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New York, New York 10003

September 24, 1969

To All YSAers

Dear Comrades,

Attached is the first contribution to the YS literary discussion now underway. Additional copies for all YSA members will be mailed to the organizers under separate cover in a few days. Organizers should see that all members receive a copy.

Comrades are once again invited to send in contributions to the discussion.

Comradely,



Nelson Blackstock  
National Organizational Secretary

YS -- THE CONSCIOUS EXPRESSION OF THE YOUTH RADICALIZATION  
by David Keil.

As the magazine of the United States' revolutionary youth organization, the Young Socialist should be a two-fold expression. Firstly, of the political line of the YSA and secondly of the best aspects of the present youth radicalization as a whole. These include anti-authoritarianism, audacity, optimism, liveliness, and above all readiness to espouse bolshevism. Correctly applied, the two functions fit hand-in-glove. The YS presents a Marxist program but it is the organ, not just of the YSA, but of all revolutionary youth. The magazine is an educational and organizing tool in this way, with which we can draw around us the youth we want to recruit and educate all revolutionary youth.

For example, the Campus Program, "Statement of the National Executive Committee", was not thrown together nor found on the floor of an occupied building. It was thought out at the highest levels of our movement. SDS-RYM may have five vague "points" literally thrown together in the July 18 pinch in Chicago; SDS-WSA is a programless alliance between concrete students and abstract workers. But if you are a serious revolutionary on campus, the YSA has a very concrete program for you in the September issue of our magazine. That should be our attitude: The YS has a Marxist program to offer.

On the other hand, we also publish interviews with Huey Newton, Rudi Dutschke, and the Japanese antiwar representatives and others who are not comrades of ours. If a struggle occurs in some isolated place and the YSA didn't happen to be there, you can be sure that the YS won't therefore leave it out. Our magazine is the best expression of the radicalization as a whole.

Trotsky remarked that bolshevism is characterized not by flexibility but by granite hardness. That is true of our politics, but the format of a youth magazine should be flexible and lively. The content of our bolshevism as expressed in the YS's format is that it is attractive and orderly, not "psychedelic." The YS expresses the best aspects of the radicalization; we are not hippies. There are pictures on nearly every page, varying column widths, imaginative headline placement. But the headlines are straightforward, not enigmatic. Nor does the magazine resemble a ransom note. We don't depend, either, on visual shock, erotic appeal, or squirming self-deprecation. The diffuse-minded approach we leave to the anarchist Crazies and Yippies and their journalistic "underground" imitators. We could never compete anyway with the refined scatterbrainedness of their material. The "Supertrot" comic strip that comrades may have heard of was a good example of self-contempt which would best be left out of the YS. The Young Socialist has made great advances in attaining a lively and attractive format in the recent period.

In the area of content, our liveliness should not prevent the YS from publishing official statements in addition to topical and more informal items. The problem with "manifestoes" in some comrades' minds is that they have been associated with passive commentary on events or with boring language. But our manifestoes and official

statements need be neither. As an example, the Campus Program is not an armchair assessment but a tool for struggle, nor is it tedious reading for those who are serious.

There is place now as before for polemics. As we move toward hegemony on the left, it is as necessary as ever to criticize and denounce mistaken strategies and ideas. In striving to make the YS a more mature magazine, on a higher level than before, the comrades on the YS have put in more polemics. Our widened influence in the antiwar movement makes it possible for us to take stands on issues where before a criticism or statement might have seemed sectarian to readers. For example, exposing the Stalinist leadership in Vietnam would no longer endanger our clear reputation of support to the armed struggle of Vietnam. Similarly, a criticism of the liberal non-struggle characteristics of the "Death March" and "Vietnam Moratorium" explaining that the antiwar movement must always push forward the demand for immediate withdrawal, would not do harm. In addition to tactical arguments and replies, such as Thorstad's GI Organizing article and the reply to Dellinger, the YS might also print general histories. For example, of the social democracy, or ultraleftism. These could be weapons against some opponent tendencies and the conceptions they promote.

Running reviews is a good idea. We should review good lesser known films as well as the Hollywood monstrosities. We can make criticisms at the same time encouraging readers to see such films that have appeared as Far From Vietnam, To Die in Madrid, or the Newsreel series. Employing the Marxist method, our reviewers should not be too subjective. Using Stacey Joslyn's good Che! review as an example, the artistic judgements were not improper and the political content was instructive. But the personal reflections at the beginning about her mood, the theater and so forth, smacked of a personal essay. That is what I mean by over-subjectivism. Our reviews should be political and minimally esthetic; but not personal commentary.

A feature which should be returned is Young Socialist Notes. It has been brought up that the YS might serve well as an internal information bulletin. That conception is too limited, but Young Socialist Notes should include reports keeping comrades and others informed of special YSA activities across the country. What new ideas and methods have comrades developed in different areas for attracting youth, fighting the rulers, combatting opponents? These need not be kept internal. But in publishing these, YS Notes would do a service to our membership. This is one feature that is appropriate for the YS and not for the Militant, monthly reports on significant activities of the YSA locals. The editorial board should consider reinstating Young Socialist Notes and the locals should cooperate by sending in regular items.

Following the example of the new brochure, "Join the YSA", the YS should make it clear that our orientation is toward the working class. This is especially important since most readers will be students not workers, and the YSA's main activity is on the campus. Our primary broad educational task toward the students is to make them identify with the workers. As the brochure says, we are not simply a

student movement but an organization of revolutionary youth. We should report on developments in the black working class, the GIs and the trade unions and educate about class politics and the workers' revolutionary leadership role. At the same time, presently our main area of activity is on the campus and the YS is not ashamed of that. Working mostly among students for now, but oriented always toward the workers: that should be how YS readers think of the YSA.

The Young Socialist is an organ of the vanguard toward the mass youth movement as well as toward the YSA membership; it is also the best organ of the mass movement, expressing the mass movement. Through the addition of staff members and through conscious effort, the YSA has turned out an increasingly excellent magazine. Let us continue in the spirit of self-criticism and revolutionary optimism in this period of expansion, toward the time when the YS will be the organ of a YSA that is itself both a vanguard and a mass movement.

Twin Cities  
Sept. 18, 1969