boston)

We must, I believe, make a careful study of our present situation and our prospects for the immediate future. Since our establishment a few years back we have developed the necessary cadre and organizational machinery to create a skeleton national organization. Our immediate aim is to recruit and fatten up so we can become active at a higher level.

We cannot at this time effect the course of events. On the contrary we will be effected by them, making our task at this time to prepare ourselves to take advantage of events and changing situations. At this point we are primarily concerned with a correct organizational policy, having passed the hardest and most important point during the YSL split and the immediate period afterwards, developing a marxist basis, for our political outlook. Our organizational policy must be geared always towards the fulfillment of our political program. When we speak of recruiting we mean adding to the cadre of revolutionary socialist youth and not merely of increasing our number.

Student Orientation

Although we can see the coming possibility of reaching young workers in the near future, today our major source of recruits will come from the college and high school campuses. An analysis of the American student and the campus will show us the correct policy we should pursue in reaching him.

The American campus in general functions under an atmosphere of the morality of the petty bourgeoisie. College means a better job, rising from the proletariat to the middle classes (for students from proletarian families,) reaching social acceptance, and for the girls a means to find a husband who will be able to meet the financial necessities of a middle class family. Students with bourgeois morality are so few that they need not concern us. The students most invested with the petty bourgeois morality of the campus are the students with a proletarian background, because they are trying to leave the proletariat. The middle class student is not as afraid of rebellion because he does not view rebellion as a direct threat to his career in the same intense fashion that the "rising" element does. The degeneration of capitalism is reflected in the feeling of rebellion against their patterned "careers" on the part of some middle class students. Out of this group comes the students who are seeking "truth," beatniks, etc... This group of students is thus primarily found in liberal art colleges with an intellectual atmosphere sitting on top of the petty bourgeois atmosphere which is basic to all American campuses.

We will not make much progress among students from working class backgrounds until the working class begins to move politically. Then it will be primarily students from working class background whom we will recruit. Today we are establishing the organizational apparatus to enable us to move the proletarian campus youth as an auxiliary arm of the proletarian movement in the factories. At this time we can draw in limited amount from the intellectually inclined middle class students.

Capitalism's contradictions are uprooting and turning over social conditions. Out of these changes which affect the family structure and contin-

uously frustrate the youth's aspirations instilled in them by the very same system, we can see a large segment of the middle class youth in rebellion to one degree or another. While the proletarian youth are frustrated in a very materialistic manner, the frustration of the middle class youth is not as materialistically manifested. Therefore the revolt among American proletarian youth expressed in "juvenile delinquency" takes place, while the middle class youth, usually in high school or college, tends to rebel intellectually. The merciless competitive nature of education with its heavy demand of conformity spreads alienation over the campus world. The student thus alienated is usually dissatisfied by a materialistic rebellion, since the symptoms of such rebellion, (growing a beard, lacking cleanliness,) will not satisfy the intellectual aspect of his rebellion.

The form this intellectual rebellion takes is almost the philosophical opposite of Marxism or Dialectical materialism. The student begins to involve himself in abstract rebellion usually camouflaged in sophistry. The concept that ideas and reality can be separated, common today among the faculty as well as the student body, takes hold, and thus springs the campus god "objectivity!" All students from the middle class, petty bourgeoisie, alienated, rebelling status you will discover, if you ask them, look at the world "objectively."

Thus students who rebel intellectually are driven by their environment (campus) to seek idealistic (historical sense) solutions instead of materialistic ones. Many develop a desire to consider ideas of dissention. Some of these ideas are pacifism, anarchism (non-political,) existentialism and sometimes oriental religions. They are seeking some way to give their lives, which they feel alienated from the world, meaning. However, in contrast to the tendency for idealistic solutions students approach the problem, though they may believe themselves "objective," within the modern framework of the supreme worship of the scientific method. Any philosophy is immediately harnessed to mathematical logic and their rebelliousness feeds itself on destroying the validity of any accepted philosophy. Students from Communist party homes or Socialist party homes are similar in their general approach. Students with leanings towards the Communist Party may tend to be the strongest anti-marxists because they cover their non-marxist program in marxian terminology. These students, although they are among the most politically conscious on the campus, do not wish to consider marxism because "they are for it and already know it." The political blindness these students show stems from a false understanding of the Soviet Union. Some of these students however have a marxist orientation in their thinking outside of the Soviet Question. Many, however, allow the false understanding of the Soviet Union to penetrate all their politics. In such cases it is best not to waste time with them but with students with a general marxist outlook all it takes is an understanding of the Soviet Union for them to get themselves back on the road to marxist politics.

Students having reached a degree of rebellion and having intellectual honesty, fed to them by the idealization of the scientific method, usually are willing to consider all ideas and specifically marxism. The rest of the student body is basically apathetic to our presence and activity.

In order to reach students we have to use the opposite approach used to reach workers. Workers must be made to generalize. They must see the connection between their immediate situation and the general - the boss, working

conditions, pay - vs - war, international politics, elections, etc... The student on the other hand must first be presented with a theory of capitalism and politics that will explain the empirical. He will not in general get aroused over empirical situations. He feels far removed from the world outside the campus. Minorities are the major exception. The Negro or possibly the Jew feel an attachment to their minority and its problems. Sometimes he is only driven deeper into the petty bourgeois struggle for acceptance. However, once a theoretical conception takes hold and its validity is ascertained at the general level, the student becomes much more responsive to empirical manifestations. But even when a student reaches some conception of marxism it is extremely difficult for him to comprehend the application of the theory. Here lies the most dangerous potential student problem. Student recruits with formal conceptions of marxism who are not consciously working class oriented in their thinking can be the most destructive force in a socialist youth movement at a critical moment.

We have one strong factor in our favor. Marxist theory has been and stands today absolutely unrefuted in any of its basic premises. It has been verified by the complete historic period which we have passed and are passing since Marx. Once a student catches a glimpse of marxian logic it will drive him to disprove it and thus to study it. It takes very little basic marxist theory to stimulate such a desire since the recognition of any of a few basic concepts immediately suggest radical conclusions. A contact who is drawn towards us in this manner, who is then offered discussion by personal contact and classes, and then given a chance to express organizationally his movement towards marxism, can become a revolutionary socialist. His chances of achieving this are much better than one who is attracted to the idealistic concepts of: "socialism is good," abuse of student "rights," "we want peace" (in the abstract idea of peace,) "progressive and intelligent people are socialist" etc...

The theoretical level of so-called socialists on the campus today is unbelievably low and among the National Guardian or Communist party youth periphery it is simply missing. The level of our periphery, readers of the Young Socialist etc, is about the same. A good deal of our very members lack even the simplest basic concepts of marxism. This situation can be improved by adopting a correct student approach both in our organizational apparatus and (primarily) our paper. In review are some of the key points to remember in student orientation.

1. Students are attracted to socialism from a theoretical instead of empirical arousalment.
2. The final assesment of a student recruit is directly proportional to his theoretical understanding.
3. The hardest concept in the theory of marxism for students is the general working class orientation of marxism.
4. Students require very little stimulation in marxist theory to become interested in it.
5. Students around us have a very low level of theoretical understanding. This factor prevents our immediate recruiting of many independent campus socialists.

Until conditions change to warrant a change in tactics, the following proposal for the editorial policy of the Young Socialist and organizational policy for the Young Socialist Alliance should be adopted.

A. Our paper should concern itself primarily with giving marxist theory either through direct theoretical articles or through the explanation of political events.

B. Our paper should cover to some extent workers' struggles and handle them in a materialistic manner not idealistic.

C. Our paper should minimize its coverage of students affairs and problems. It should maintain coverage in brief form of the more widely known campus activities or YSA campus activities in order to attract new readers to the other material in the issue.

D. We must participate in or form socialist discussion clubs on campus. Through these clubs marxist speakers can be brought to the campus and contact made with students interested in socialism. When the working class begins to move politically it will be desirable to have YSA campus organizations.

E. We must form city wide YSA groups where ever possible to offer our members organizational experience and provide classes dealing with theory and classes dealing with the working class. Through the city wide clubs students should be de-campused in their political thinking. This can be accomplished best where some working youth members exist along with the student members.

F. Our general organizational needs of course include many other points which are however basic to our organization and not connected to the student orientation. These will not, of course, be discussed here.

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Received Jan. 25, 1960

OUR ORIENTATION IN THE CURRENT SIT IN CAMPAIGN

Our task is the organization of a mass movement among the students of the North in support of the Southern students integration struggle. We seek therefore to form broad Ad Hoc Committees representing the active militant students on the campus and in the high schools as well as community youth organizations where this is possible. We then seek support from other organizations such as NAACP, CORE, NSA for these committees and their participation in these committees if they wish. We do not however hand over the leadership to these elements as we know they will do all in their power to stifle the movement and that their leadership is not necessary to rally students to the action.

Our experience in the last few weeks has shown that all three organizations do not control this movement and to the extent that they influence it, it is to contain it. Our best weapon against them is the concept of an all-inclusive ad hoc committee of the youth themselves.

While we do not attempt to organize this movement under our own banner and are opposed to independent picket lines of the YSA, we do not submerge our identity within the movement. We participate in the movement as socialists and through individual contact, through sales of the YS, through specially organized meetings and socials aimed at the participants in the movement, we seek to attract to us the most militant section of the movement. We ask for no other right than that already utilized by CORE and others who work in this movement -- to present our concepts of how to win the struggle for Negro equality to the participants in the movement. We seek in our activity to coalesce around us that section of the youth who wish to fight harder and carry the struggle further than others.

Our main target is Woolworths as this is the only really national chain involved. We are opposed to such diversionary tactics as rallies and the like and though we participate in them to rally support to picket work and favor instead the mass picketing of Woolworths. We generally favor single massive picket lines rather than small scattered ones. The size of the line not only gives us more publicity but tends to make a qualitative change in its atmosphere -- in the direction of militancy. 400-500 youth marching together and chanting is quite impressive.

In addition to picket lines we favor the raising of the slogan nationally: BOYCOTT WOOLWORTHS. This slogan should be contained in all leaflets handed out during demonstrations. All organizations such as NSA, NAACP, trade unions, etc., should be urged to adopt this strategic goal. The YS will take up this slogan and popularize it. Already we can see the more conservative elements involved shirk from this while the mass of the participants go for it.

Finally we aim to coordinate this movement nationally. We hope to do this around preparations for a massive national day of picketing on May 17th in front of every Woolworths store in the nation. We will attempt to get this goal adopted at CCNY and then by our groups around the country. May 17 will be the sixth anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision and its appeal should be obvious. By urging a national rally on this day we can unite the impact of the movement, maximize publicity and have a real reason for the coordination of our local activities. It also will give us a vehicle for linking up with the struggle in the South and give students both in the North and the South a longer range objective in the struggle. We will of course urge NSA, NAACP, CORE, etc., to support and popularize this idea.

Tim Wohlforth, for the Editorial Board

Appendix C of March 28, 1960 Editorial Board MinutesONCE AGAIN ON OUR ORIENTATION

by Tim Wohlforth

As can be gathered from the reports of our activity in Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, and a few other areas our comrades are deeply entrenched in this movement. It is also becoming clearer just how decisive our leadership is to the preservation and expansion of a Northern solidarity movement with the Southern sit-in struggle. However, I feel that it is possible that all our comrades have yet to grasp fully and completely what we are doing in this campaign. Some areas continue to lag in their intervention or have allowed a single act of intervention to substitute itself for the type of activity we have been conducting in New York, Philadelphia and Boston.

There is a certain tendency to look upon our role as merely that of a petitioning body urging some other "respectible" force into action. In one area we may continue to call upon the Student Council or some university to act and hold off our own activity awaiting this rather cumbersome body to move. In another area we may be waiting around for the NAACP to move -- even though nationally the NAACP has been the most ineffective of all organizations in acting. Even the pacifists have a better record!

This tendency is quite understandable as it flows from our previous mode of political functioning during these last few years of isolation and the witch-hunt. What the comrades fail to grasp is that for once we have a chance to act independently of these "respectible" forces. Their support or initiative is not needed in order to mobilize students on this issue. In fact the opposite is the truth. These forces in case after case have done more to hinder the development of a militant Northern movement than they have done to help it. They are not only not initiators of action but to the best of their ability they seek to prevent action.

All that is needed in order to stage a successful picket line is: (a) us; (b) a few more people who are not necessarily important student leaders but individuals who wish to see such militant demonstrations occur; and (c) a few thousand neat mimeographed leaflets issued in the name of the ad hoc committee and distributed at the high schools and colleges. These three elements can be gathered in every area in the country where we have one or more comrades. Once they have been gathered and the action is rolling it is quite possible to solicit and get all sorts of other assistance and support including -- NAACP endorsement, student council endorsement, and even CORE cooperation. But to wait upon one of these bodies to act is futile and quite dangerous.

A month has already passed since we first began action on this campaign. In any area where there isn't already a functioning ad hoc committee our comrades should get to work immediately to initiate it.

Possibly another source of the delay in some areas is a misunderstanding of the way we acted in New York. We never intended the particular approach of New York to be taken as a pattern to be applied everywhere. Originally in New York we wished to set up an ad hoc committee at CCNY rather than work through the Student Council. We utilized the Student Council only because of witch hunting regulations on the campus which prevented us from organizing an off campus action independent of the Student Council. We have long since passed the Student Council phase and

Appendix C continued

in several areas. It was never even necessary to go through this stage, e.g., Philadelphia, Boston and San Francisco.

As time passes our comrades can expect an increase in redbaiting and attacks from the reformist forces. This should not frighten our comrades nor force them into such a position as we give up our own independent functioning -- the sales of the YS at picket lines, the pushing of YSA activities, etc. Rather we should recognize the real nature of the struggle we are engaged in. It is not simply a matter of some people being opposed to our participation in the movement. It is rather an attempt of the reformist elements to destroy the very independence and militancy of this movement -- independence and militancy which comes not simply from us but is expressed by the participants in response to the objective nature of the struggle. They seek to destroy this independence and militancy by forcing out of the movement that one conscious force which makes it possible for this movement to remain free of these forces -- us. Their aim is to force us out and then contain the movement within the framework of the present two party system and within the iron clad control of the reformist leadership.

Under such conditions it is an abdication of our political duty not to act and to act forcefully to see that this movement keeps rolling in the North, that we remain a part of it, and that we continue to put forward our socialist ideas through our press and organization as well as work along with others in these ad hoc committees.

* * *

SEATTLE COMMUNICATION TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD

by John S. and Ted N.

The notable lack of correspondence from this area in the last few months has been largely the result of the general stagnation of the youth situation. Recent developments, however, have somewhat altered the picture, and possibilities for organization along militant lines are making themselves felt. For your benefit, we have summarized these developments as follows:

1) YPSL. The YPSL has effectively dominated the scene (in the University District) for some time. This had flowed from the lack of any effective competition in the area and from the impetus of their original and succeeding organizational drives. Nevertheless, they are beginning to lose ground: a) through loss of membership due to people leaving the area, disgust, and political disagreement (as in my case-T.N.) b) their failure to build a cadre or to educate the members. In spite of loud wails heard from time to time over the failure of the membership to raise its political level, the leadership, we believe, wants nothing of the sort and confines itself to half-hearted attempts in this direction.

2) The YPSL and the SP are taking steps to counter this increasing disorganization. Recently, they have drafted a program under which the local functions of the two organizations will be combined. The draft of this program includes measures for creation of an educational program. Tussing and Co., working under the belief that Jimmy Higgins' don't think and "theorists" won't do any work, have built a separation of functions into the program (the proposed combination makes Don Burns, the local SP hack, chairman of both organizations. The SP itself consists mainly of Ypsels and tired, elderly ex-radicals.) Thus, the continuing weakness of the program, the right turn in the organization nationally (both politically and in recruitment policy), and local cliquishness has created opportunities for the building of an organization offering a genuinely left program, internal democracy, and an atmosphere of honest discussion.

3) The most important factor in our favor is the increasing cohesion of the Left Discussion Circle. This group, which was formed several months ago, is nearing the end of its second series of discussions (mainly on theoretical questions and general political positions). More and more, the membership is beginning to recognize a common political ground and the necessity of appearing as an organized force with a program. Although progress has been slow, we feel that by the end of this series (in the beginning of March) the groundwork for a supporter's club will have been laid. It may even be possible to engage the membership in some sort of fund-raising activity for the purpose of financing a trip to the April YS convention for one of the group's members. We have a few Supporter cards and will try to recruit a few members (those willing to take such a step at this time).

4) Our biggest problems are: a) We still have no cadre. Neither of us can perform this role and it is not likely that we shall be able to better the situation overnight. We will do what we can, but we can only carry things so far. It would be very advantageous for all of us if you would send someone out here as soon as possible. b) We have no contact with the center. We need this desperately, as we are now completely ignorant of what's been happening nationally. We need documents, YS's, more supporters cards, and particularly information about the April conference.

P.s. Ted N. quit YPSL officially early in January. Will outline reasons for doing so in the next letter.

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received Feb. 15, 1960

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AT
CITY COLLEGE - SAN FRANCISCO
By Don R.

City College of San Francisco recently held their semesterly student elections. The results, which climaxed a week of campaigning, gave little proof that the electoral pattern had changed. However, there was one difference from the college's past elections. A third political party was formed and took a position which, although not radical, definitely called for sweeping changes in the existing political setup. This report will deal with the developments of this third political party, its members, and its problems.

Approximately one month before the elections on the eve of Christmas vacation, a group of seven or eight politically and socially conscious students decided to form a student political party. This party, eventually named Party for Democratic Action, would satisfy, it was hoped, a large deficiency in the voice of student government.

It is necessary to digress for a moment to explain the student political situation as it has been for the 25 years of the college's existence. Being a two year college which is attached to the city's public school system, students have never been given an official voice in the planning of the college's educational program. To offset this despotic situation, there exists on campus an official student organization called the Associated Students. To belong to this organization one must buy an Associated Students card which costs five dollars. This card entitles a student to free parking in the campus facilities, discounts for the various social activities (dances, teas, athletics, drama productions, etc.), and the right to vote in student elections. In return, it is the job of the elected student officers to provide bigger and better social activities, etc.

The success of this type of student government can be determined by the past semester's cold, hard statistical facts, which are excellent examples and faithful representations of the past years as well. Of the over 7,000 students at City College last semester, less than 2,400 owned AS cards. Of these, between 350 and 450 voted in the election. These facts prove that most students aren't interested in student government. But even of those that did buy AS cards, only a small fraction voted. The fact is that the majority of students that do buy AS cards are interested only in parking.

The Party for Democratic Action, aware of this general consensus, attempted to develop a platform which would stimulate a more real and meaningful interest in student government. In a series of evening meetings during Christmas vacation, the following platform was developed:

- 1) Extend the right to vote to ALL registered students.
- 2) Form a student-faculty advisory board on curriculum.

- 3) Form a student-faculty court of appeals for minor infractions.
- 4) Establish a regularly scheduled student grievance day.

Members of the PDA felt that universal suffrage must be the first step in stimulating student interest and proving the power that students can and should have. The advisory board on curriculum would give students an opportunity to change either the number of courses offered or the quality of the subject matter offered. The court of appeals, it was hoped, would spare the students the time and expense of going downtown to appeal any parking ticket or other infraction they felt was justified. The grievance day would develop a closer relationship between students and their elected representatives.

Basically, these planks were designed to take the control of the official student voice on campus out of the hands of the socially minded minority and give it to the great mass of students who are primarily interested in education. The assumption made by PDA was that social activities deserved no official place on campus.

Because of grade and unit requirements and their late start, PDA was only able to run three candidates (there were 20 offices to be filled). Nevertheless, these few determined students went to work planning campaign strategy with vigor. The basis of their strategy was to meet every student on campus and let the sheer logic of their platform do the work.

The members of PDA decided to begin their campaign a week before the election and as it turned out this was the same time that the other two parties started also. Five-thousand leaflets were run off containing the party platform and the names of the candidates. In addition, around 30 posters with names, pictures, and pertinent jingles were made for placement around campus.

The focal point of the week's campaigning was to be short speeches given between classes at various points around campus where students gathered. Simultaneously, leaflets would be distributed among the students.

Before the actual campaigning began, the group discussed the feasibility of attacking fraternities and sororities (their major opponents) openly. It was finally decided not to for reasons which will be discussed later.

The campaigning did not go as planned. Posters were put up a day late, there was only one speech given except those at the election rally the day before the elections, and the level of morale among the members of PDA was low. Needless to say, PDA candidates placed a poor third in the election. However, this does not mean that they were not successful. In fact, there was a great deal of popular support from the non-voting students and many new contacts and friends were made.

The mistakes made by the PDA'ers were numerous but mostly the result of inexperience. Of the seven or eight who worked throughout the campaign, four were San Francisco Young Socialists and the others were non-socialists but equally interested in seeing some changes made on campus.

All of them, however, got their first taste of organization and came out the wiser for it.

In listing the mistakes, it is best to start with one that was unavoidable. It was not decided to carry on a campaign until the last possible moment. This delay meant that not enough time would be available to make adequate preparations for a campaign. There was not enough time to sound out the student body and adapt the platform accordingly. There was not enough time to acquire a full slate of 20 candidates. There was not enough time to obtain sufficient funds to carry on a proper campaign. Most of the other mistakes, therefore, were either directly or indirectly the result of too little time. For example, it was not known that the strongest plank in the platform, universal suffrage, was still too weak to excite the interest of normally uninterested students.

Another mistake concerning the party's platform was the result of another failing of the PDA'ers. The members realized that their support would come from the vast majority of non-fraternity students, but, even though they were diametrically opposed to fraternities, they refused to come out openly against them. This was because they feared retaliation from the administration which openly sponsored fraternities and sororities. This amounted to a selling out of ideals in favor of fraternity votes. The fact is that the PDA'ers felt that they had a good chance of being elected and could then take steps to eliminate fraternities and sororities. By taking this stand, however, they underestimated the power of fraternities and overestimated their own power to sway the elections.

Regardless of the mistakes made, however, the overall results of the campaign were quite successful. The number of votes received by the PDA'ers at the polls, although comparatively small, proved that their ideas were hitting close to home. The campaign brought the YSA members of the party in contact with many new students and made it possible to except new ears for the socialist ideology. Finally, the experience of running a campaign taught many lessons that could not have otherwise been learned. The PDA members learned that it takes a great deal of preparation and planning to present a political campaign. They learned that it is vitally important to adopt a platform that realistically satisfies the needs of the majority. They learned just where their support lies and in whose interests they are functioning.

The members of the Party for Democratic Action intend to carry on another campaign next semester. They have a more realistic picture of the situation on campus and feel able to present a more realistic platform. They will start their campaigning earlier and attempt to enlist more organizational aid. They are optimistic but are fully aware of the barrier of administrative wrath and tradition that must be overcome.

Philadelphia, Pa.

February 9, 1960

Young Peoples' Socialist League and
Socialist Party - Social Democratic Federation
Room 516, 303 - 4th Avenue
New York 10, N.Y.

Dear Comrades:

I request that the enclosed document be published in the internal discussion organs of both the YPSL and the SP-SDF. Having expressed the views contained therein, I am no longer able to belong to the Socialist Party - Social Democratic Federation or the Young Peoples' Socialist League, and I hereby withdraw my membership from both organizations.

Fraternally,

G. McD.

Enclosures

cc: YPSL and SP-SDF, Philadelphia locals
717 Spruce Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

by G. McD.

A number of members of the Young Peoples' Socialist League and the Socialist P. -Social Democratic Federation supported the entry of the Shachtmanites into their organization in the hope that this would bring about a turn toward a more revolutionary policy away from class collaboration and support of U. S. imperialism. Instead, these new elements have allied themselves with the most right wing of the social democracy. In the youth organization, in which they play the dominant role, they have completely abandoned any leftism in their former convictions on the presumption that it is necessary to build a broad all-inclusive movement.

Let us examine the chief aspect of this drive for a broad organization. There is a statement in the YPSL constitution to the effect that members must regard "Communism" as the antithesis of socialism. Harrington, however, sees no inconsistency in this respect when he says that there is a place for Deutscherites in the organization, while at the same time he excludes all those who agree with Deutscher on the necessity for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism but who further maintain that a political revolution is necessary to eliminate the bureaucracies in the Stalinist countries. The only plausible explanation would seem to be that since Deutscherites tend to be less conscious of the necessity for a revolutionary party anywhere, they would not seriously threaten the aims of the conservative Shachtmanite leadership. Pacifists and Christian socialists are also welcome, according to the program, but of course in practice, because they are to the left of the leadership in their anti-war position and their relative militancy on certain other issues, they are vigorously fought against in elections to the NEC.

The idea of broadness has gone to the ridiculous extreme of trying to create divergent views in order to make the organization "broad". This would all seem to have a practical purpose, however. Such a hodge-podge of rightists and pseudo-leftists in the general membership has the effect of neutralizing each and preventing any political opposition from arising as a challenge to the dominant group. For this reason an opposition can only take the form of challenging the reality of bureaucratic leadership, and this leads to unprincipled coalitions of varied political dissidents against the leaders.

One further manifestation of the concept of broadness which has a more direct relationship to the right-ward direction of the Shachtmanites is the following statement from Comrade Shute's resolution on the Democratic Party (Young Socialist Review, Nov. 1959):

"Although as an organization we oppose support to Democratic Party candidates in general, we welcome into membership all democratic socialists who believe that support of the Democratic Party is a proper perspective and who actively pursue that perspective; ..."
(emphasis in original)

This curious viewpoint has been restated in a recent resolution put before the NEC for consideration, where it appears to have every chance of acceptance. Obviously, if enough "socialists" join who advocate supporting the Democratic Party, the YPSL will no longer be able to say that as an organization it opposes this policy.

Young People's Socialist League
303 Fourth Ave. room 516
New York 10, N.Y.

Feb. 11, 1960

Dear Comrade McD.:

It is with regret that I receive your letter of resignation from the Young People's Socialist League. Regret because I am always sorry to see anyone exclude himself from our movement, and because I especially am sorry to see it done on the basis of such a collection of fancy and non-fact as appears in your statement.

I take it that you are somehow displeased that there are people in YPSL and the SP-SDF who disagree with you - especially that there are more of them than there are of your co-thinkers. A certain amount of chagrin on this point is perhaps allowable to anyone. But to seriously propose it as a reason for abandoning our movement displays a lack of seriousness about socialist activity which is astounding. If you find the political atmosphere of the YPSL uncongenial to your present views, I wonder how you would find that of any of the real mass social-democratic parties of the world - in which sane socialists of all tendencies find it necessary to work.

Your point about how Deutscherites are "invited" to join YPSL but "really" aren't, displays a type of logic which escapes me at the moment. And Pacifists and Christian socialists are "vigorously fought against" in elections to the NEC? Because they are "left" wing? Oh, well, maybe there are some aspects of this organization on which you are better informed than I. I am only National Secretary.

What you have to say about Comrade Shute's document on the Democratic Party is a prime example of the kind of "fact" with which I am afraid you have allowed yourself to become entangled. First, according to your formulation in opposition to Shute's statement "welcoming" socialists who wish to support Democratic candidates, we could not allow anyone who disagreed with anything that we are officially for into our organization. Secondly, you seem to think that the Shute document had "every chance" of acceptance by the YPSL NEC. You should - perhaps - have let the NEC know that, since they didn't accept it.

Lastly, concerning your paens about the SWP. It is strange that while the YOUNG SOCIALIST vigorously maintains that it is "independent of the Socialist Workers Party - so many people display an odd tendency to start displaing illusions about the SWP just about the same time that they suddenly become aware of the virtues of the YS. And as one who has undergone the experience of membership in the SWP, let me assure you that you have nothing but sad disillusionment before you if you seriously expect to build a really independent, democratic and revolutionary socialist tendency thru the medium of the SWP.

Fraternally,

J.T. Burnett,
National Secretary

Philadelphia, Pa.
February 15, 1960

James T. Burnett
c/o YPSL
303 Fourth Ave., Room 516
New York 10, N.Y.

Dear Comrade Burnett,

Your letter of February 11 regarding my statement "For a Revolutionary Socialist Movement" has induced me to reply to some of the points you make, particularly since you seem to feel that some of my arguments are false and irresponsible.

First of all, you express wonder at my contention that pacifists and Christian socialists are to the left of the official leadership. I have talked with comrades, some of them Shachtmanites, who have said that they are opposed to unilateral disarmament and do not feel that the United States should disarm except on the basis of an agreement with the Russians which would guarantee that they also would disarm. To my way of thinking this not only puts them to the right of pacifists but makes them undistinguishable on this issue from Democrats and Republicans. Also, if I remember correctly, pacifists and religious types were opposed at the convention because they were in favor of rank-and-file militancy in the NAACP, participation in picket lines of strikers, etc.

Concerning the Shute document on the Democratic Party, you emphatically reminded me that the NEC did not accept it. The way I understood it, although the proposal was tabled for further discussion, it was recently submitted to a test vote by the NEC, where it passed with only one negative vote and two or three abstentions. The one negative vote, by Comrade De Brul, was cast on the basis that he wanted the YPSL as an organization to support the Democratic Party. Correct me if I'm wrong on this. Don't you feel that on the basis of this one is justified in saying that the document had "every chance of acceptance"?

Of course the real issue, however, is the merits of the statement itself and the broader question of socialist tactics on the American scene. Even if one accepts the idea that a broad all-inclusive movement is necessary, it is still unheard of to express "welcome" into membership those who if sufficiently numerous would negate the policies which the organization in its present composition is for. If such persons cannot be kept out, that is that, but when you state an expressed desire to recruit such people, it seems to indicate that you aren't serious about the policies you advocate and are looking for an opening through which to escape.

Concerning the nature of the party itself, you drew a comparison with the mass social-democratic parties of other countries. These parties, although "all-inclusive", are nevertheless mass parties with a working class base, even if they are controlled by reformist and petty-bourgeois elements. Their broadness is not the conscious effort of socialists who wish to effect a fundamental transformation of society from capitalism to socialism. When revolutionary

socialists work within such parties, they do so because thereby they can reach the workers with their ideas and infuse them with a revolutionary purpose. In the United States, however, a mass labor or working class party has yet to be created, and the formation of such a party is the immediate step necessary toward establishing socialism in this country. The SP-SDF is not and can never become such a party, not according to the most optimistic predictions of its most enthusiastic adherents. They believe only that it can be instrumental in creating a labor party.

A labor party, however, must be based on labor's own organizations, the trade unions. The "progressive" elements of the Democratic Party, because they have a direct economic interest in capitalist forms of property and support arms spending to keep workers employed and rescue the capitalist system from economic collapse, cannot represent the interests of the working class and therefore cannot form the nucleus of a labor party. Was the Labour Party of Great Britain formed as a result of a realignment of forces within the Liberal Party? Of course not. It was launched by labor itself, with the trade unions as its base.

A political organization which can be instrumental in the formation of a real labor party in America must be one which approaches the issue from the standpoint of unqualified class opposition to capitalism. To this extent, at least, it must be exclusive, not inclusive. Reaching out for the coattails of liberals can only lead to a continuation and a strengthening of class society. For this reason I have arrived at the conclusion that the Socialist Workers Party is the only practical rallying point for socialists in America at the present time. I do not think that being a "sane socialist" entails allowing oneself to drift with the reactionary tide into the trap of class collaboration in an effort to be "realistic". Those who fall victims to this type of thin thinking are struck with amazement when they see the results which a firm revolutionary stand can produce.

Fraternally,

G. McD.

P.S. It strikes me that our correspondence would be a valuable contribution to the YSR, along with the statement which I have recently submitted.

5 January 1960

YOUNG SOCIALIST Editorial Board

Dear Comrades:

I hereby resign from the Editorial Board, the Young Socialist National Committee and as European Correspondent of the YOUNG SOCIALIST. In addition to my increasingly dubious status as a "youth", my reasons for this action are principally two:

1) It has become evident that, partly with, but mostly without, connivance by the Socialist Worker Party, the Young Socialist movement is little more than a creature of that party. It has thus lost its original character of independence which prompted my adhesion to it more than two years ago, and, in losing that character, has thereby also lost, in my opinion, any chance of building a meaningful socialist youth movement in America. With the disappearance of its independent character, it can no longer claim the adhesion of independent socialists, and it is not my intention to serve as window-dressing for a party which I find absurd in theory and pernicious in practice.

2) Despite my tenure in the above-named positions in the leadership of the movement, I have been systematically excluded, since my departure from the U.S. in June 1959, from any participation in that leadership and even from knowledge of its policies. Despite repeated requests to the Managing Editor, I have not received any Editorial Board minutes in nearly four months, have had no communication from the Board or any member thereof in nearly five months and have not even received any copy of the YOUNG SOCIALIST in more than three months. Furthermore, I have not been able to obtain a copy of policy statement of the June 1959, plenum, despite four specific requests for such, the first of these requests dating back to July 1959. This negligence must be a result either of a decision by the Editorial Board to exclude one of its members-- and a member whom, it may be said in all frankness, has played not a small role in building the newspaper and movement--from its policy decisions and even from knowledge of them or it must be a result of phenomenal inefficiency in prosecuting the socialist cause. In neither case would I be furthering the cause of socialism by continued association.

With fraternal greetings,

Richard DeHaan

February 2, 1960

Richard DeHaan

Dear Comrade,

We accept your resignation from the Young Socialist Editorial Board, National Committee of Young Socialist Supporters, and as our European correspondent. Your request does not come as a shock for your disagreements with our organization have been increasing over the last year or so. However, we do not approach your resignation with any bitterness but rather with a deep-felt appreciation of the contributions you have made to building the Young Socialist.

From the very beginning of our collaboration we shared a common political feeling -- to put it negatively, a disgust for the phony socialism of both the Stalinist "Pop Front" school and the reformist social democratic variety. Where most of us differed with you was in our concept of a positive alternative to these two brands of reformism. You based your hopes on building some sort of political organization out of those elements originally attracted to the regroupment process and to the Independent Socialist Party who became critical of the I-SP from what you considered the "Left". This grouping soon found that it had agreement only on what it opposed and disintegrated once it attempted to formulate some sort of positive alternative.

Though many of us active in the YS movement are supporters of the Socialist Workers Party, we had hoped originally that through the regroupment process a new revolutionary party would be formed which would include the SWP. This hope has proven illusory. Rather than turn our back on political reality we are facing the fact that the only revolutionary party in this country is the SWP and at the coming Spring Conference of the YS, we are proposing that the YS offer its open political support to the SWP.

Does this mean that the YS has become "little more than a creature of that party (SWP)," as you suggest? Quite the contrary: it is becoming less a creature of the SWP than it was in the past. Previously, the organizational structure of the YS movement was much weaker and there did not exist any formal means whereby the movement could work out its views collectively. Thus the YS movement was not only organizationally weak but also its internal political life lacked vitality. The SWP, on the other hand, is a well organized party with a lively and active internal life. Under such conditions it was quite natural for the SWP to play a greater role than it properly should have in determining the policies of the YS locally and nationally. This occurred, as you suggest, "mostly without the connivance of the SWP." As a member of the leading body of the YS you are well aware that we did our best to counteract this tendency and that we did so with some success -- especially after the Detroit Conference.

Today the YS movement is changing. At the Spring Conference, it will take on a full organizational framework. Further, it will begin the process of working out -- independently -- its own political views. Finally, the YS movement is feeling independent enough to declare openly its obvious political solidarity with the SWP.

So, in answer to your criticisms under point one of your letter, we can state that the YS movement is completely independent as an organization, and that its independence is far more real than that of any other existing national youth body in this country. Secondly, we do not hide our political solidarity with the SWP but openly proclaim it. We feel that our support to the SWP will contribute far more to the growth of a mass revolutionary party in this country than your adhesion to a handful of individuals who do not have the energy to keep even a mimeographed discussion bulletin going.

We consider point two of your letter to be of secondary importance. Most of the minutes and all of the issues of the YS were sent to you during your absence, but, for some reason, they have not reached you. We would have nothing to gain from attempting to hide these from you. Our failure to write you frequently we will not attempt to excuse, for even under the heavy pressure of work here, and the change in personnel, we should have communicated with you more often. Again, do not mistake organizational inefficiency for political malice -- especially when you know our organizational weaknesses so well.

In conclusion, we must state that the political reality on the left refutes your charge that the YS has "lost, in my opinion, any chance of building any meaningful socialist youth movement in America." Our experience has been quite the contrary. We find that over the last six months the YS has been growing at a faster rate than any other period of its existence, except for the first few months of its original growth. This growth is based on open espousal of revolutionary politics, a conscious effort to reach American students, and a higher level of national and local functioning. In the same period the YPSL have begun to disintegrate and leading members of the YPSL have left that organization -- some even joining us. Our Spring Conference should prepare us for even greater gains.

When you return to the United States we hope you will give some further thought to your political activities. Quite frankly, considering your "increasingly dubious status as a youth", we do not feel it would be fair for us to urge you to reconsider your resignation from the YS. However, we would like you to think through your relation to the adult political forces in this country. After such a re-examination, if you really wish meaningful political activity, we are sure you will come to the same conclusion that we have -- That is, that political solidarity with the SWP is the only real alternative for someone wishing to be an active revolutionary socialist.

Editorial Board
Young Socialist

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE
SWARTHMORE, PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE DEANS

6 January 1960

Mr. Tim Wohlforth, Managing Editor
THE YOUNG SOCIALIST
P.O. Box 471
Cooper Station, New York 3, New York

Dear Mr. Wohlforth:

The December 1959 issue of the Young Socialist contains an erroneous reference to Swarthmore College. Since students have posted the paper on the College Bulletin Board and generally called attention to the erroneous report, I would like to make sure that it is corrected. The kind of report that you published is exactly the kind of report that prevents people of liberal tendencies from having confidence in organizations like yours.

The statement in question was "In this supposedly liberal institution, however, Young Socialist salesmen (the Trailblazers) were denied the right to sell on campus." While this statement is literally true, without qualification it implies that the denial was an illiberal act, which it certainly was not. For the protection of our students, cigarette salesmen, magazine and newspaper salesmen, insurance salesmen, etc. are all denied the right to sell on campus. On the other hand, any one of those groups may appoint a Swarthmore College representative who is then free to sell their products. The New York Times, Time Magazine, various cigarette companies, etc. have complied with the spirit and letter of our regulations in this respect, and I see no reason why the Young Socialist should be an exception. Your salesmen appeared on the Swarthmore campus as strangers without invitation. They were asked to leave in exactly the same manner and for the same reasons that we would have asked for the departure of a salesman for the Ladies Home Journal.

Sincerely yours,

W.C.H. Prentice
Dean

January 29, 1960

W.C.H. Prentice, Dean
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Prentice:

Thank you for your letter of January 6. We will be very happy to clarify our position on the questions you raise in regard to our statement in the December Young Socialist that our salesmen "were denied the right to sell on the campus."

You are concerned that no erroneous impression be given that Swarthmore has denied civil liberties to anyone. This is laudible. Too many colleges and universities are not concerned with this problem. We must say that as far as civil liberties and academic freedom are concerned, we have held Swarthmore in such high regard that we were shocked to learn that our salesmen, who had gained easy access to colleges with much less of a reputation for liberality, were barred from selling on your campus.

In our two and a half years of publication there have been many attempts to prevent us from presenting our views to American students. Most germane to the issues raised in your letter was our experience at the University of Colorado. Our supporters in the area took the very first issue of our paper (October, 1957) onto the campus and handed it out to students. The students responded with interest -- because, as students, they sought to investigate all views. But the Denver tabloid, the Rocky Mountain News, ran a false story on the incident which suggested that campus police had chased our supporters off the campus. Following this publicity, the University officially banned our publication from the campus by utilizing a college rule almost identical to the Swarthmore rule referred to in your letter.

Following this action, the campus paper, the Colorado Daily, the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, the state chapter of the ACLU, and finally one of the members of the Board of Regents -- all protested. None of these individuals and organizations were socialist. "People of liberal tendencies" should have had no difficulty "having confidence" in them. They believed that a ban on commercial literature could not be applied to political or religious literature, the distribution of which is part of the free expression of ideas that is essential to campus life. The Board of Regents finally agreed with this view and opened the campus to the Y.S. and any other political or religious material. Enclosed is the statement of the Colorado State chapter of the ACLU, which we are sure you will find of interest.

It is quite possible that your action in barring our salesmen from the Swarthmore campus was done without knowledge of the implications it could have for the civil liberties of political or religious groups as distinct from cigarette companies -- a distinction which has been made time and time again in the highest courts of our land. We hope that this is the case and that we shall receive a letter from you shortly, correcting this error. In which case, we will do our best through our press to correct any impression readers may have gotten that Swarthmore's liberal reputation has been damaged.

Editorial Board
Young Socialist