

Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, New York 10003

February 20, 1969

To All Organizers, NC Members and At-Largers

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a report by Dave F. of the Los Angeles local on the recent SDS Southern California Regional Conference. This report is for the information of all YSAers.

Comradely,

Charlie Bolduc

Charlie Bolduc
National Chairman

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REPORT ON THE SDS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE by Dave F.

The SDS Southern California Regional Conference (January 31 - February 2) opened on Friday night with about 60 people representing 12 chapters in attendance. It reached its height on Saturday with about 100 people. On Saturday, we intervened in the conference with a fraction of 5 comrades to raise the question of the GI orientation for the antiwar movement and April 6.

The main business was transacted on Saturday, and was essentially a fight between PL and the regional SDS leadership on the question of nationalism.

There were 5 presentations made. They were the Regional SDS Papers, the paper of the CP youth, a PL paper presented by John Levin, and one by myself on the antiwar movement and the GIs, advocating that SDS support April 6.

I estimate that there was a PL caucus (not all members) of about 30-35 in attendance, a regional office caucus of a similar size (at least), and a CP caucus of about 6 or 7. Although some of the discussion of the black struggle was on a higher political level than in the past (concepts of democratic and socialist demands, permanent revolution, etc. were raised), no mention was made at all of the war in Vietnam. After I made my presentation, I was greeted with silence. No questions, no attack, no discussion. We got a similar reception on an individual level. People I spoke with said that the fight against racism was the main issue.

PL made no presentation other than the one by Levin, which was not billed as a position paper, because their reprints of the SDS NC Resolution weren't ready on time. In the voting, the SDS Regional paper was voted against the NC Resolution and won 43-37. We didn't stay for the evening plenary, so this is just a reported figure - but the regional proposal did carry. Our proposal on April 6 was not voted on. It was presented by us as a YSA, not an SMC, proposal for tactical reasons - we felt it necessary, given the character of the meeting, to argue as revolutionary socialists, not simply as antiwar activists. We had tried to get a workshop on April 6 but it was voted that workshops would "discuss general strategy" not specific topics.

In general, there was been no very significant organizational growth or decline in SDS, as represented by attendance at the regional conferences, over the period since their previous conferences in June and October. However, the ideological domination of PL seems to me to have progressed considerably. Even when PL loses a vote, the debate is on their terms. This is evident, for instance, in the conditional support for nationalism given in the SDS Regional Document, and the role it projects for SDS in the black struggle, which the PLers have no quarrel with.

Paradoxically, my experience has been (at Cal State, Los Angeles - a campus where PL is very strong in SDS) that the PLers themselves are very weak on the question of nationalism in the sense of even defending their own position. In using the Militant articles as a wedge in discussions I have gotten one of their sympathizers to buy Trotsky On Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, another to request the materials which we have put out on that question, after admitting that he didn't know enough, and one actual member of PL (the line between members and sympathizers is often very thin) to admit that he wasn't sure on the question of nationalism and would have to read more.

We sold \$4.15 worth of literature and signed up 3 people interested in working with GIs. Our perspective now is to draw in individual SDS chapters on the April 6 action wherever possible.