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BLACK STRUGGLE REPORT

By Malik Miah

Introduction

(The general line of the following Black Struggle report was adopted by the July 4-7, 1974, YSA National Committee Plenum.

(Since then a number of events occurred that affected the YSA's Black work during the fall. First concerned the developments in Portugal and their African colonies. Portugal's decision to grant Guinea-Bissau political independence and to set up a provisional government of Frelimo and Portuguese forces in Mozambique, undercut the potential to organize support actions for the right of the Portuguese colonies to be granted immediate independence.

(Second involves the racist and reactionary mobilizations of whites in Boston to prevent school desegregation. This has become the most important national development in the Black movement this year. A victory for the racists would mark a setback for the Black liberation struggle. Discussion of the Black movement in YSA locals should include an analysis of the Boston situation and in particular our response to the racist drive.

(Last concerns the evolution of the Congress of African People. At the plenum we discussed the fact that there were a growing number of Blacks studying Marxist ideas. The most significant groups mentioned were the African Liberation Support Committee and the Congress of African People. Since July CAP has openly proclaimed itself as a revolutionary socialist party with Maoist leanings. It is, however, still debating and discussing out many important issues like whether the revolutionary party should be all-Black or multinational. At the same time, CAP was active in a struggle against a cop murder of a Black youth in Brooklyn, New York, and ran an independent socialist campaign for congress in Newark. Therefore, our approach toward CAP should remain a fraternal one as outlined in this report. At the YSA convention we will have further discussion on CAP's evolution and other Black organizations like the African Liberation Support Committee.

(These three points should be incorporated in a discussion on where the Black movement stands today and the YSA's orientation towards it.)

In the Black struggle report given at the June, 1973, National Committee Plenum, we discussed the growing attacks on the Black nationality by the ruling class. We indicated this by pointing to the general economic and social decay of the Black community. We also noted that the overthrow of Jim Crow -- legal segregation in the South--

was a big victory but that it did not resolve the fundamental social and economic problems underlying Black oppression. We said because of this, only through a conscious leadership cognizant of the real nature of Black oppression and how this oppression can be eliminated would Black liberation be won -- that is, only through a socialist revolution. We also said that the present Black leadership -- its overwhelming majority -- fails to understand that such a perspective is needed. They instead are hogtied to the Democratic and Republican parties. Therefore, we said it was up to us, the revolutionary Marxist wing of the Black movement, to take the lead in opposing the racist oppression of Blacks -- through our student government election campaigns, youth support for SWP election campaigns, sales of the Young Socialist and The Militant and other activities we engage in. We said we wanted it to become clear to everyone that the YSA was the most consistent fighter of racism in the country.

Then at the YSA convention we gave a Black report that reaffirmed our basic programmatic and theoretical positions held on the nature of Black oppression. This included a defense of the position that the third American revolution would be a combined one -- that is a revolution of Blacks for self-determination and of the working class as a whole for socialism.

In this report I will cover four areas.

- 1) The present objective political and economic situation in the country and how it affects Blacks.
- 2) Where the Black movement stands today, with special emphasis on the nature of the present leadership and its perspective for Black liberation.
- 3) The YSA's programmatic solutions to the economic and social issues that face Blacks.
- 4) The major tasks of the YSA's Black work -- especially how we apply the concept of the "YSA take the lead" in practice, that is, how the YSA should participate in the Black movement propagandistically, organizationally and agitationaly. This includes our work on the campuses, high schools and our orientation towards a growing milieu of Blacks open to Marxism.

Economic Crisis and Blacks

At the present time American imperialism is suffering an economic crisis -- rising inflation coupled with economic stagnation. Blacks and other oppressed nationalities are especially feeling the brunt of this crisis.

The plight of Black America is indicated in the following figures printed in the June 17 Time magazine. The editors point out, according to 1972 figures, that over 33 percent of the Black nationality have incomes less than the official poverty level of \$4, 500. This is for a non-farm family of four. They also point out, "After some encouraging gains in the early 1970s the job situation for poor Blacks has lately turned worse." They continue, "The current unemployment rates are 9.5 percent for Blacks and 4.7 percent for whites. One-third of Black teenagers are jobless, which is more than double the rate for white teenagers."

They also point out that 50 percent of Black labor is unskilled or semi-skilled. This type of labor is becoming less necessary in a highly automated society. Only 40 percent of the labor force holds such jobs today. The fact that only less than a quarter of the work force is unionized means these workers get the lowest pay and experience the worst working conditions.

The present economic crises of capitalism will continue to drive down the living standard of Black Americans. The rotten housing will get more decayed and the schools in the ghettos will become even less "educational" than they already are.

But what has been the response of the very diversified and heterogeneous "leadership" of the Black movement to the crises of capitalism and their effects on Blacks?

Not too much at all.

After the overthrow of Jim Crow by hard-fought battles by Black people across the country, the legal racist oppression was replaced by the de facto racist oppression used in both the North and South. Because racism is integral to American capitalism and can't be ended except with the overthrow of capitalism through a socialist revolution, none of the social and economic problems -- the most fundamental ones -- were dealt with by ending Jim Crow.

This reality posed a big problem for the old civil rights leadership. Instead of putting forth a program of mass struggle to deal with these fundamental problems -- to fight to gain real control over Black people's lives -- all but a few went searching for salvation in the two capitalist parties, particularly the Democratic party. Others took up the cry for Black Power and other militant slogans -- like the Black Panther Party and SNCC for a period -- but soon were destroyed by government repression as Watergate has shown, and their lack of a clearly defined political program to fight for the needs of the Black community. Soon most of these "militants" also took the path of the capitalist parties. An example of this occurred last year when Bobby Seale of the Black Panthers ran for mayor of Oakland on the Democratic party ticket. The other leaders of the old civil rights movement -- like Julian Bond --

have entrenched themselves in the Democratic party.

All of them point to a number of significant figures to prove that the capitalist way is the best way for Black liberation. In the Time article, according to the editors, it is indicated that Blacks have made the greatest strides forward in politics. The article says, "The number of Black mayors has increased in the past year from 82 to 108, including Los Angeles' Thomas Bradley, Atlanta's Maynard Jackson and Detroit's Coleman Young." It continues, "In Mississippi, where any Negro who had the temerity to run for office a decade ago might have been a candidate for a lynching, there are some 200 Black elected officials." In the South alone over 1000 Blacks have been elected to public office, over 2000 nationally.

These figures are impressive. It first shows the gains won by Blacks through struggle during the civil rights period. It also indicates that the ruling class can be very flexible in its methods of maintaining its political and economic domination over Black people.

What is happening is that with the victories won in the struggle for the right of Blacks to vote and run for public office, other methods are being used to attempt to prevent Black people from fighting for fundamental changes in their living standard. Blacks can now vote and run for office in greater numbers than ever before, at least since the period of Reconstruction, especially in the South. But instead of being encouraged to do so independent of the capitalist parties, which are agents used by capitalism to oppress Blacks, the present "leadership" of the movement is encouraging Blacks to do so through the Democratic and Republican parties. They label it being "practical." This is becoming more and more the national trend in Black politics: that is, being "practical." This type of "practicality" cannot and will not advance the fight for Black liberation as history has shown.

Unfortunately, this is where most of the so-called Black "leadership" is at today: in the Democratic party.

This reality poses certain limitations on what we can do but it also places certain responsibilities on the YSA as the most conscious segment of the Black movement, and the only segment with the answers to the fundamental economic and social conditions oppressing Blacks. We understand that we, the revolutionary Marxist wing of the Black movement, cannot substitute ourselves for the lack of a mass movement in the Black community. But we can take the lead where opportunities do arise even if it means attempting to initiate united front coalitions around particular issues.

In the present period it is very important to be conscious of raising our full program to solve the problems facing Blacks. Unlike the Stalinists, Maoists and Social Democrats,

our approach in the present period is the one codified in the Transitional Program for Black Liberation. This means raising both democratic and transitional demands to meet the needs of the Black nationality -- through our election campaigns and other areas of work. It also means clearly supporting the Socialist Workers Party election campaign as the only alternative in the 1974 elections: to break with the Democratic and Republican parties and vote SWP! Of course, if an independent Black campaign were to develop, we would seriously consider giving it our support for being an initiative outside the capitalist parties.

Importance of Campus Base

As we said in the political report, we continue to be in a period of radicalization. Many different types of struggles are occurring across the country and there is widespread questioning of the status quo. In the Black movement most of these struggles have been off the campus -- like fights against police killings and terror, defense campaigns, and so forth. But many students have been involved in these struggles. It is therefore very important that the YSA have as many comrades that we can on the college campuses and in the high schools. This holds true for the YSA's Black membership as well. This is the center of the YSA's work.

The crisis in education harms Blacks the greatest. The cutbacks in funds for education and the attacks on Black Studies programs, ethnic studies, open admissions (where it exists), affirmative action programs, scholarship programs, etc., are making it more difficult for Blacks to get an education. Gene L. Maeroff writing in the June 28 New York Times reports that according to a recently released Carnegie Commission report on higher education, "The affirmative action program by which the Federal Government is compelling colleges and universities to hire more women and Blacks is lowering standards and undermining faculty quality..." In fact, the author of the report said it was one thing to give Blacks preferential treatment to be a "typist, bricklayer or punch press operator" but another thing for this to occur in a university!

Rising tuition costs have affected Black students the most. We haven't seen much in response to these attacks but as the crisis gets worse struggles will likely erupt.

In spite of the higher tuitions and education cutbacks, there are still more Blacks on campus today than in the mid-1960s. In the Time magazine article it is pointed out that "Between 1967 and 1972 the number of Blacks enrolled in college doubled to 727,000." In 1973 there was a decline in Black enrollment after over a decade of steady increases.

What the exact figure is now, I don't know. But I'm sure it can't be lower than the 700,000 figure since there has been an increase in the number of community colleges where a large number of Blacks attend college. Thus, our

orientation toward the campus is not any less important today than it has been in the past. Even when big struggles take place in the Black movement off the campus -- in the factories or wherever -- we will want to remain and increase our activities on the campuses. There will always be a role for Black YSAers on the campus. The concept of the Red or Black university means to turn the university into a vehicle to help build the Black liberation movement. It means using the campus as an organizing base to advance the Black struggle. It means also advancing the needs of Black students on the campus -- fighting around particular issues that relate to Black students themselves. This approach of the YSA remains true today, as it does for the future.

So in the fall, we must be alert to opportunities to advance our Black work on the campus. We want to be alert to any attacks on Black students. We want to take the lead in responding to any attacks that do occur. We also want to increase our recruitment work on the campus -- classes, forums, etc., on the Black struggle and socialism to attempt to win Black militants to the YSA.

This orientation of developing a good base on campus also applies to high school work. When we talk about high school work, in most cases we are talking about Black work, Blacks as the most radicalized segment of the population are generally the most receptive to our ideas. This holds true for Black high school students. Some of our best opportunities to do campaign work, youth support work, is at the high schools. The New York City high school campaign rallies and the response they received are such examples.

High school and Black work are completely tied together. So as we think out our sales of the YS and The Militant at the high schools and getting our candidates into the high schools, we should keep that in mind. The key to our success in doing Black high school work will be in the way it is organized. The key is that it is systematically organized and consistently done. Consistency in doing the work cannot be overstressed.

Coupled with YSA work directed at the high schools and the major universities is the work we do at the community colleges and all-Black schools. This is just as important as other campus work and must be well planned out. In many cases this may mean trail-blazing to campuses where we don't have members or where we haven't visited before in the cities we function in. The number of students open to our ideas is great on all campuses and we should take advantage of this.

YSA Take the Lead

Now, I want to develop the concept of "YSA take the lead." We must first recognize that this isn't anything new but something we have been doing and just want to improve

and make better.

Over the past year the YSA can be proud of the way we have applied our propaganda offensive to the Black movement. First, on the sales of our press -- The Militant and Young Socialist.

Sales of the press in the Black community and to Blacks on the campuses is one of the best vehicles we have to get out the YSA's program on the Black struggle and other issues related to Blacks. Great strides forward have been made over the past year.

What have we accomplished? From the rough figures we have, most YSA locals -- at least in the regional centers -- sell 30 percent of their YS bundle to Blacks. This includes in the Black community and to Black students. Some areas even reported sales on some issues as high as 50 percent of their bundle. This trend that developed over the spring is very good and we want to continue high sales to Blacks over the summer months and the fall.

The same holds true for The Militant. We have no exact figures for overall sales to Blacks but we do have the figure for sales in the Black community which is 26 percent. Also 26 percent of weekly Militant sales takes place on the college campuses. Undoubtedly a high number of these sales are to Black students.

We cannot stress too much the importance of sales for all aspects of YSA work -- whether we are intervening in an African liberation support activity, or an action in opposition to police terror. Our press plays an invaluable role in YSA activities and is part of our participation in the struggle. A recent Black recruit in Philadelphia, for example, joined after reading The Militant for three years while attending college in Ohio.

Next, I want to briefly discuss the importance of youth support work and reaching out to the Black community. First, our youth support for the SWP election campaigns is especially crucial today with the present lack of a fighting leadership in the Black movement. Since we represent the only alternative leadership to the capitalist parties, we must push forward the SWP as the only real alternative for serious and radicalizing militants in the Black movement. That is, in the 1974 elections we should say to Blacks: "The SWP campaign provides the only answers to your problems -- no other party does."

Some of the most viable youth support work can be done at Black high schools through campaign rallies. This is what the New York campaign has been doing. This can be tried in other areas. Getting Black high school students active in the SWP election campaigns at their schools could be the first step toward them joining the YSA.

The important thing is that we are flexible in the methods and ways we organize Black youth support work. We should try out new ideas in doing the work. Although we recognize the most effective method still lies in the work being systematically organized and consistently done.

Now, I want to discuss the last area of propaganda work we laid out a year ago and reaffirmed at our December convention: that is, the YSA looking in its own backyards to take the initiative where opportunities arise.

I think our accomplishments in this area of propaganda work have been the most impressive. The YSA has taken the lead in a number of areas and on a number of issues -- all very diversified. Let me enumerate a number of the more significant ones.

1) The YSA's response to the recent coup in Portugal. The issue of Portugal will be an important issue for YSA work in the fall.

As Gerry Foley explained in his report on the political situation in Portugal today and what revolutionaries should be doing, it is clear that the YSA must continue to take the lead and organize support for the right of the Portuguese colonies to have immediate independence; that Portugal get out of Africa now; and that American imperialism end all aid to Portugal.

The Portugal issue has special meaning for Black work. It opens up many new opportunities for the YSA to organize united front actions with Black student groups, African student organizations, Black unionists and other organizations and individuals. We know from our experiences in the anti-Vietnam war movement the best way to do opponents work, the best way to talk politics with people we are trying to reach, is through common work -- that is, common action, demonstrations and marches where possible.

We have two examples of the potential to do this type of united front work around the issue of Portugal. First is the picket line initiated by the New York City Young Socialist Alliance held on June 22. It was the YSA's idea and we took it to as many other organizations that we could to endorse and to help build it. We had good success: the size of the picket line was over 125 and the sponsors list was quite broad -- over a dozen groups.

The second example just occurred in Chicago on July 2. Although only a few dozen people participated in their picket line, the sponsors list was also very broad.

I think Chicago and New York are not exceptions. I think it is possible for the YSA to do similar type united front actions around Portugal in the fall -- and we should do so. Of course, we don't expect every area to have the

same success as New York did but we should remember that even a picket line supporting the African militants against Portuguese colonialism can have an impact. We don't expect mass actions on this question -- they'll be basically vanguard type actions -- but it is politically important for the American people -- its most conscious elements -- to show who's side it stands on. We can organize forums and teach-ins as well.

2) Another area of work we have been active in and where we can consider taking more initiative is against the racist teachings of Shockley and Jensen -- professors who hold theories of Black inferiority to whites. There have been a number of campus protests against these racist professors. In a couple of cases the YSA has been active in these actions. For example, at the University of Georgia in Athens the YSA in alliance with the Black Students Union organized a picket line outside of a Shockley engagement. Also in New Haven, students at Yale University, including YSA members, organized successful protests against a Shockley meeting.

During both of these actions a number of students left the picket line and entered the meeting and shouted Shockley down. It is important that we understand what approach we want to take on how to effectively fight racists trying to propagate their ideas on campus. Firstly, we oppose them speaking on campus and spreading their racist views, which are used as a basis to help explain why Blacks are oppressed; that is, their so-called inferiority. We say racists have no right to spread their racist ideas freely on campus. And, we organize against them doing so. We do so by trying to win over the majority of students to our point of view. Since most students today think it is alright for racists to have "freedom of speech" on campus to express their ideas, the most effective way for us to explain why freedom of speech is not the issue is by organizing a mass informational picket line at meetings where racists speak. In this way we can politically win students to our view and eventually win over enough students to make it not worthwhile for racists to try and speak on campus.

We, however, do not want to be involved in activities that will limit our ability to win a majority of students to a correct view. For example, we are opposed to shouting down Shockley in a meeting hall by a minority of students as PL and a handful of Black students have done in many cases. This only gives the racists and the administration a handle to attempt to victimize serious students opposed to racism, particularly Black students. It also weakens the ability to build politically effective actions against the racists. We are also opposed to calling on the university administration to ban these racists from campus. This would set a precedent that the university could attempt to use against the left in the future. We depend on the mass mobilization of the student body to fight the racists. We should keep these points in mind if and when a Shockley

or Jensen comes to speak on our campus.

On the other hand, the YSA should not wait for other groups to organize an action against Shockley before responding. The YSA can take the lead and reach out to other groups and build a protest action against the racist. It is clear from the spring actions that were organized that there exist a significant number of students willing and ready to move into action against overt racism on the campus.

3) The YSA has also been active in opposing police terror this past spring. One example is in the city of Atlanta. In the last year-and-a-half 22 people have been killed by Atlanta's cops -- 21 of these have been Black. Blacks have hit the street in response to this terror many times and the YSA has been in the center of the protests. We are considered a central part of the fight against the terror of the police. Comrade Vince Eagan, for example, is a recognized leader of the struggles and has been involved in negotiations with Black Mayor Maynard Jackson on march permits, in discussions determining the nature of the actions and has spoken at most of the demonstrations.

We are also active in the Tyron Guyton Justice Committee in Oakland where the YSA and SWP are playing key roles in the committee, especially in opposing the sectarian perspective put forth by Maoist currents. This involves a case of the community responding to a brutal cop murder of a Black youth.

And after the SLA members were executed in Los Angeles, the YSA in alliance with other community forces helped to organize a protest demonstration against the terrorist methods used by the cops.

This example only indicates that the response to cop terror may not be as extensive as what is taking place in Atlanta. But nonetheless a response is possible and it is very important that one is organized when sentiment exists.

I'd like to say a few words on our view of cops. We do not consider cops as part of the working class. They are direct agents of the capitalist state. Their role is to break strikes and smash demonstrations organized by workers, Blacks and others oppressed by capitalism. This holds true for both white and Black cops as the Black community is surely learning in Atlanta. We are not for the reforming of the capitalist police force. We stand for its complete dismantling and abolition. We call for the expulsion of the police from the Black community and its replacement by a self-defense militia drawn from, selected by and controlled by the Black community.

4) The YSA has also been active in a number of defense cases and related activities. In some of these, we have

played an indispensable leadership role in the committees. For example, we are actively defending J. B. Johnson in St. Louis. Here again the YSA and SWP have played an important role in building a correct defense for this victimized Black youth. In this case we had to counterpose our defense strategy against that put forward by the Stalinists.

5) The YSA continues to play a very important role in the struggle of Black, Puerto Rican and Chinese parents and students for community control of their schools in New York City's school District One.

6) The YSA and SWP's lead in opposing Watergating of the Black movement has helped to further legitimize the YSA as a part of the Black movement. We have set an important example for Blacks on how to fight back against government repression.

The FBI memos on the Black movement, for example, printed in The Militant were picked up by many Black newspapers across the country, including many student papers. Many articles written in The Militant have been lifted and printed in other papers. Some Black groups on campus even ordered copies of The Militant insert on the FBI memos. The number of Black endorsers for the YSA suit has also grown.

7) The YSA has been active in an educational cutback fight in Washington, D. C., at Federal City College, which is 95 percent Black. Here white YSA comrades played a leading role in the struggle.

8) And lastly, the YSA's propaganda interventions at the Little Rock Black Political Convention and the Washington, D. C., African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC) conference on racism and imperialism has further improved the YSA's position in the Black movement. At both these gatherings the YSA and SWP planned and carried out big propaganda literature interventions. We drew up special leaflets and spoke in the workshops every chance we could. We had an important political impact on some of the participants of both conferences.

Another thing we saw at the Little Rock and ALSC conference was the interest in feminist literature. We sold a lot of women's liberation material, especially the pamphlet on Black women's liberation. The organized expression of feminism in the Black movement was first attempted last year when a National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) was founded. Although it hasn't done much since then, its founding was significant. And now, an African Women's Organization is being set up in Newark this weekend. The Congress of African People women are the organizers of the conference. Significantly, they invited Maxine Williams to speak for the SWP on the politics panel. The SWP was the only multinational group invited to the conference.

I think it is clear from these examples that the YSA has

been active in many Black struggles and around diverse issues over the past year. And in many of the cases, we have taken the lead in organizing the actions together with other groups in which we have gained some valuable experience and made important contacts. We want to continue this process over the summer and fall -- expand it and improve on it.

We recognize that the present period opens up many opportunities for the YSA even with our own limitations in terms of Black cadre and the objective limitation of the Black leadership being in the Democratic Party. It thus falls more and more on our shoulders, where it is realistic and possible, for the YSA to take the lead. This initiative can be very limited like a special leaflet as we did in Little Rock and Washington, D. C., or it can be more ambitious like our role in organizing the June 22 Portugal action in New York City.

Growing Discussion of Marxism

Now I would like to turn to the last part of the report. This is on the topic of a small layer of Blacks who are discussing and debating Marxist ideas. This layer was referred to and discussed briefly in the report we sent out on the ALSC conference a few weeks ago. I'm going to deal with this milieu a little more extensively than their actual political weight in the Black movement requires because we think there are some people in it that can be won to Trotskyism.

What we have is a group of people who have gone through different experiences and now see Marxism as relevant to the Black struggle. Although most of these people have different conceptions of what Marxism is, all to one degree or another think it important for Black militants to study Marxist ideas. They see this as necessary in their attempt to answer the fundamental question: What is the nature of Black oppression and how can it be eliminated?

This milieu is quite heterogenous and narrow. But their openness to Trotskyist ideas was shown at the ALSC conference where the YSA and SWP comrades intervening sold over \$200 of literature to just over 300 people, including 80 copies of Marxism vs. Maoism. Nearly half of the 300 people are in organized groups, a good percentage Maoist. But clearly most were not hardened Maoists or consciously against Trotskyism.

The nature of this milieu and what approach we want to take towards it was indicated by the discussion in the ALSC conference. Let me briefly summarize what happened at it.

First of all the conference was called by the leadership of the ALSC after a year of internal differences on what the nature of the ALSC should be; what perspectives it

should have. One wing of the group around the central leadership of the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOB) and its main ideological leader Owusu Sadaukai, were for transforming the ALSC into the Maoist conception of a "united front" organization -- that is, a general multi-issue organization against racism and imperialism. Thus, the ALSC would not focus its activities around Africa any more as it did when it was founded in 1972 after the first African Liberation Day demonstration.

The other wing of the group initially led by Imamu Baraka of the Congress of African People and other Pan Africanists was for keeping the ALSC as an organization focused on Africa -- not necessarily for organizing mass actions against the U. S. role or support to African liberation movements but mainly to keep within the concept of a Pan Africanist perspective as well as to keep Marxist ideas from infiltrating the ALSC.

At the May ALSC conference both of these views were defined as: one for the recognition of class oppression of Blacks and the need to have a class analysis of Black oppression; and one for the recognition of a more race or narrow nationalist view of the Black struggle, that is, only seeing Blacks being oppressed as a people.

The results of the conference were clearly for the ALSC being organized as a multi-issued, anti-racist and anti-imperialist Black so-called "united front" organization.

The Pan Africanists around Baraka, including Baraka in his speech to the conference, tended to agree with the perspective of the ALSC being a Black "anti-imperialist" organization, although a number of Baraka's former followers rejected this path because of their race or narrow nationalist view of Black oppression. These Pan Africanists still find it hard to read any writings by whites -- like Marx or Lenin. Thus, some groups once affiliated to CAP have broken with Baraka. The group in Philadelphia was expelled from CAP, for instance.

Those who held the class analysis of Black oppression encouraged people at the conference to read Marx, Lenin and Mao but also agreed that the ALSC should remain an all-Black group as an "anti-imperialist united front". Although they made it clear they thought it would be tactically correct for Blacks to make alliances with whites,

One of the more significant aspects of the conference was, in spite of the Maoist rhetoric thrown about by the leadership of the ALSC, the fact that most of the ALSC's rank-and-file and supporters are only now beginning to study Marxism. Therefore, as well as the fact that the YSA has been active in ALSC since it was formed, we were able to sell our literature and were allowed to speak from the floor of the conference.

We can compare the way we were received at this conference to the one a couple of weeks ago in Iowa City of the Attica Brigade, now Revolutionary Student Brigade, which is the so-called "united front" of anti-imperialist students. There we were threatened by some Maoists when we tried to sell our press and weren't allowed in the conference, although it was publicized as being open to all "anti-imperialist" youth.

But in the ALSC conference, as I said, this was not the case. The relationship of forces was not quite the same. This was true because of our activity as ALSC builders in a number of areas. We were known by many activists. Thus, it would have been very difficult for the leadership to keep us out of the conference. Also, the leadership is not totally hardened Maoists.

It was clear at the ALSC conference that most of those present had not yet come to the conclusion that Trotskyism is "anti-Marxist." Most are still studying Marx, Mao and Lenin to further define what their Marxism is. This fact indicates that there are opportunities for the YSA to make some contacts and possible recruits from this milieu. We understand in the final analysis these Blacks will have to choose from one of the three historic currents of the working class movement: Stalinism, either Moscow or Peking, Trotskyism or Social Democracy.

This small milieu can be roughly defined as three currents:

- 1) First, the followers of Owusu Sadaukai and members and supporters of the Youth Organization for Black Unity make up the first current. Sadaukai and YOB) leaders have been the central leaders of the ALSC from its inception. YOB) was the backbone for the first two ALD actions in 1972 and 1973. For both those actions, YOB) was still a Pan Africanist organization reading the thoughts of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and other leading African Pan Africanists. They didn't read Marx or Lenin then. This has all changed now. After discussions with African guerrilla groups and reanalyzing the state of the Black movement -- particularly seeing the failure of Black mayors and other Black capitalist politicians -- they reached the conclusion that Pan Africanism did not adequately explain the nature of Black oppression and how it could be ended. They correctly concluded that capitalism must go for Blacks to be free. This led them to read Marx, Lenin and Mao as well as to read African revolutionists like Guinea-Bissau's Amilcar Cabral, who was assassinated in January 1973.

Most of this ideological evolution, however, was restricted to the leadership of the organization. Their ranks are only now really beginning to study Marxism. This is important to recognize. It was clear at the D. C. conference. In some areas like the Boulder YOB), many of

their members have only begun to grapple with Marxist ideas and are still open to Trotskyism. Therefore, we must not view YOBU as a homogenous group. This is especially true for ALSC.

2) The main current is the Pan Africanists who support the views of Imamu Baraka of Newark. Baraka's followers are ardent Pan Africanists. But for the first time they are seriously reading Marxists ideas. For Baraka this is done not by him and his ranks to become Marxists, as he explains it, but to use Marxist writings and experiences to help to advance the fight for Black liberation in the U. S. Baraka holds the position that anyone who has led a revolution has some good ideas to contribute towards the eventual Black revolution -- struggle for Black liberation. Therefore, his followers read Marx, Lenin, Mao and some even read Trotsky. This is the viewpoint Baraka expressed at the ALSC conference.

Although I would add, Baraka's general day-to-day political orientation for the Black movement has not changed despite his new Marxist baggage. He still holds the view that working in the capitalist parties, primarily the Democratic party, is a tactical question that can at times be used to advance the Black liberation struggle. (This is also the position of the YOBU wing of the milieu.) However, at the conference Baraka did change slightly his view on the role of whites in any revolutionary struggle. He stated for the first time, Blacks and whites could make alliances around particular issues. Previous to that statement, he held that all whites were reactionary, including white workers. Thus no alliances could ever be consummated.

Because Baraka's rhetoric has been in constant flux for the last several months, our approach to this current should be based on what it is doing as it does it. We can't speculate today on what Baraka might say tomorrow. For example, Baraka's bookstore has books by Stalin, Mao and Trotsky. Bibi Baraka, Baraka's wife, recently said that CAP's position on the role of women was incorrect and is now undergoing changes. In the past CAP women would never speak at conferences but at the ALSC conference they were the most aggressive CAP members in political discussions. Even a recent issue of Unity and Struggle, CAP's newspaper, had a picture of Andrew Pulley, noting that he was one of the Black leaders present at the ALSC conference.

The key point, however, is to recognize the fact that most of the CAP youth reading Marx do not fully comprehend all of Baraka's rhetoric. They will likely take much of the Marxist literature they read as good coin. It is these people in particular that we want to reach with our ideas and program. This is exactly the approach we are taking at this African Women's conference in Newark:

talking to as many of the CAP youth that we can. We'll make a few contacts out of these discussions.

3) The last current consists of a very small handful of Blacks who were never active in the Pan Africanist movement but who are now studying Marxism. For example, there is such a group, the Socialist Collective, in Los Angeles of about 15 people. The main leader, I think, was in the Workers League.

This last group of people is very loose and has few organized forms that we are aware of. Many are Blacks who attend socialist study groups on campus.

There is one general conclusion we can immediately draw from this information; most of these Blacks at the present time identify, to one degree or another, Marxism with Maoism. Very few, if any, identify Marxism with its revolutionary continuator today -- Trotskyism. This is an important point to recognize in order to have a correct approach to the overall milieu.

The basic approach we should take is the following:

First, we should have a fraternal attitude in the discussions and debates we have with the leadership as well as with the ranks of the different currents of the milieu, especially in discussions with Baraka's followers and those around the YOBU wing of ALSC. The best way for the YSA to have frank discussions with the ranks is by having fraternal and honest discussions with the leadership -- as much as they will allow it.

We think it is good that a layer of Black militants see Marxism as necessary to adequately deal with and understand the nature of Black oppression. It only confirms what we say in the Black transitional program: only a socialist perspective can solve the problems facing Blacks. We should accept their desire to learn Marxism as good coin and then move on and discuss with them what the real Marxists are doing and saying. We do not have to bring out the mallet if a few of them say it is a tactical question to vote for a capitalist party. Our approach should be pedagogic: to patiently explain what Marxism is and what it isn't. This should not limit the firmness of our polemics on Maoism, Stalinism, class collaborationism, etc., but only place these discussions in their proper context.

Second, it is not only important to have debates and discussions with this milieu and other Blacks open to Marxist ideas but it is also very important to get them involved in common action. The most likely issue this will be possible on in the fall is the question of Portugal and African independence. The seriousness of any Black militant will be tested by their participation or lack of it in organizing support for the Portuguese colonies through united front

activities.

And lastly, we should consider organizing special activities directed at this milieu. This can be forums on Marxism and the Black movement, Stalinism and Blacks, Maoism, etc. This can either be classes or debates or panel discussions. For example, right after the May 25 ALSC action the chairman of the ALSC, Gene Locke, spoke at the Houston Militant forum on the African revolution.

We must think through what will be best and most useful in each area, which is our main concern. This should include seeking out common action where possible with the milieu. I would add, also, that any campus classes on Marxism and the Black movement that we organize should be done in a way to attract other Blacks or white students interested in the topics being discussed.

Of course, this special attention we want to pay towards this small milieu, where we consider it worthwhile, is only one small aspect of the YSA's overall intervention in the Black liberation movement. The key tools we use to intervene in the movement still remain the sales of The Militant and Young Socialist and the distribution of Pathfinder lit-

erature, YSA youth support work for the SWP election campaigns, and other propaganda activities we organize including local initiatives we take around specific issues.

Finally, in the context of the propaganda offensive we should step up and professionalize our one-to-one contact work. This cannot be overstressed. Recruitment of Blacks to the YSA is the most important task before us. The YWLL and the Maoists have more Black members than we do, although, I would quickly add, the YSA's Black membership today is by far the most politically capable Black cadre the YSA has ever had in its entire history.

Besides recruitment work, constant education on racism and capitalism, Stalinism and the Black movement and other topics are very important for our ranks.

In conclusion, the leadership of each local should provide proper attention on how Black work is organized in their local. We still consider it important that a comrade is assigned as Black work director to oversee and coordinate the local's Black work through the appropriate leadership bodies. Every local should make this assignment.

YSA RECRUITMENT

(The following are transcriptions of remarks made at the YSA Recruitment workshop at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, in August, 1974.)

By Scott Breen, Seattle local

My remarks relate mainly to locals that don't have large local struggles to intervene in right now such as the Wounded Knee defense work or local struggles against police brutality. But all locals do organize regular sales of our press and in Seattle we've found that these sales open up important recruitment opportunities.

Since the YSA convention, we've recruited 14 new comrades to the Seattle local and well over half of these people were first met through sales of our press. Our press serves as a beacon to a layer of people who are disgusted with what's going on around them but don't see what they can do about it or exactly why it's happening. Then they meet a salesperson and read The Militant or the Young Socialist which provides them with some answers, alternatives, and points them in the right direction -- our direction.

To give you an example, we were selling at a public market place where a lot of young people shop and one person came up to a comrade who was selling the YS and said, "Where have you been? I've been looking all over for you." She joined the YSA two weeks later.

Our opponents really hate the YS and Militant. Not only do they disagree with our political views, but they recognize that our press is a vehicle through which we can meet, talk to, and win people to our ideas and movement who may have initially come around activities of our opponents. For instance, the Revolutionary Union organized an impeachment demonstration in downtown Seattle that drew about 40 or 50 people. We sent a sales crew to it and in the course of their sales, comrades met one young person who came to the forum that night, started reading The Militant regularly and joined the YSA a couple of weeks later.

We're on a very aggressive sales campaign, and that aggressive sales outlook should carry over into an aggressive recruitment outlook as well. We're selling The Militant and YS not just to reach out with our ideas to broad layers of people -- although this is a very important goal of our sales campaigns. But we're also selling the press in order to meet people -- to talk with them, find out what their political interests are and to let them know what we stand for. And at that first meeting we want to begin the process of involving them in political activities and recruiting them to the YSA.

Sometimes comrades aren't quite sure how to do this --

how to begin a conversation with someone who buys a Militant or YS. One of the first things that I often do is just ask the person, "Are you a socialist?" And a lot of times people will say, "Yeah, I am." So I start a discussion by suggesting that they should be in a socialist organization and begin to explain what the YSA does and what it stands for.

But there are other ways to begin a political conversation as well. For instance, in telling someone about an upcoming forum, you can ask if they know anything about the subject and get into a discussion about that. Or you can do the same thing with an article in the paper they just bought. The point is that we want to engage these people in discussions, find out about them, and let them know more about us.

Then, the next step is to figure out how we can involve them in further activities outside of discussions. One of the first things we can do is continue the discussion but in another type of situation. We would, for instance, bring them to the bookstore where there's all kinds of activity going on and lots of literature that might interest them. Another thing is to invite them to dinner before the next forum.

In Seattle, we also organized a series of classes every Saturday after sales with the idea that we'd meet some people during the course of sales that we could bring to the classes as well as other contacts. One Saturday a comrade met a woman downtown and introduced her to the YS for the first time. The comrade told her about a class that afternoon on the SLA and terrorism in general. She came to that class, and afterwards a few of the comrades had dinner with her. We used the large book, The Militant, 45 Years in the Struggle for Socialism, as a tool to show how we've been consistent fighters throughout The Militant's history in all struggles, like the Vietnam war, not only from 1963 on, but way back in 1950 and 1951. It turned out to be a very useful way of inspiring this individual with a sense of the revolutionary traditions of the Trotskyist movement.

We have involved contacts in sales of the socialist press and the SWP campaign endorser drive. We've also been successful in bringing contacts to YSA meetings. One of the things to keep in mind is that we can't get discouraged if someone says that they'll meet us at the headquarters the next day or come to a YSA meeting and then doesn't show up. For instance, one person was going to come to a YSA meeting, and when she didn't come we weren't sure if it was because she just wasn't interested or what. So we called her up and said why don't you come over for dinner next Sunday and afterwards we'll go to the YSA meeting. Well she did come for dinner that week and joined at the meeting that night.

The main point we need to stress in our recruitment work is that we have to take time out with the people we meet through sales or other activities -- talk with them, explain our ideas, get them involved in our activities and inspire them out of the cynicism that a lot of youth feel right now, and give them a sense of the alternative that our movement represents.

By Betsy Farley, Twin Cities local

I don't think that we can over stress the importance of a strong campus fraction in our recruitment work. Since the YSA convention, 25 new comrades have joined the Twin Cities local -- 23 of them, in one way or another, came around us through our campus work.

In order to take full advantage of the recruitment opportunities on campus, we not only need a large number of comrades on campus, but also, a large number of leading comrades on campus. During the winter and spring we had a fraction at the University of Minnesota of 15 to 20 people including half of the executive committee. Having most of the YSA leadership on campus means that we can make sure that our strategy and our priorities are clearly thought through, that we're on top of the most important issues, intervening in struggles and doing our best recruitment work.

We found that through our participation in local struggles we can help people understand why it's important for the YSA to exist and how we are different from other political tendencies. When we are in the leadership of a struggle, it is our strategy that moves the struggle ahead because it inspires confidence among those involved -- as well as broader forces -- of their own power. For instance, in defending the Wounded Knee victims we were able to explain to people the key role that the YSA was playing in organizing demonstrations and other activities, especially on campus.

After the YSA convention, we sat down and planned out a strategy for recruitment at the University of Minnesota campus. At that point we had a fraction of nearly 20 comrades. We figured that organizing recruitment was necessary if we were to make the gains that we had the potential to make over the winter and spring.

We set up a series of eight contact classes which covered different aspects of our program. We explained to people that these classes were a way for them to learn about the YSA's politics, and would help them decide whether or not to join. Throughout the class series, we encouraged people to get involved in our activities such as selling the Young Socialist and Militant and participating in the struggles that we were involved in.

For the spring, we planned a shorter, four-week class series because we found that the eight-week series ran into

the end of the quarter and finals so attendance tended to drop off a little bit towards the end. We planned this series more consciously according to who we thought we could recruit. There were a number of people around us from a childcare struggle that we had been involved in. So we organized the class series with this in mind. And we wanted to do something particularly related to the Wounded Knee defense so we organized a class on the socialist view of the Indian struggle.

We also had a lot of comrades going to the classes so that after the class broke up there would be a comrade to talk to every contact at the class.

We put out leaflets to publicize this series. However, we didn't mass leaflet for these classes as we do for campus forums. We wanted to draw people that were interested in joining the YSA. We would give leaflets to people who bought our press, have them on our literature tables, pass them out at political meetings and see that our contacts got them. We also did calling periodically to invite people to the classes. Generally, we had between eight and fifteen contacts come to the classes every week.

The best result of the classes was getting comrades to think in terms of recruitment. We used the series as a way to initiate discussions with people we met. Comrades would take leaflets around with them all the time and at our campus fraction meetings we would discuss who was coming to the classes, how we could make the classes better, who should be coming that wasn't and who should contact them to make sure they came. The whole campus fraction as well as a good part of the local began viewing recruitment as a part of all the work that we do. So the local wasn't just setting aside a time to recruit and another time to sell, but everything was recruitment work and it worked out very well.

These classes on campus were also useful in recruiting some high school students. We met a number of radical high school students at political events on campus and we talked to them about coming to the series. As a result of being conscious about talking to these high school students, bringing them to the classes and involving them in other activities, two people joined.

Since the YSA convention we have recruited six high school students in Twin Cities. We recruited them through forums and classes, USLA work, YS sales at high schools and Wounded Knee activities. This fall we're going to have a high school work fraction with five people on it to organize our high school work in a more consistent and thought out way. Three comrades will be at one school, and it is just about the most important high school in the whole city, so our work should go very well.

The biggest lesson we drew from our experience is what

can be accomplished if we are well organized.

By Mike Weisman, Atlanta local

Since last July, a little more than a year ago, the Atlanta local has enjoyed consistent recruitment. We've recruited a total of 35 people in that period of time, including 15 Black comrades and 17 women.

Our recruitment of 15 comrades in the past six months has been the product of three general things. First, our participation and leading role in a number of local activities, in particular the fight against police terror, the student government election campaign we ran at Georgia State last winter and our participation in the ERA activities.

Second has been the use of our sales, the bookstore and our election campaign to bring our program to activists in the local struggles as well as to other people who know about our participation in these struggles and want to find out who we are and what we represent.

And lastly, the aggressiveness of the whole local towards recruitment.

Participating in local struggles has been an important way to build a base and sink roots in the city. Through the fractions that are directly involved in building struggles we have also been able to recruit activists to our movement and integrate them into our political work. So we primarily organize our recruitment through the existing fractions and committees.

For instance, during the Georgia State election campaign there were a number of people on campus who became active in distributing material for our campaign. We organized their participation by involving them in meetings every morning with comrades on the campus fraction to plan out the day's campaign work -- leafleting, making announcements in classes, etc. In this way the supporters would participate like other comrades in the campaign.

We've had good success with fractions and committees assigning someone to talk with contacts regularly, to make sure that they are invited to all of our various functions, not just the day-to-day work of the fraction, but also drawing them into city-wide YSA activities like banquets and forums. These activities allow contacts to gain a broader perspective of YSA activities and what we stand for.

We've also found that YSA meetings are important recruitment tools for this same reason. For instance, one person who was involved in the ERA activities became very interested in the YSA after coming to a YSA meeting and hearing reports about our Georgia State election campaign and other YSA activities.

The fractions discuss the contacts that they've made, who should get in touch with them, invite them to YSA meetings and other activities. But these discussions don't just happen automatically. We had to make a conscious decision to place the discussion of contact work on the agenda of every fraction and committee meeting.

The Socialist Workers Party campaigns have been very important for our participation in local struggles and our ability to draw people around our movement and to recruit. Debbie Bustin, our candidate for mayor in 1973 was known throughout Atlanta as a supporter of the various struggles that were taking place.

For instance Debbie used her radio time to publicize and explain the demands of the Black workers on strike at Rich's department store.

Vince Egan, the SWP gubernatorial candidate, has become a well known leader in the struggle against police terror. This has helped to bring people around our movement and has made the YSA a more attractive organization for people to join.

Many of the people that we have drawn around us we met through sales. A lot of our sales take place downtown which is right near the bookstore. When we meet people we always encourage them to go up to the bookstore, and if an individual seems particularly interested, the salesperson will often take the time off to go there with him or her.

The bookstore itself has been very useful. We have a big sign downstairs and a number of people have come up to the bookstore just from seeing it.

When somebody comes to our bookstore it usually means that that person has some kind of interest in our ideas. We have the approach that no matter how busy things are around the hall, we make sure that a comrade stops what he or she is doing and engages that person in a political discussion. That's been one of the best ways that we've recruited a number of our Black comrades in Atlanta -- just through people coming up to the bookstore and having discussions with them.

We've had a general approach of encouraging people to join the YSA very quickly. We can do this because we understand that recruitment doesn't end after somebody officially joins the YSA. In Atlanta we have a very conscious approach to involving and developing our new comrades.

First we make sure that new comrades immediately become involved in the work of one or another committee or fraction. We want every new member to be given some responsibility and to have the opportunity to work with a

variety of comrades, including SWP and YSA leaders.

We've also established a very effective class series on the fundamentals of Marxism. This series has been very important for beginning to answer the many questions that new members have on Marxist ideas and the revolutionary movement.

We've also made sure that more experienced comrades have informal discussions with the new comrades. This is very important for making the new members feel comfortable about asking questions. Such discussions often take place at our socials.

Our approach to YSA meetings is also important. Executive committee comrades call the members every week to find out if they are planning to come to the meeting and to motivate its importance. Sometimes we even arrange rides. We've found that this calling has made a big difference in meeting attendance. We also have put a lot of thought into making meetings educational. We try to aim the reports at explaining and motivating our work, particularly to new members and the contacts that we bring to the meetings. In this way the meetings play a real role in the integration of new members and help to inspire others to join.

We've found that the central factor in our recruitment work has been aggressiveness on two levels. First is our aggressive approach to the local opportunities around a variety of political issues, our sales of the YS and Militant and our election campaign. And second is our ability to take that aggressiveness a step further in our approach to people on a one-to-one basis. How much an individual gets out of a visit to the bookstore, attending a forum or YSA meeting or stopping by a literature table largely depends upon the effort that comrades put into talking to them, introducing them to the YSA and encouraging them to become active with us. This aggressive and open attitude is spreading throughout the entire local with exciting results.

By Gaile Wixson, Oakland-Berkeley local

Since the YSA convention, Oakland-Berkeley has recruited 23 people: 10 women, 4 Chicanos and 1 Black. In this report, I want to center in on the organizational forms and ways through which we were able to involve our contacts in activities and recruit them.

In Berkeley, our recruitment committee functioned as a real work committee that met every week, early in the week, to discuss and sift through all of the names that we would get from our various political activities. The focus of the committee was very defined. We picked out five or six people that we thought were very close to the YSA and then one or two that we concentrated our efforts on, having discussions and involving them in our activities.

We found that the scatter gun approach in recruitment

didn't work, that recruitment took long discussions and we wanted to make sure that we had discussions with the most interested contacts. The recruitment committee gave us the organizational tool to act quickly when we met potential new recruits. When you are involved in recruitment activity, timing can be very important. Someone may feel like joining now and then a month later they won't feel like it -- you've got to be there when they're really interested in the YSA.

The five or six names that the committee selected were divided up among the committee members and we contacted them early in the week and set up a dinner. The dinners were held Friday night before the forums in comrades' homes.

The committee consisted of five comrades plus the recruitment director. The recruitment director was an executive committee member. This person was responsible for being familiar with all the contacts and guiding the selection of the best contacts to invite to dinners. The recruitment director was also responsible for a newsletter that we sent out every week to 10 or 15 of our closest contacts. The newsletter explained the local activities that we were going to be involved in and encouraged them to come to the local meeting and the campus fraction meeting. All areas of external campaigns were represented on the recruitment committee -- campaign, UFW, women's liberation, Black work and forums. In this way we were able to get those different committees to have an agenda point on recruitment at fraction and committee meetings and make it more of a conscious part of their work. This also helped in bringing a change of consciousness in the whole local towards recruitment.

Specifically on the recruitment dinners, we were very successful in providing a relaxed informal atmosphere in which we could have discussion with these people about the YSA. We could find out their questions and if there were any obstacles to their joining the YSA, we tried to eliminate them. The reason that we put so much emphasis on dinners is that right now any recruitment we do takes a certain amount of discussion and we didn't want to leave this up to chance; we wanted to organize it consistently.

We involved executive and recruitment committee members plus a new YSAer and the contact in these dinners. In this way we were able to accomplish integration -- helping to develop new recruiters who recently joined -- and recruitment at the same time. To make sure that the dinners came off, we often organized rides for the contacts. We had an average of three to four dinners per week and sometimes as many as six or seven. They were definitely instrumental in our recruitment.

In addition to the dinners, we were able to involve contacts in activities of the YSA. Each week in the campus

fraction meetings there was a separate point on recruitment. We worked out a buddy system in which every member of the the campus fraction took the name of a contact who they worked with consistently for the next week or two -- bringing them to activities, having discussions with them and making sure that they got to the YSA meeting and to the fraction meeting.

We found that it was especially important and possible to involve contacts in the day-to-day work of the campus fractions. Many times it's easier for you to make a leaflet yourself than to teach a contact how to do it; that's not the right approach. We have to think of every contact as a potential member and take the time to teach them how to participate in all of our activities, whether it's teaching them how to sell or how to raise money from professors for PRDF.

We also had a contact class series at the University of California at Berkeley. It lasted about six weeks and covered international and national issues of general concern to students. We built them by sending out a brochure to a list of about 100 campaign supporters and other contacts. We held the classes in the YSA office on campus because our papers were there, the Pathfinder literature, our participation charts, etc. After the class, discussions would naturally develop about the YSA's activities and what it meant to join the YSA.

The classes were held on Friday, which we saw as a big recruitment day. After the classes the students that attended were invited to dinner, then to the forum and then out

for a beer. By the end of the day, they really knew a lot more about the YSA. Also, as a result of the classes on campus, we were able to get a number of independents to run on the Young Socialist for Rodriguez slate who later joined the YSA.

With the beginning of the California SWP campaign, the names of endorsers began pouring in and there was no way for the recruitment committee to handle all of these names. We worked out a close collaboration with the campaign committee, focusing our attention on recruiting YSR supporters. Since the campaign director was a part of the recruitment committee, each week we would have three or four names of outstanding endorsers brought to the recruitment committee meeting. We would then try to recruit these people through dinners and other activities as well as generally trying to activate all campaign endorsers.

At high points of the campaign, the whole YSA and SWP pooled their efforts to get endorsers to attend a campaign rally, banquet or educational conference. Comrades in the YSA each took four or five names to call and the results were written down for later use by the recruitment and campaign committees. To build the final big campaign activity for the spring leg of the campaign, we organized a visiting campaign. Each YSA member took the name of one potential recruit and went to visit him or her two weeks in advance of the event, sold tickets and organized rides for them. In that way we were successful in bringing a lot of contacts and having individual discussions with people about our politics.

YOUTH SUPPORT WORK

(The following are transcriptions of remarks made at the Youth Support workshop at the Socialist Activists and Educational Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, in August, 1974.)

By Susie Berman, Philadelphia local

In Philadelphia this year, we were faced with an entirely new situation: this was the first time we were able to launch a statewide campaign with two party branches and two YSA center locals. This, along with the fact that Philadelphia and Pittsburgh were sharing a YS team, really determined the scope of our campaign and the type of projections that we made.

Within this context, we projected the youth support work we planned to carry out during the spring. The most important decision we made was that, unlike before, all the Young Socialists for Scherr and Adachi (YSSA) work was going to be directed through the YSA executive committee, rather than the campaign committee.

Every aspect of youth support work was discussed during the tasks and perspectives report in the executive committee and was seen from the beginning as a primary focus for all of the activities of the YSA. We've never done this before, and it proved to be very successful.

Since the campaign was one of the major propaganda offensives of the spring, we fully discussed, formally and informally, how we were going to approach youth support work. This included not only the kind of tasks we wanted to project, but also discussing in the local as well as the executive committee the whole concept of youth support groups.

The first thing we projected was an endorser drive. We decided to initiate this as a way to reach out to as many people as possible, to get them on the mailing list and draw them closer to the YSA through campaign activities. This was the kind of project we could involve campaign supporters in, as well as regional comrades and the team that was to go out in the spring. It was projected as a public drive that we made very open from the beginning.

In the executive committee, in the tasks and perspectives report, we discussed what kind of goal we thought we could project and came up with the figure of 350, based on where we thought we could get endorsers. Campuses, the work of the team, and every area of work including sales on the streets on Saturday were considered in determining this goal. We projected this as a three month endorser drive starting in the beginning of January and ending with our campaign rally in April.

We also set an additional goal for the team, separate from the local's goal and during the whole course of the campaign kept a chart of how Philadelphia was doing, how the team was doing and also how the Pittsburgh endorser drive was coming along.

It became a challenge for comrades to go out, talk to everybody around us and get as many endorsers as possible. A comrade was assigned at every forum and every other activity to get endorsers. Besides making it possible for us to reach out to a large layer of people, it was also a good opportunity for comrades to talk to contacts about the YSA. It became a regular part of our activity from day to day.

At first, as we began to accumulate a steady, growing list of contacts, they were called up about our campaign activities and every aspect of our work. After a period of time, we started to get a large number of endorsers, and realized it was becoming cumbersome to handle a mailing list of 350 people in this way. So we began to narrow it down to key in on a few individuals we thought we could recruit to the YSA. This key list was called on practically a weekly basis about our forums, our campaign and other activities. The drive was very successful in making comrades aware of talking to contacts that came around the YSA.

In the initial discussions in the executive committee we had arguments about the number of endorsers we should project. We felt that 350 was a very high goal and comrades were going to have to work very hard to reach it. By the end of February, we had already surpassed 350 and decided to increase our projection to 500. We met that goal by the end of the spring.

One other area of campaign work that we wanted to establish was a way of reaching out to people in the city on a consistent basis. We decided on what we called the "campaign Saturday". We established that as a one-time-a-month event involving comrades and contacts. We would meet at the headquarters and go out and set up seven or eight campaign tables around the city and sell campaign literature. When we were petitioning, we used the "campaign Saturdays" to help reach out with our petitions and sell The Militant and Young Socialist.

On the first "campaign Saturday" we began with a short 10-minute rally. We got a few contacts to participate, as well as all the comrades. By the end of the day we found that we had sold over 400 papers, which is the most we have ever sold in Philadelphia in one day. This was just the beginning of a steady increase of sales. By the last campaign day we were up to selling 700 papers on "campaign Saturdays".

"Campaign Saturdays" were organized in close conjunction with the sales committee. The sales directors and campaign directors would sit down and plan out the day and decide where it was politically important to set up tables. It proved to be successful and comrades were very excited about it.

In addition we found that although there wasn't a huge layer of contacts who were coming to our campaign days, there was a small number who did come and immediately started selling The Militant for the first time -- people who had been around us for a really long time. One person who's been around through the Irish defense work was sent our mailing and called up. Although he didn't come down to most other activities, he came to every "campaign Saturday" for the whole spring, and became a very high Militant salesperson.

One other thing we did toward the end of the spring was to have street rallies along with our "campaign Saturdays" where we would have either Roberta Scherr, our candidate for governor, or a combination of two of our candidates speaking. These proved even more successful than our regular "campaign Saturdays".

We had our first campaign rally at city hall, which is in downtown Philadelphia. At city hall alone, in a period of just a few hours, we sold 180 papers and found a lot of people were interested in what we were doing. We also started getting a lot more press coverage and everyone in the city knew who we were.

One other project that the YSSA launched was a regular monthly campaign newsletter. This proved to be very important in keeping our contacts up on what the campaign was doing. Another aspect of the newsletter was that we used all the comrades in the YSA to help put it together. It didn't just include the activities of the campaign per se, such as our petitioning or endorser drive, but also everything we were involved in from USLA to Farm Workers support activities. We found that through the newsletter contacts would show up at events, even though they had not gotten a specific leaflet for one thing or another.

The newsletter was the main way we brought the endorser drive and "campaign Saturdays" to our periphery. We made sure that everyone in our periphery and that of the Socialist Workers Party got the newsletter so they would find out what was going on.

I think the most important aspects of the youth support work that we did over the spring were to establish two things. First of all, that youth support work for SWP campaigns is a YSA area of work. We wanted it to be directed through the YSA executive committee and have the whole local involved in thinking out how we wanted to handle it and how to use our youth support work to recruit to the YSA.

The other aspect is that it provides a real opportunity to involve all the comrades in the branch and local in our campaign activities.

By John Hummer, San Jose local

I want to talk about Young Socialists for Rodriguez work in San Jose, a regional local. San Jose is a city which encompasses an urban area of more than a million people which makes it California's fourth largest city. Among its demographic features are its large Chicano community, perhaps the second-largest in the Southwest, and a large liberal, white-collar professional working class. It was the San Jose local's responsibility to bring the socialist alternative to the capitalist parties to this area.

The San Jose local is small, and we're rather spread out, so the question revolved around how best to maximize our impact. We decided on the following tactics:

We billed Olga's first appearance as San Jose's first socialist rally. We decided to concentrate our efforts around the university community (San Jose State) and in the Chicano community of the east side. We felt that these would be the most receptive areas. We distributed 8,000 leaflets and put up 500 posters.

Two things we paid special attention to was the tremendous collaboration and cooperation which the San Francisco and Berkeley centers gave to us and which helped to build and plan for this rally. Comrades from these locals were invaluable, in their help and in coming down for sales and leafleting forays.

Another important thing that we paid attention to was finances. This is really important, especially for a small local like ours. Our financial director and the regional organizer made firm and well-rounded financial plans on everything from socials to booking a large and inexpensive hall in which to hold the rally. We raised over \$100 from the rally for Olga's campaign, and all our expenses were met.

Most of the people attending the rally were Northern California comrades and sympathizers, and there was a sprinkling of independents from San Jose.

All in all, our first rally was very successful. We got the name of the YSA, the name of the Socialist Workers Party and the names of Olga Rodriguez and Dan Styron out. We look forward to improving that in the fall.

There's another aspect to our election policy. San Jose has a reputation of being a Mafia retirement community. But there is a more dangerous animal in San Jose: the Communist Party. Well, this animal decided to creep out of its burrough and see its shadow. And thus, Jack Kurzweil,

a well-known CP member, ran for county tax assessor, a relatively unimportant office. He ran on a totally reformist platform, that any good democrat could have espoused and support. This provided us with the opportunity to show his reformist candidacy as a contrast to the program of our socialist campaign. So, we decided to give Kurzweil critical support. We issued a leaflet (which was reprinted in The Militant) urging a vote for Kurzweil as a working class candidate, and then listed at length our criticism of his program and the reformist policies of the CP. We posed our program as the real socialist alternative and urged a vote for Olga Rodriguez for Governor.

We attended his campaign meetings, leaflets in hand, and asked embarrassing questions in a polite way. For instance, "Why are you running for such an obscure office," and how would he use the power (a phrase he liked to use) of the tax assessor's office to improve the oppressive tax structures of San Jose. And I have to say that our work has born fruit because through all of this, we've not only recruited, but we've gained a large and interested periphery,

By Jack Lieberman, Upper West Side local

During the past few years, one of the major projections of the YSA nationally has been to expand our work in the high schools. There are literally thousands of students in the high schools who are looking for solutions to society's problems -- solutions which only the SWP campaign and the Young Socialist Alliance can provide. One of the major vehicles for getting the YSA into the high schools is through campaign youth support work.

This spring in New York City, we were able to take a major step forward in this area of work through the organization of outdoor campaign street rallies at several high schools around the city. Each local singled out one or two high schools, and did preparatory work before the rallies. We went to them several weeks in advance, on a regular basis each week. We gave out campaign materials, sold the Young Socialist and got into discussions with students to get a feel for the overall political life of the high schools.

We found it was better to single out a few high schools so that we wouldn't spread ourselves too thin, and so we could have the maximum impact at the high schools we chose to hit. One thing we learned was that you don't need to have high school comrades to do high school work, although it does help. High school work should be thought out by the local leadership. It shouldn't be just the concern of the campaign committee, the sales committee or high school comrades. It should be discussed out in the executive committee and local and a leading comrade assigned to keep on top of it.

Where there are campuses near high schools, one thing

that we have done at several high schools in New York is to have campus fractions carry out work at those high schools, and work with comrades who might be at those high schools. The Lower Manhattan local was able to do this at Julia Richmond H. S., having the Hunter fraction do regular sales there, and later on held a very successful campaign rally at Julia Richmond H. S.

If the preparatory campaign and sales work is done, we find that students will be familiar with us when we bring our candidates to the school and will be fairly receptive. In New York, we didn't pre-publicize the rallies, because we thought that the administration might stop them. At that time we didn't want to get into any confrontation with the administration concerning our right to have rallies. What we did was quickly hit the high schools, and by the time the administration came out the rally was just about over.

We also found out that bullhorns -- although they're preferable at rallies -- aren't really necessary if we do advance work in building the rallies and hitting them several weeks in advance. At several high schools, the administration came out and said we didn't have a permit, and that we couldn't have a bullhorn. But we found out that if we bring six or seven comrades to the high school, have a banner, go at a time when students are around we can have comrades talk to people and bring them up to our table to meet the candidate.

One thing we are going to want to look for in New York, is opportunities to actually establish our rights to hold rallies at the high schools.

Another thing we tried out in building the campaign through these rallies was to put out a campaign statement specially addressed to high school students. This spring we reprinted Derrick Morrison's speech about high school student unemployment and the summer job crunch. We got a very good response, and were able to get into many very fruitful discussions.

The rallies were an overwhelming success. At Erasmus H. S. in Brooklyn, for instance, over 50 papers were sold a week before the rally, and at the rally, we signed up 19 endorsers.

This year in New York, we're planning to blitz the high schools when they open. We're projecting a one-week high school tour of the candidates in mid-September. This is actually a little bit later than the opening of school, because we'll want to do some preparatory work first. Although many students will know us from last spring, there'll be new students coming into the schools.

We want to become acquainted with some faculty members

in order to speak before their classes. We were able to do this at several high schools this spring. We had Sam Manuel, SWP candidate for Controller, speak to about five classes at Julia Richmond H. S. We also had some candidates speak at Music and Art H. S. where we have comrades.

One other approach we should take where we have comrades is to run student government election campaigns in the high schools. In many high schools, the YSA doesn't even have to be a recognized organization. We were able to do this last fall at Music and Art H. S. We were able to tie in the campaign with the statewide campaign, build a periphery and get the YSA recognized there. We're going to be running a campaign there again this fall.

We should involve high school endorsers not only in campaign activities, but also other YSA activities. We'll find out that many people we run into will be interested in doing work around African Liberation support, USLA or PRDF. On the Upper West Side, one high school campaign endorser is now working as a full time staff member in the New York USLA office. Another, who was an editor of a school paper printed a PRDF article. Another thing I think we should look for is opportunities to form campaign supporters groups in the high schools.

In the Upper West Side, we're going to have a separate campaign committee which can think out youth support work. It will work closely with the branch committee but concentrate on youth support work in the high schools and on the campuses to give it the kind of attention that is needed. We thought that through a separate campaign committee, we could better involve newer YSA members in campaign work, invite contacts and take advantage of the opportunities both in the high schools and on the college campuses.

One thing that we learned in New York was that with a well thought-out, organized and aggressive approach we can make major gains in youth support activities in the high schools and build the YSA.

By Jon Olmstead, San Francisco local

In San Francisco we found that we were able to go into high schools with the campaign. We began almost cold but came out after a period of almost three months with a functioning youth support group of about six, with their own periphery that was larger than that.

We had an extremely close collaboration between the sales committee and the campaign committee. The only way we found to get into a high school and make contacts with students was to sell. Instead of projecting high volume sales or a large sales campaign, we sold our press with the specific objective of finding high school students who were interested in the campaign. We also took a whole arsenal

of literature: campaign literature, YSA literature and especially leaflets for forums and other activities that were coming up.

Before we even started in a high school, we had an idea of what we could accomplish in that school and what we could get students involved in. The main vehicle for that was a campaign tour of the high school and a class series at the high school, organized by the high school students on a weekly basis.

When we went to the school and sold a paper, we would hand them a campaign brochure and say, "Olga Rodriguez will be here and available to speak at this high school. Would you like to work on that, and see what you could do to organize a tour?" That prospect is very alluring to high school students; it is something that they can take responsibility for from the outset.

And that's what we did. We gave the high school contacts a tremendous amount of responsibility. But we called them up every night and worked closely with them in building the tour. We had very little problem in setting up five or six teachers that were willing to have the candidates come in and speak to their classes.

We found teachers' fears about having a socialist in the classroom was not a large problem. There were a number of teachers who wanted to organize joint classes with three or four classes coming together in the school. It never got to the point of a full-blown assembly, but it was easier than we thought with the teachers.

We tried to bunch the classes as closely as possible for the candidates' convenience and then have a time after school or at lunchtime when there would be a general meeting for discussion with interested students. We also organized the sign up list in the classes somewhat scientifically. The candidates would incorporate it into their speeches and at a certain predetermined point say, "We are now going to hand out a list for those people who are interested." Then they would hand it out along with three back copies of the paper and a platform. We would get on the average 35 or 40 percent of the students to sign up for more information or to join the YSA. It's possible to do several tours within the same high school with different candidates. Each tour opens up new teachers and new contacts that can help build another tour.

The next step is to consolidate the people you have at that high school. We started a class series at the school. We focused on smaller projects like this rather than putting pressure on these people to go out and start getting endorsers or selling the Young Socialist.

For such classes, it's best to use materials like "What

Socialists Stand For" by Stephanie Coontz; literature that they can read and then come back and discuss. On the class series itself, the students again can take the responsibility. They make the decision about what the name of the class series is, the different classes, where it will be held and how it will be built. For example, they came up with the title, "High School Students vs. Watergate Politicians," and a poster with a big picture of Nixon on it, which was much more appealing than if we had done it.

By the time school ended, we realized that we had just begun to tap the potential. Afterwards, we thought about what we could do in the fall and the first thing we thought of was that the campaign can open a whole round of testing democracy in the high school. Although we didn't run into difficulty, the students may have problems in setting up tables, getting recognized or running for student government. In Sacramento last fall, we did have a student running for student government in his high school. I believe it was a junior high school. The principal said, "Well, you know

you're really going a little too far. You really can't do this." The student replied, "We're suing the government for 27.5 million dollars, would you like to be a defendant?"

Another great possibility, I think; is that of debates within the high schools. It could be one of our supporters, with a candidate and a bourgeois candidate; that's an obvious possibility.

On recruiting some of these young people: once you've worked with them for a couple of weeks, they've already been down to the hall several times, learning how to build their own activities, it's a very simple question of them coming to the local meeting. One of the most important things we found, though, is having the same individual working with the same people for a period of time. Contacts get very disoriented if their name travels the route of the recruitment committee and someone ends up calling them and saying, "Hi, Joe, you don't know me, but..." It's much more important to develop a personal rapport.

TWO ORGANIZATIONAL PROPOSALS

By Jon Kegler, New Haven, Connecticut, At-Large

It is my hope that these two proposals will be debated on their merits, without regard to narrow tactical considerations. I believe that they, like all good organizational measures, are the logical expression of our movement's needs.

For the purposes of this document:

- 1) A "delegate" is someone with both voice and vote at a national convention.
- 2) An "at-large" delegate is a delegate chosen on a national basis and does not necessarily represent at-large comrades.
- 3) "Tendency" means either tendency or faction.

A. For the Election of At-Large Delegates

When our movement was a hodge-podge of localized and isolated groups, the methods of delegate selection presently used were perfectly adequate. Now political disputes occur within each local, as well as nationally. This is to be welcomed, as it shows political development and attention to principle. But it makes our old delegate allocation procedure inadequate. The old system embodies the principle of local selection of delegates. This principle has shrunk in importance compared to the more basic principle of balanced representation.

These are the major flaws of the present system:

- 1) In many small locals there are not enough delegates to allow truly proportionate representation for all tendencies. A 3-2 split in a five-comrade local leaves the trio grossly overrepresented and the pair totally voiceless and voteless. Even in larger locals, our current method of proportionate representation, while as fair as it could be, leaves the minority underrepresented. All in all, the smaller the tendency, the lower the delegate-to-comrade ratio tends to be.
- 2) At-large comrades are disenfranchised. These comrades now have a voice under special circumstances, but this is more an admission of organizational poverty than a solution.
- 3) Healthy tendencies tend to be evenly distributed throughout the nation, while unhealthy ones form cliques in isolated pockets. If anything the former should be encouraged, but now the cliques have the advantage. The present system also encourages the sort of geographic juggling the IT practiced and could even convert a minority

of comrades into a majority at the convention.

4) The national leadership is squeezed between having unwieldy conventions or disenfranchising all those comrades in five comrade locals. This quandry will grow worse as our movement expands. So that we may face this prospect fearlessly, the reform I propose would allow greater latitude in our convention calls, while protecting the rights of comrades.

I propose that we first select delegates according to our usual methods. These delegates will be called "regular" delegates hereafter. Once this is done, we take the following steps.

STEP 1. Declarations of tendency shall be due at a date specified in the convention call. A tendency declared after that shall be ignored in the selection of at-large delegates.

STEP 2. As the regular delegates are chosen, the National Office shall determine to which tendency each delegate and each comrade affiliates. Affiliation need not imply membership. A comrade may not wish to join a particular tendency, but wish to be affiliated with it in order to have a vote in selecting the at-large delegates. The NC, or the NEC acting for it, shall supervise both counts, and its decisions are final.

STEP 3. In what follows, c_X is the total number of comrades affiliating to tendency X, d_X is the number of regular delegates affiliating to tendency X, and a_X is the number of at-large delegates to which tendency X is entitled.

Delegate-to-comrade ratios for each tendency ($\frac{d_X}{c_X}$) are computed and the highest one (H) is determined. Then, for each tendency, the number of comrades is multiplied by this highest delegate-to-comrade ratio and the number of regular delegates subtracted. The result is the number of at-large delegates to which the tendency is entitled.
($a_X = c_X H - d_X$)

EXAMPLE 1. There are 2198 comrades, 64 cannot be found in time by the NO and 134 choose to declare no affiliation. 1800 affiliate to the Bukharin Tendency and 200 to the Plekhanov Faction. Of the delegates 120 belong to the Bukharin Tendency, 3 to the Plekhanov Faction and 1 is unaffiliated. From this I compute the delegate to comrade ratios.

$$\frac{d_B}{c_B} = \frac{120}{1800} = .0666$$

$$\frac{d_P}{c_P} = \frac{3}{200} = .0150$$

$$H = .0666$$

And with this data I compute the at-large delegate allocations.

$$c_B H - d_B = (1800)(.0666) - 120 = 0 = a_B$$

$$c_P H - d_P = (200)(.0666) - 3 = 10.33 = a_P$$

The Bukharin Tendency is not entitled to any more delegates and the Plekhanov Faction receives 10 at-large delegates. Fractions of a delegate are always lost. A tendency whose $a = .99$ receives no at-large delegates.

EXAMPLE 2. A YSA of 1099 comrades has 33 not found and 66 unaffiliated. Of the rest 100 belong to the Trotskyite Tendency, 200 to the Leninist Faction, 300 affiliate to the Engels Tendency and 400 to the Marxist Faction. $d_T = 0$, $d_L = 2$, $d_E = 10$ and $d_M = 20$, and therefore:

$$\frac{d_T}{c_T} = \frac{0}{100} = .0000$$

$$\frac{d_L}{c_L} = \frac{2}{200} = .0100$$

$$\frac{d_E}{c_E} = \frac{10}{300} = .0333$$

$$\frac{d_S}{c_S} = \frac{20}{400} = .0500$$

$$H = .0500$$

$$c_T H - d_T = 100(.05) - 0 = 5 = a_T$$

$$c_L H - d_L = 200(.05) - 2 = 8 = a_L$$

$$c_E H - d_E = 300(.05) - 10 = 5 = a_E$$

$$c_M H - d_M = 400(.05) - 20 = 0 = a_M$$

STEP 4. The selection of at-large delegates, once allocated is to be an internal affair of the tendency. Where internal disputes result in credentials challenges to the at-large delegates, the NC, or the NEC acting for it, or any other body designated for this purpose, shall decide the question in accordance with the wishes of the regular delegates of the tendency. If there are none, if no view gains a majority among them, or if they otherwise prove unequal to the task, the NC shall decide the issue as it thinks fairest. If the affair is especially entangled, the NC is entitled to eliminate or reduce the at-large representation of the tendency involved.

Here purely formal quarantees are impossible. Comradeli-

ness and devotion to Leninist principles are the only true protections our democratic procedures have.

B. For the Reorganization of Discussion at Conventions

When fewer delegates attended our conventions, the simplest and best system was simply to recognize any delegate who wished to speak. A degenerated version of this system survives today. The expansion of our movement has created the following major contradictions in it.

1) No provision is made to give better speakers priority. The order of speakers is random and no continuity is possible. Preparation is discouraged, superficiality and impromptu rhetoric condoned.

2) The chair is open to accusations of unfairness. If the chair chooses speakers at random, the minority may be neglected. Each side then tries to pad its speakers list, first the minority and then, in retaliation, the majority engaging in large scale card-raising. The discussion becomes repetitious. If the chair sets a ratio between tendencies, this ratio is being determined secretly, arbitrarily and undemocratically. If the chair does not, it leaves up to chance an important part of our conventions. Randomness has no place in the serious business of debating our politics.

Comrades the chair does not know may be discriminated against and, anyway, it is embarrassing to be called as "the comrade in the blue shirt -- yes, you." This is not to accuse previous chairpeople of mishandling the assignment. Indeed, they have often carried out this impossible task far better than we have a right to expect.

3) A third contradiction arises when the above two are eased by lengthening the discussion sessions. The convention becomes longer and a financial and physiological strain is placed on comrades. Every comrade, especially every delegate should attend all the sessions. Most now do not, because it is unreasonable to expect them to. Many of our comrades have a burdensome schedule throughout the year and the social activities of conventions, while not their most important aspect, should have a place. Finally, it impresses those outsiders who come to our conventions to see us as windbags.

I propose these changes:

1) The convention not have business sessions longer than eight hours a day.

2) Discussion sessions be divided up among the declared tendencies and that they use this time as they wish, subject to the final authority of the NC or the NEC acting for it, according to these rules:

a) Each tendency must have at least an amount of

time reasonable for one speaker.

- b) The larger the tendency the more time.
- c) The smaller the tendency the more time per delegate.
- d) Time may be allotted to unaffiliated delegates or for non-partisan presentations.

e) Each tendency is required to submit its speakers list, with the length of time for each speaker, by the convention, or earlier.

3) Extensions be granted by the convention itself only under extraordinary circumstances.

September 5, 1974

THE RED UNIVERSITY AND THE STUDENT WORKER

By Dayne Goodwin, Logan, Utah, At-Large

The decay of the capitalist economy is having a profound effect on the young people of the U. S. The state of Utah used to rank number one in the nation in terms of the number of high school graduates who continued their education at the university level. Recently the Utah Conference on Higher Education (an association of Utah university and junior college administrators) reported that the number of high school seniors who planned to pursue post-secondary education (including business, technical and university) had dropped from about 85 percent in 1968 to 65 percent in 1974. The number who planned to seek work after high school graduation went from about 10 percent to nearly 25 percent in the same six-year period.

Impressionistically, it appears that young people who do attend college face increasingly severe financial problems. More students seem to need resources beyond what their families can provide in order to attend college. More students depend on financial aid of some sort (generally loans) or their own wage earnings to get through college.

University students appear to be conscious of the increasingly publicized fact that college graduation will not necessarily enhance their future standard of living. This may be one reason why (again, impressionistically) it appears that more students who get jobs to help them pay their way through college end up making the education secondary to the job. Students become workers without ever graduating from college.

Young people move back and forth from being full-time wage earners to being full-time students. Many full-time students hold part-time or even full-time jobs, especially those who have families. Many students change from full-time to part-time while earning their own living (and often supporting dependents).

The point is that the "economic downturn" is dissolving (any) boundaries between university students and the surrounding work force. This is particularly evident in the small, relatively isolated town of Logan, Utah (20,000+). Utah State University's student population of almost 9,000 is employed in every facet of the local economy. USU students and student spouses are employed in large numbers both on- and off-campus.

University students are not only found in the service and retail jobs but make up the majority of certain night and swing shifts in the local food-processing and small manufacturing firms. Without figures and statistics, it appears that a very large part of the local work force is made up of students, student spouses, recent students and future students. I think that the economic situation of students at USU is,

generally, analagous to that of students at community colleges and junior colleges in urban areas.

The work force in the Logan area is not organized and the wage level is very low (resulting in a recent influx of new light industry and additional food-processing industry). In this context I think it is appropriate for the YSA to bring pressure to bear on the elected student government to become involved in the economic well-being of the student population. This can be done in the YSA election campaigns for student office as well as agitationally at any time.

In an article in the student paper here (see below) I raised the idea of a Student Labor Office. I think that the proposal or demand of a Student Labor Office may be appropriate to colleges and universities around the U. S. (The article expressed my own point of view and not that of the Logan YSA.)

The essence of this proposal is that the student government should actively represent students vis-a-vis their biggest employer, the university itself, as well as use its resources to organize students in their off-campus workplaces. The student government has the resources to bring students working for the same employer together and provide leadership in organizing the students (and the rest of the workers). The Red University will not only support strikes, it will organize the unorganized, initially through defending student-workers.

While working for free education and annual salaries for all students, this particular proposal may result in gains for the YSA in at least some situations. Work in this direction seems to be on the agenda.

The "Inflation and Students" article (below) was well-received by USU students. One student government officer tried to recruit me to do research work to enable him to construct legislation appropriate to all six of the proposals.

Instead I proposed that he use the power of his office to: first, get the student government to officially recognize their responsibility for the economic well-being of USU students; then get the student government to conduct a poll of students and request information from the administration as to the economic situation of students (i. e., how many work, where they work, how many receive financial aid, how much, etc.) and/or hold hearings on the financial crisis of university students; and then pass student government legislation to come to the assistance of working students (i. e., create a Student Labor Office, amend the registration process to include reporting on workplaces, wages, etc. and

with this information begin to organize students in their workplaces -- and on the campus).

* * * * *

The following article appeared in the September 25, 1974, issue of Student Life.

INFLATION AND STUDENTS

Guess what our number one national problem is; it shouldn't be too hard to figure it out. After paying tuition and assorted fees, shelling out to the landlord, and deciding which books you can get along without, you're probably trying to figure out whether it's possible to eat on a dollar a day.

Yes, the price of being a student is going up, just like the price of keeping alive. But you won't find scholarships and assistantships any easier to get. Congress and the state legislatures are not stepping up funding of higher education. They're trying to figure out how to cut back, how high to raise tuition.

Here's a challenge for our student government. A problem that affects almost all of us. A problem that requires the best leadership we can find.

What can the student government do? They can do a lot if they want to, certainly they will have student support for every effort made to ease the financial problems of students.

Here are a few ideas:

First, the student government should prepare to wage an effective fight against any proposed increases in tuition, fees, USU housing rents or cafeteria prices. Last year the student government unanimously passed a resolution against any tuition increase, then meekly watched the out-of-state tuition being raised. Dorm and cafeteria rates were also raised.

Second, the student government should begin a campaign to make the campus bookstore into a non-profit service where books and educational supplies are available to students at cost.

Third, the student government should establish a Student Labor Office. A Student Labor Office could assist students in finding jobs both on- and off-campus while also encouraging affirmative action hiring policies. The Student Labor Office could work to improve the wage rates of university employment; as it is, USU is constantly in the process of catching up with the federal minimum wage.

A Student Labor Office could assist the many students

working off-campus in organizing to become an effective force for securing needed wage raises and cost-of-living increases to keep up with the rate of inflation. It should defend students against any on-the-job discrimination while also trying to improve working conditions, on- and off-campus.

A Student Labor Office would have no lack of projects to undertake and problems to solve. For example, foreign students need assistance in protecting their right to seek employment. Earlier this year the government suddenly refused to give foreign students work permits.

Fourth, the student government should take the initiative in organizing a Tenants Union for students living off-campus. A strong Tenants Union could ensure equitable rents and prevent deposit rip-offs, discrimination against non-white and non-LDS (Mormon) students, and other common housing abuses.

Fifth, the student government should take the initiative in expanding day-care services and making them free to students. Expanded day-care service would permit more students and student spouses to work.

Sixth, the student government should exercise every ounce of its strength in seeking more funding for higher education at every level of government. The student government could increase its leverage by joining the National Student Association. It should maximize its participation and leadership in the statewide association of student body governments.

While some efforts along these lines have been made there is still a lot to be accomplished. Our basic aim should be to make university education available to anyone who wants it, regardless of their financial background or situation.

We don't want to see students dropping out after each quarter because they've run out of money. We don't want prospective students turning away for lack of money. University education should be a right, not a privilege.

October 7, 1974

Addendum

A recent survey of University of Utah students revealed that 63 percent of the undergraduates work part-time and 70 percent of the graduate students also work part-time. The University of Utah, located in Salt Lake City, has an enrollment of over 20,000.

November 13, 1974

FOR AT-LARGE VOTING RIGHTS

By David Matthews, David Brandt, Richard Daw,
Geneseo, New York, At-Large

The arguments against allowing at-largers to have a full vote at our conventions range from bad to worse. To sum things up, we have been told at-largers should be deprived of any decision-making power in the YSA, because we are not part of locals.

At the last convention, the speaker against voting rights for at-largers argued that at-large members are of secondary importance and that the local is the basic unit of organization in the YSA. Since it would be preferable to have locals in areas where we have only at-largers, the argument went, at-largers should have only a consultative vote. While it is true that at-largers are in a minority, that is no reason to keep all the decision-making power in the hands of the locals. Nobody is asking for undue power for at-largers -- only proportional representation. Obviously it is better to have five or more comrades in an area than four or fewer. However, keeping at-largers powerless does not help to build locals.

We have been told that local members are somehow more "politically advanced" than at-large members. If this line of argument is accepted, we must assume those at-largers who were once local members are becoming politically backwards as they gain more experience. Take for instance the situation in Geneseo. Last year we had a local. Two of the three present at-largers were members of that local. Last year we were considered competent enough to help decide YSA policy -- but not this year. However, we have not lost the experience we had up to the last convention, and are now more experienced and have read more of the literature of our movement than when we were allowed to vote on the convention issues. The illogic of this is apparent -- hopefully even to those comrades who have feelings of superiority about being local members.

At-largers serve in a wide range of political roles. The same comrades must make posters, draw up leaflets, be literature salespeople, serve as student government candidates, organize support for rallies we participate in, spread our ideas to new areas and form the basis for new locals. Such a wide variety of activities prepare us to be full-

fledged YSA members with some power in deciding upon the policies we carry out.

Even if at-largers are incompetent as the voting policy of the YSA would indicate, allowing at-large voting rights would encourage serious, enthusiastic discussion of the issues the YSA faces. Allowing voting rights for at-largers would help to overcome the isolation of at-large membership. It would make at-large members full members of the YSA in fact as well as in words.

At-large members are expected to carry out the political line of the YSA, just as any other members. This is as it should and must be. On the other hand, at-largers should and must have a part in deciding on the line we carry out.

Resolution

1) All at-large members should be permitted by the locals to participate in the pre-convention discussion and delegate selection. At-large members would participate in the discussion and voting on the same basis as members of that local. They should be required, however, to notify both the local and the National Office of their intent, in writing, immediately after the convention call has been issued by the NEC.

2) If they choose, at-largers should be permitted to make arrangements with other YSA at-largers for such discussion and delegate selection. In order for at-large comrades to elect a delegate, they should be required to gather together at least five members (i. e., the same number of comrades it takes to constitute a local.) If more than five at-large comrades participate, delegate selection would follow the same pattern established by the NEC for larger locals. Again at-largers participating in such pre-convention discussion should be required to notify the N. O. of their intent, and submit the names of at-largers participating in the discussions, as well as the name(s) of the delegate(s) selected.

November 13, 1974