

873 Broadway  
2nd floor south  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
January 2, 1969

TO ALL NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ORGANIZERS

Dear Comrades,

CP Internal Documents

Attached are copies of 1) the resolutions of a December 14, 1968 New York District CP Youth Conference, and 2) three documents submitted by the Southern California CP youth leadership to the CP national office and the New York District Youth Conference. The three Southern California documents are entitled:

- a) On the Correct Handling of the Youth Policy Proposal and Attached Article.
- b) Proposal for an Organization of Young Communists
- c) Discussion Paper on the Proposal for an Organization of Young Communists, by Jim Berland.

Jim Berland is a leading public spokesman for the CP youth in Southern California. There were no dates on these three documents.

We do not have the proposal and article on youth work mailed out by the national office of the CP on November 27. It is referred to in the first paragraph of On the Correct Handling of ... which indicates that the Southern California documents are substitute proposals for the national office proposal.

Resolution #1 passed by the New York District Youth Conference on December 14 states, "That the resolution be rewritten in keeping with the main political thrust of the discussion article." We assume the "discussion article" being referred to is the one of the CP national office not the substitute document from Southern California.

This material is for NC information only. It is not for general membership distribution.

Comradely,

*Jack Barnes (jw)*

Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

COPY

COPY

COPY

COPY

RESOLUTIONS - New York District Youth Conference - December 14, 1968

1. That the resolution be rewritten in keeping with the main political thrust of the discussion article.

Passed unanimously.

2. That there be an urgent priority on the initiation of a discussion of program and policy for all fields of youth work.

Passed unanimously.

3. The resolution should include the assessment of the present period to be a period where the main function of the youth organization will be a cadre function, while at the same time we see the need for the organization to project an open face to any given area of work through such means as leaflets, position papers, forums, etc.

For - 31; against - 9

Abstentions not counted

4. We urge a full report on the past history of the DBC and urge preparation of a report and a full review of Party youth work and leadership.

Overwhelmingly approved.

5. A consultative vote on the following: That the term "communist" be included in the name of the organization.

For: 15; against - 15

Abstentions - 8

Note: various interpretations were given to the meaning of this vote.

7. Introduced but not discussed or voted on:

That the strategic goal of the youth organization is to build an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist movement led by the C.P. That it work and participate in developing working class struggles and the sharpening of class contradictions. That its programmatic emphasis be on the organizing of the unorganized; the most oppressed workers - Black, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and poor white. That its community work have a view towards influencing Black organizations. In trade unions, our work be toward building independent, left caucuses of young workers. That our student cadre work be as open communists as the main area of work on campuses and high schools.

COPY

COPY

COPY

COPY

ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF THE YOUTH POLICY PROPOSAL AND ATTACHED ARTICLE

Comrades:

The following proposal and the article which argues for it are being suggested as a substitute for the proposal and supporting article mailed from the National Office on November 27. It should be understood that this proposal, or any other put forth at this time, must have a certain tentative character. After four years of a basically unsuccessful policy in youth work it would be blindness to jump immediately into a new direction without full discussion at all levels of the party. The failure of the National Office to conduct this discussion in the past should be no excuse for precipitous action at this time.

We recognize the pressing need for change, and to this end we suggest that the discussion around the proposals adopted should proceed with the involvement of non-party forces on an organized basis in each district.

If the proposal contained is to be successful it should be developed with the full participation of the forces which it is hoped will be attracted by this attempt. It is crucial to our argument that this involvement be one of full participation. This can only happen if the non-party people feel that what we have in mind is an organization which will belong to its members.

We should recognize that our initiation of this idea will raise suspicions among many people who we wish to involve. This grows out of people's experience with the DuBois Clubs and is based on a general unfamiliarity with the Party's activities. It can only be allayed by an openness of discussion before our decision is finalized.

For this purpose, we propose the election of a committee to supervise the development of this discussion both inside and outside the Party.

In summary, we propose this document as an alternate basis for discussion between now and April, when a decision should be made by the entire Party as to the future direction of our youth work.

Comradely yours,

Youth Membership and Youth Commission  
Southern California District CPUSA

COPY

COPY

COPY

COPY

DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE PROPOSAL FOR AN ORGANIZATION OF YOUNG COMMUNISTS

by Jim Berland

An entire generation of the left has developed in the last decade without the clear leadership of any of the existing parties of the left. Although this situation is not unique in the world, it is a new development for the United States in the 20th Century.

Our generation has developed its political wisdom and its weaknesses as a result and reflection of its experience. It has developed in a historical era unprecedented in human history. The growth of U.S. Imperialism and the challenge of Socialism and National liberation movements, the expanding of education, mass media and electronics, material abundance and the contrast of moral and material poverty have all placed this generation as a more conscious, aware and experienced one.

The roots of our generation are also unique. Its origins in the civil rights movement has stamped it with a concern for Black liberation, but also with a confusion about the relationships between black and white. Its student core has given it the ability to develop a large body of written material which has accelerated its political development, but the lack of radical working class struggle has given the left little practical experience with the class which it increasingly recognizes must play a central role in revolutionary struggle. Its origins in the anti-Vietnam War struggle has given us a deep feeling of internationalism and an understanding of imperialism, but it has kept us from a full debate on political economy and a full understanding of the internal contradictions in the continental United States.

Our militance and vitality, even our ignorance has often led to the discovery of new methods and forms of struggle, but its organizational weakness and its instability have kept us from integrating new tactics and forms into a strategic perspective for socialist revolution.

The two main areas of youth struggle are the struggle for Black liberation, and the student struggles on a variety of issues.

The Black liberation movement grew out of the general movement for civil rights, which had a decided integrationist direction and a plethora of white leadership. We are all familiar with the progression from lunch counter sit-ins to the economic questions of the ghetto and the emergence of vital Black leadership under the slogan of Black Power. Today there is growing division in the Black movement between cultural nationalism and revolutionary socialism. The differences are expressed within Black Students Unions throughout the country; in the growth of black capitalism, and in the counter thrust of the Black Panther Party and other progressive elements. This contradiction is increasingly sharp, for the alternative of cultural nationalism gives up political struggle, a "solution" Black people cannot accept. The Black Panther Party is emerging as the most consistent foe of cultural nationalism and exponent of militant political struggle. It has

grown rapidly and its leadership has produced some of the most thoughtful analysis of race and class and revolutionary strategy.

The Student movement is led by SDS; the largest and most influential student organization. Its own development has been at the center of the development of the left in this decade, and mirrors the strengths and weaknesses described above. Its organization varies from chapter to chapter. Despite the continued development of a leadership which has given thoughtful consideration to the problems confronting the organization and the left and which increasingly considers itself Marxist-Leninist, SDS has been unable to create the same kind of thoughtfulness on a chapter level.

The three main trends in SDS: Progressive Labor, anarchist, and chapter people (divided between some remnants of the new working class approach and the clearer Marxist trend) intermix constantly. Despite their sectarian ideas and methods, PL has played some positive role in its injection of class considerations. Of course they could not have done this if they would have stayed outside the organization. Much of what is weak in SDS on class questions is a reaction to the dogmatic formulations of PL. ik  
cl

Because of its loose character and divergent trends and because of its white composition, SDS cannot be made into the Marxist-Leninist organization desired by some of its leading forces. The only alternative for them is to help build such an organization and work to make SDS a mass expression in the student struggle. ✓

The fact that there are differences with SDS or its leadership should not be an excuse for ignoring these developments. The Party has very little direct experience of these forces and its estimates tend to be too rigid. But the Party should stop feeling self conscious about our non-involvement, and recognizing that the Bolsheviks did not initially organize the Soviets, or the 1905 revolution, see that the important historical necessity is to recognize what is new and important and give it its proper place. /

There has been a qualitative increase in the size and depth of the left in the four years since the party adopted its present youth policy. Today many groups large and small call themselves revolutionary socialists, communists, Marxists and Marxist-Leninists and many more would if they had the opportunity to learn something of Marxism.

All of this interest in Marxism, the commitment to socialist revolution has not given the left an increased stability and sense of direction. This is true because of the continued fragmentation of various ideological and political trends within and among those who consider themselves Marxists. Because of this fragmentation and because of the lack of collective bodies in which daily work and political program can be related to the long range perspective, the left vacillates a great deal and does not put forth a political program with the confidence born out of a well integrated analysis of U.S. Capitalism.

What merges from this picture is that the left (and the movement as a whole) needs an organization of youth which can bring together the activists, the movers, the thinkers and can provide a place where their experience can be digested where political ideas can be tested, and where theory and strategy can be developed.

The development of the struggles for Black liberation and on campus struggles and the beginnings of radical organizing in the working class have shown more clearly the need for such an organization. Only a Marxist-Leninist organization can develop the analysis which can give the political leadership necessary to make strategic ties between Black and white, campus and community and work place, and can integrate an analysis of the complex relationships between internal and external contradictions, between imperialism and racism.

There is a growing recognition of this situation and of the need for such an organization.

What should our attitude be toward these developments? For all of its weaknesses SDS is becoming a socialist oriented youth organization. Which is the sort of thing we saw the need to build a few years ago. Where did that leave us? With a "...very real sense of isolation that we all feel from other sections of the left. All around us youth are talking about radicalism, revolution and we have no contact with them." (Bobby Heisler, Cadre vs. Mass addition to main report to DBC October 19 and 20, 1968, page 2)

I think we can agree that these trends and developments cannot be brought to the best fruition within party youth clubs. <sup>age problem</sup> <sub>of CP</sub> "The middle-aged and the aged often do not know how to approach the youth, for the youth of necessity advance to socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstance than their fathers." (Lenin, 1916, The Youth International)

Most clearly in a period like this decade, when the left has developed without the leadership of any revolutionary political party, it has been shown that the youth will determine on a mass scale just what those forms are going to be. The DBC was not that form, and we have all recognized that. But is the DBC on a "higher" level the answer?

The historical necessity which we and many others recognize for a disciplined Marxist-Leninist youth organization does not guarantee success to any attempt. We must learn something from history.

"...that is why we must decidedly favour organizational independence of the Youth League, not only because the opportunists fear such independence, but because of the very nature of the case. For unless they have complete independence, the youth will be unable either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism forward." (Lenin, op. cit.)

The acceleration of the historical process, the generational gap, the different conceptions of life which each generation has, are all the

deeper and more profound today than in Lenin's time and make the need for such an independent organization all the greater.

The Key question for the Communist youth organization is independence. It is a contradiction to say that the organization will be open to all who want to participate in any aspect of the programs, and then to define the organization's political content as rigidly as the eight points. The members of the Communist party who participate in this organization can fight for the policies of the party, and for organizational relationships of fraternity with the party, but if the organization is to meet the needs on the left and to have the participation of leading forces on the left it must be independent.

Not alone because of the history of the DBC and the isolation of much of the party's youth work from the rest of the left, and not alone because of the suspicions of the Party, but primarily because of the necessity to relate to this unique period we must recognize the need clearly to start this effort with the organized participation of all those of the young generation who recognize the need for this new form.

Thus we see as a new point one: (1) The organization must be founded on the clear understanding that it will embody serious political differences at every level. That its discipline will grow as its understanding of the unity of theory and practice develops. That what will unite it is the dedication to revolutionary socialism and Marxism-Leninism, and not some mechanical unity imposed because of the paucity of analytical thinking and conscious practice. Unity in Action, diversity...diversity...diversity in thought. This is a historical process. The tremendous diversity of thought is the result of limited experience, any youth organization must have this. But this diversity is also the stuff of unity. It is only in constant debate and reexamination of policy that a unity of action can be built. To regard unity of thought as the goal is to be dogmatic and undialectical. The diversity is essential to practical unity. Ideas suppressed only reemerge in a more destructive form later when the accumulated experience forces them disruptively to the surface. Unless this fundamental point is understood there will be a danger of a new dogmatism, for the young Left has its own tendencies in this direction. This attitude towards the complete independence of youth organization means that our discussion should proceed along different lines from those expressed in the national proposal. Much of the national proposal is concerned with setting out the political content of such an organization as if it were the party youth section. The political content of the party does have to be clarified and this is what the pre-convention discussion is supposed to do. One point alone should make it clear that these "definitive" formulations are at least inadequate.

"4. The central contradiction in American life is the class conflict between the working class and the bourgeoisie and not between those who accept bourgeois value system and those who reject it."

It is precisely the complex dialectical relationships between what is "accepted" and "rejected" in these statements which is the essential to find the truth of our time. To so thoroughly negate one side of a phenomenon is very close to dogmatism. But our debate or conclusions

on this, although it will influence anything we are a part of, should not be directly transferred to a youth organization. The party will work out its approaches to the youth question and its strategic goals in the building of a left and fight for those policies as it constructs with others the new youth organization.

It seems that this approach is the only one to assure that we are not just "upgrading" DuBois, to just do this would be to fail to recognize the lessons of the past, and to isolate our political debate from other sectors of the movement.

It is of course impossible to separate the ideological and political differences within the party from the perspective for building a new youth organization. But the decision to build a Marxist-Leninist youth organization can be made independent of the specific political content which the party will impart to it. What should take place at this first youth conference is an agreement of a tentative nature that there is a need for such an organization, and that such an organization should be completely independent of the party. This is what is being proposed. Then we should begin the discussion of the political differences which may arise from the eight points and in the formulation of the strategic goal of building "democratic youth unity." It is in the process of the debate on these questions that the character of the party's participation in such a youth organization will emerge, as will the approach to organizing.

If there was complete agreement on the eight points, things would be much simpler, but it would also be a different era, perhaps even a different world.

The differences in our party on these questions are not abstract, for the real consequences in this instance are who you relate to and how. We do not consider the eight points to be the "touchstones" of Marxism for our day. If our Marxism is measured against these statements it falls far short, and we are told we are only "approaching Marxism." We do not believe this. Although our formulations and ideas may err to one degree or another, they are not characterized by the dogmatic rejection of one trend and the full acceptance of another, when it is clear that both exist and are important. But these questions are for us to debate as we engage in the discussion and building of the proposed youth organization.

We want a Marxist youth organization for this purpose: "To develop in our own way" with the rest of our generation, not isolated from them. It is their strengths and weaknesses which are important to us. We want to unite the forces committed to socialism and develop our theory and politics based on a common practice and a common experience. We want to test our ideological assumptions, we want to end the isolation of Marxism from action and make Marxists out of thousands of activists.



## HOW TO PROCEED

The DuBois Clubs are only one channel, not the main avenue for the construction of this new organization. Based mainly in New York they can play a part in its construction, but it must go far beyond that. Party youth must be the main thrust. Their contacts and relationships must be utilized to the fullest extent and expanded further as this proposal is discussed inside and outside the party. Forces from SDS, black, brown and white working class youth must be involved from the beginning. No one organization, including the party, has the clarity of political line, the contacts and the acceptance in the Marxist left to do the whole job by itself. As the discussion proceeds, the party will have to react to the non-party response and to the basic idea and to the political trends which are expressing an interest in the idea of the organization. There should be a committee established nationally, and in each district, and sufficient resources should be made available to conduct the discussion on the widest possible scale. The final decision about the party's participation in the building of this organization should be made at the April convention. By that time the discussion should have taken place widely enough to determine the real feasibility of the organization, and the political content of the party's participation. It must be recognized that much of the left will view with suspicion this suggestion coming from the party. It is only with the frankest approach and the clearest commitment to organizational independence that there will be a chance that serious Marxist trends in other organizations and movements will be attracted to this proposal. What is formed should be entirely new, although it may include large sectors of the DBC. The forces which should be approached should become an integral party of the development of this organization.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion we want to stress the need to move carefully and deliberately forward on this proposal, making clear our commitment to the organizations independence, while at the same time clarifying our own political stance and making clear that we will fight for those policies which we see as correct.

\* \* \*

[All errors in spelling, grammar, etc. are as they appear in the original documents. - jw]