

Activists Panels

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1970 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference Reports

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS PANEL

Joel Britton, New York: It was about a year ago, at the SWP convention, on Labor Day, that we projected the 1970 election campaigns. Many comrades thought that was very early. But it really paid off in terms of what we've been able to do this year in the electoral field, and the panel tonight is for the purpose of drawing a balance sheet of what we've done so far in the 1970 elections, projecting what we can do between now and election day, and to deal with some of the strengths and of the weaknesses of the campaigns.

At the party convention we emphasized that all areas should, if at all possible, get an early start on their campaigns. We proposed large, youthful slates of candidates composed of activists from the various social movements. We proposed that the party branches and YSA locals think in as large terms as possible. We projected putting candidates on full-time, raising money outside the usual sources to finance the largest and most ambitious election campaigns possible, getting out attractive brochures and posters, and taking advantage of the mass media. We also projected challenging the anti-democratic election codes on the books in many states which make it difficult for us and other small parties to get on the ballot. All of these activities were viewed in terms of building our movement, increasing our influence, informing millions of people of our existence and our ideas, and informing them who some of our leading activists and public figures are. We viewed it as preparation for the 1972 presidential campaign which we hope to launch in mid-'71 and which we anticipate will be the most ambitious, most successful campaign in our history.

We wanted to use the '70 campaigns as examples for future Black parties, Chicano parties, and labor parties. We wanted to use our transitional program in as concrete a way as possible by relating it to the day to day needs and struggles of the American people and the people in our cities and states. We projected building young socialist support for the campaigns and recruiting to the YSA.

So far the results have been outstanding. We've had campaigns of considerable scope in more states than ever before -- 15 states so far. That of course is a few less than the number of states that we were formally on the ballot in the last election, but in a number of those states we did not run a serious campaign because we had no active supporters there. Most of the '70 campaigns started earlier than any previous campaigns in those states -- most of them were underway by this last spring. Im-

pressive slates of candidates were put forward, reflecting our role in the antiwar, Black, Chicano, student, women's, and union movements. We have made an impact on the real politics of cities and states and of the movements for social change. Outstanding examples of this were Linda Jenness in Georgia, Herman Fagg, Antonio Camejo, Froben Lozada and Andrew Pulley in California, Peter Camejo in Massachusetts, Stephanie Coontz in Seattle, and undoubtedly there will be others.

These are some of the outstanding examples of how our candidates came to be taken seriously, either in outside movements, by the mass media, in broader layers of the population. Of course legal challenges played a role in this and often that was one of the first ways of really making an impact in the press. We have won a series of legal victories which have been covered in The Militant and which, I'm sure, comrades are aware of. The main challenges have been on questions of the number and distribution of signatures on nominating petitions, loyalty oaths, filing fees and other restrictions. We still have a number of challenges in the courts and we assume that between now and November we will win further victories.

We have to start thinking ahead, past the 1970 elections, about how we're going to use what we've learned in this campaign to take on some of the municipal and county election codes, in the local elections that will be taking place next year, and of course in states where we haven't been running this year but where we'll want to be on the ballot in 1972. For example, the distribution decisions that we've won, both last year and this year, will make it possible for us to seriously attempt to get on the ballot in a number of other states where there are distribution requirements for signatures or for electors.

If there are weaknesses to the campaigns so far it's been, if anything, that we haven't taken enough advantages of the possible openings and opportunities even in states where the campaigns have been qualitatively better than any previous campaigns, much more could have been done in many cases and hopefully comrades, inspired by the campaigns that have done the best, will really begin to gear up campaigns for the home stretch this fall.

One aspect that has not been emphasized enough in the '70 campaigns is the potential to recruit to the YSA. We don't notice it so much because the YSA is recruiting anyway, and recruiting from our campaigns. But in most cases this has not been as consciously thought out and organized as possible, and a couple of

the comrades on the panel tonight will be speaking on how we project doing that in the fall. It will be very important to take back the lessons from the discussions here tonight to each of the locals and branches represented here. In terms of prospects for the fall, if we haven't already begun to think of the fall push on the campaigns in a new way, we must start doing so. We have the May events behind us, which created many new opportunities which we'll discuss at the panel. We also have the adoption of the 18 year old vote law which raises all sorts of possibilities. Since it won't take effect until the first of next year, there are possibilities for raising new demands on the university administrations and student governments to provide a vehicle for the 18-21 year old vote to be expressed in the fall elections. That could take the form of Choice '70 referendums on a state-wide basis or at least on the campuses and high schools where we have people.

It is very important that comrades realize that in a whole number of areas, as a result of the May events and the application of the "red university" concept (although unconsciously in many cases), there have already been decisions in a number of areas to provide a two week period leading up to election day where students will be free and encouraged to support the candidate of their choice through leafletting and carrying out other activities. There will be forums and symposiums and debates on many campuses. It opens up many opportunities for us to confront the capitalist candidates. It will be possible to demand that this period be extended, or to demand university facilities be made available for such activity. At some campuses very little will be projected but it will be possible to use the example of other schools to get that kind of thing going. In some cases, they're planning to allow the students to campaign for two weeks during October but they're making the students go to school for two weeks during the Christmas holidays to make up for that. We assume there will be major struggles in cases like that.

We assume that in many campuses at the very opening of school there will be large meetings to discuss what students should do in the fall, what uses the university facilities should be put to. Our campaigns around the country should dynamically participate in these struggles with our candidates and other spokesmen and spokeswomen projecting what should be done in that school or city or state.

We can't project the exact course of events on the campuses but it is nearly certain that, as a result of the May experiences, there will be major campus struggles in the fall which will give us increased opportunities for our campaign.

We have a panel tonight that doesn't cover every aspect of our campaign activities but does cover some of the most important aspects. The first panelist will be Linda Jenness from Atlanta who will speak on how to be taken seriously as a candidate of the Socialist Workers Party.

Linda Jenness, Atlanta: I was asked to speak about how campaigns are organized to be taken seriously by the mass media, by other candidates and by the state as a whole. Without any pretense of trying to exhaust this subject, I want to cover some of the many things that we have found valuable and have learned lessons from in the Georgia campaign. As everyone probably knows from reading The Militant, in the Georgia campaign we have received very good press coverage as a whole.

And I think that has been due in large part to our attitude to the working press. Many of the reporters, the cameramen, and the TV interviewers are very young. Some of them are Black; some are women; and almost all of them have been affected by the radicalization that is taking place. For example, almost all of them are against the war and most are appalled by the racism, poverty and pollution that they see around them. They're genuinely interested in the program that we put forward to solve these problems. Because of that the candidates have an opportunity to talk to these young reporters, to be friendly to them. In some instances you can even form good friendships with some of them.

Now within this very friendly attitude towards the working press, we have to behave as very serious candidates when we're around them. We have something very serious to say about a serious crisis in our society and I think that we should act that way. I don't think that it's our job to be cute, to be quippish or to be off-hand. I also think that acting like a serious candidate includes looking like one. By that I mean dressing appropriately on all occasions and by dressing appropriately I mean for the male comrades on almost every occasion, with only a few exceptions, wearing coats and ties, having neat haircuts and being clean shaven. For the women comrades, corresponding dress.

Another very important point to make about the press is that you should never, never admit that you think you're going to lose, or that you think that you might lose. You should never say, "We know that we're not going to win but we're running an educational campaign anyway." Very often people are asked "Do you really think you're going to win?" or "Do you have any hopes at all of winning?" There are all sorts of ways of turning that

around so that you don't have to say "No I don't think I'm going to win." You can always just turn it around and say "One thing is very clear. Unless we win this election there won't be any real progress made toward solving the problems faced by the people of Georgia" or whatever state you're in. It's important to have that kind of attitude, and never to have a defeatist attitude towards the elections.

One of the most important aspects of our campaigns is the speeches that we give. In Georgia the majority of opportunities that we get to give speeches are very short three, five or ten minute speeches that we are invited to give along with the other candidates at meetings on TV or on the radio. It's really amazing how much you can get out of a speech like that if it's approached properly and the right preparation is put into it. For one thing, you should try to give a different speech each time. The other candidates give the same speech over and over and bore themselves, the other candidates and the press to tears. I am convinced that some of our press coverage has been obtained simply because we are the only ones at the meeting that had something new to say that some reporter could write down and report back to his or her newspaper. That's very important. Don't bore the press and have new things to say. Also over a period of time by having different speeches on different subjects, people get a chance to find out our positions on a whole variety of topics.

In a short period of time it's just impossible to present our whole program and I don't think that anyone should try. We've had the most success by taking one topic and saying where we stand on it very clearly and very simply. If there's a real hot news item at that particular time, you can zero in on that. If not you can direct your speech to the particular interests of whatever group invited you to speak. For example if you were invited by teachers, you can talk about the school crisis.

In order to make our speeches as realistic and as relevant as possible, I think that a very good way to prepare our speeches is to have the campaign staff or committee draw up a schedule each week of what the campaign meetings are. Then if one of the talks, for instance, is to an audience of school principals, assign someone to do the research. Get out the news clippings which you should have on file by topic, and find out what the problems are, what the current issue is and put that into a folder along with an outline or even a draft of the kind of speech that person would give if he or she were giving it. Thus the candidate will have in his or her hands the background material to go into the meeting, confident about what they're talking about.

They can then talk very concretely about the issues that these people are involved in. This takes pressure off the candidate if there are a large number of speeches to be given that week, and it involves others in writing outlines or even drafts which the candidate can then put in his own words. I think that that approach, in and of itself, gives our campaigns a very serious and down to earth atmosphere when we speak because we know what we're talking about.

We should also follow very closely what the other candidates have to say so that we can challenge them in the next speech or even draw them into some kind of discussion or provoke them into answering us. Our candidates should go to public hearings which are held in almost every city on a whole variety of questions. Our candidates should go to them and make our position clear on whatever the topic of the hearing is. The press is usually there and you can get good press coverage. And of course our candidates should appear at all the demonstrations which we support, with a statement saying not only that we support the demonstration but also with suggestions of how we would solve the problem of welfare or inadequate housing, police brutality or whatever the demonstration happens to be about. Any time our candidate makes a major speech at a demonstration, copies of the speech should be handed out before hand to give to the press there at the rally. That is another thing that helps give us a professional look. You have to look and act professional in order to be taken seriously.

Another important point is the tone of our literature, our brochures, our leaflets, speeches and things like that. We're in a position now where we're reaching hundreds of thousands and even millions of people with our campaigns, and the wording in our platforms and other literature should be formulated so that everyone who reads it can automatically understand it and not be turned off or offended by the use of words that may be acceptable on campus but are not part of the language and understanding of the general public. I'm not talking particularly about swear words and things like that which we should obviously not use, but I'm talking about terms like "Right On" and things like that which should not appear on our literature.

To student audiences, we will formulate our ideas differently. But I am convinced that the best way to impress the radical youth on the campuses is not by developing a program only for them, but by showing them how to run a serious political campaign with a program aimed at winning the majority of the working masses. That is what will help inspire radical students and show them that we are serious and are capable of making a political impact. I don't think, for instance, that as a general rule we should hold our

principal press conferences on the campus. I know that it is generally easy to get rooms on campus, but I think it sets a bad tone. In Georgia, and I know that the Texas comrades do the same, we hold our press conferences at the State Capitol where Maddox and all the other candidates often hold theirs. I think that that's more appropriate than holding them on a campus.

Our campaign staffs, managers and candidates must become sensitive to what kinds of things people are thinking and talking about at the moment, so that we can relate to it on the spot. I think that you have to have your finger on the pulse of the city and of the press so that you can immediately respond to any event that comes up. A good example was when we read one morning in the morning paper that the Internal Revenue Service was investigating the Atlanta Library to see who had checked out so-called subversive books. We immediately wrote up a two paragraph statement, called it into the press and by that evening our statement, almost in its entirety, had been picked up and incorporated into the front page article that appeared in the evening paper. I was also interviewed by a TV station and appeared on the 6:00 PM news.

When the Republican candidate attacked Earth Day in the morning paper calling it a communist plot because it fell on Lenin's birthday, we immediately called in a statement which received coverage in the paper and which also resulted in a ten minute debate on TV with that candidate (who is an elected official, the state comptroller) and myself which made him look like a fool. The ability to put out what we call "quickie press releases" on immediate topical issues is very important. And of course, to do that you have to have a campaign staff, a campaign manager and candidates who think about the campaign on a day-to-day basis and who see it as a day-to-day campaign rather than a weekly or monthly event. It's a day-to-day thing that they follow and keep on top of.

The real test of our campaigns, though, is how well we can apply our transitional program to local areas, to the problems and issues of the cities and states where we live. The very last thing that we want to do is to give the appearance of having some vague, general program for socialism way off in the future, or to talk abstractly about the theory of alienation or the Marxist concept of the state. We have to take our theories and concepts and make them alive and real. We have to be seen as the only people who have a realistic solution to the crisis that people are facing on a day to day basis. When the bus fares go up in a city, we have a logical solution for that. When the tenants in low cost housing have complaints, we have suggestions about what they can do. If our librarians get harassed we protest, and if they're getting ready to move nerve gas through your state you'd

better get ready to protest and quickly.

We have to relate all of these things in a way that people can understand what we're talking about. We have found in Georgia, for example, that most people, including most people in the Black community, don't understand us when we talk about Black control of the Black community. However, when Black teachers protest the fact that the history books misrepresent the role of Afro-Americans in history, or when the Black community holds a rally to protest police brutality or the firing of a Black teacher, we can take that issue and explain in very clear and concrete terms the concept of Black control of the Black community. That's what we've had the most success at, zeroing in in a concrete way and not just talking in a general way about a concept like Black control of the Black community.

Another good example, one of my favorites, is that we recently received some very good coverage from a meeting where all the candidates were invited to speak to a convention of librarians. There were about 400 librarians there and each candidate answered three questions, about a minute and a half apiece, and then was able to make a three minute summary. The other candidates of course got up and said that libraries were lovely and of course they needed more money, and that some gray haired old librarian when they were a kid had set them on the road to fame and that kind of thing. We had done research on the libraries and knew some of their problems so that in the total of seven and a half minutes that we had, we were able to talk about our tax program and ending the war as a partial solution to the funding problem. We were able to take exception to the fact that almost eighty per cent of all librarians are women whereas most of the top positions are held by men, and we protested the IRS investigation of the library. Then we made up a sort of "Red Library" concept and explained the role that we thought libraries should play in society by being sure that their resources on the women's liberation movement, the Black liberation movement, and the anti-war movement were adequate and were brought to the forefront by displays, in bookmobiles, etc. So we had something to say about the libraries and to the librarians that they could relate to. We were the only ones there who seemed sincere, who seemed knowledgeable and who made any sense at all and the press picked that up. We got the best coverage of any of the candidates there.

One of the major aspects of our Georgia campaigns and in other states have been our legal fights to be on the ballot. These fights have identified our campaigns with the struggle for more democratic elections and have, in fact, made us seem much bigger and even much more professional than we would have seemed otherwise. Here in Atlanta for instance many

people have told us how they thought about challenging the election laws, and some even did but either lost the suits or didn't carry them through. The fact that we have done this has impressed many people, including the press. Particularly in the Mayor's race in '69 you'll remember how two TV stations even endorsed our fight.

These legal fights have given us a good deal of status in the Black community. Often in the Black community I will be introduced as the person who made it possible for poor Blacks to be on the ballot in Georgia because of our fight against the filing fees. That kind of identification with a democratic struggle is very important and should not be minimized. Neither should the amount of publicity we get from the fight, nor what it means if and when we win these fights be underestimated. To be on the ballot puts our campaigns on a much better footing. For one thing it means to a lot of people that someday you might win.

One of the weaknesses of our '70 campaign in Georgia is that we did not help set up a Fair Ballot Committee. That would have given us many opportunities to draw in broader support for our right to be on the ballot. We could have gotten more publicity and could have pressured not only the other candidates but other so-called liberals to support our rights. California particularly had a lot of success with their Fair Ballot Committee.

Another weakness in our Georgia campaign has been our lack of fund raising. All other factors being equal, our campaigns are taken more seriously if well financed. We didn't go about fund raising in as conscious and consistent a way as we should have -- and we paid the price, no money. Our campaigns have literally been run on a shoestring and there are many things we could have done in terms of literature, tours, and other things had we had a bigger budget. We probably could have received more money from honoraria had we been more consistent and had we been convinced that our candidates were important enough people that they should be paid to speak!

So those are the kinds of things that I think we have to do to make our campaigns alive and meaningful to the people who live in the cities.

Now let me make one last point. All too often the press and the other candidates try to paint us as the people who are trying to tear down society, who complain and gripe and say that everything is rotten. Candidates will get up and say "I'm tired of listening to people

just tear down our great society." Or they'll say "I'm for constructive change and not for destroying the things that we have," aiming those comments at you. I think that we have to respond to such comments very consciously by inspiring people with our talks. I don't think that we should just get up and say that the libraries are rotten and the schools are rotten and society is sick. We must project what libraries, for instance, could be, what they should be, and what they can be and that we're the people who are for making them that way and here's a suggestion for starting in that direction. I think that the inspirational and optimistic nature of our election campaigns is very important right now when we have the opportunity to speak to and inspire millions of people who are ready and willing to listen to our ideas.

Herman Fagg, San Francisco: How to use the campaigns to intervene in outside movements.

One of the things that's most important about our 1970 campaign in California is that we not only look at our campaign as a propaganda campaign, but also as a campaign that participates in mass movements and tries to give them guidance. I'd like to take a couple of examples of how our campaign has participated in two situations in the Black struggle in California.

We found out in April that there was going to be a Black youth conference, to be held at Stanford University on May 1-3. We went to the Black Student Unions that were sponsoring the conference and told them that we wanted to help build the conference. We said that I was going to be on tour in Washington state, Oregon, Northern California and Southern California and for them to have a decent conference they would have to bring in people from those areas. We said we would be only too happy to use our campaign to propagandize for the conference. They said okay, and I'm sure they assumed we wouldn't do anything because Black Democrats came along and made the same offer and didn't do anything and later on didn't even go to the conference. But we drew up a leaflet, showed it to them, and they approved the leaflet. I took it with me wherever I went and the BSU at Stanford began to get calls from all those places. In my talks I described this conference at Stanford and explained that we agreed with the slogan that the conference was called under: a quote from Malcolm X that it was time to go into the closet and talk shop and emerge with a united front. We're all for Black united fronts to move against the oppression that Black people face.

Also in the context of building the

conference, everywhere I spoke I also pointed out the role that these conferences and meetings play in building up united fronts, the kind of role they play in moving towards a Black party, the kind of role they play in the whole transition of America from tyranny to democracy. And people really began to relate to it in a very concrete way. We obtained opportunities that we wouldn't have received ordinarily. We had interviews with the local press. I had interviews with campus newspapers, and in some places there were campus newspapers that were the Black Student Union newspapers.

As this conference approached, we also figured out internally how we were going to deal with it. First, the conference was projected as an open and democratic conference, which is the best kind of conference to have, particularly if you want to get anything done and if you want to infuse the movement with a sense of going forward rather than a sense of pessimism. So we encouraged this tendency on the part of the BSU leadership at Stanford and San Francisco State. Some comrades may know San Francisco State must be the third most ultra-left place in the world, outside of Japan and Berkeley. So you can see what we have to deal with at San Francisco State.

Nevertheless, the leaderships of both of these Black Student Unions are totally isolated from the mass of Black students. So you can essentially go over their heads. You talk to them but reach the other people.

Seven Black comrades participated in this conference. There were about 400 or 500 people there at Stanford University. We came in with all our campaign materials, a decent selection of Pathfinder material, set up our literature table and attended the workshops of the conference. We sold \$125.00 worth of literature that ranged all the way from Stalinism and Bolshevism to How a Minority Can Change Society. We also intervened in the conference in a very concrete way by putting forth parts of our transitional program for Black liberation. We raised the idea that this conference should go on record opposing the war in Southeast Asia and should begin to call for actions that move Black people in that direction; and that this conference should call for Black control of the Black community and hold conferences in the future that would concretely deal with some kind of apparatus to move on that. We also plugged the idea of Black united fronts, that they could be achieved in a sort of a single issue context and what that could lead to in the long run. The conference adopted all these motions after a lot of debate. But it was the first time in California in a long time that any other line except the Black Panther line was adopted in a

mass meeting of Black youth. So we think that was a good development, not just because of our participation, but because the Black movement is beginning to change and think about the problems that face the community, and the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance were there to offer concrete solutions to how to deal with the problems.

At this conference we also suggested that on May 19, which was Malcolm X's birthday, mass demonstrations be called in major urban areas on the West Coast, not just to commemorate Malcolm X's birth, but to point out that we have to carry out the struggle and that there are certain things that have to be done right now. As it so happened, the Cambodia invasion and the Kent State and Jackson events intervened between the end of the conference and the 19th, so we, along with some of the people in the BSU at San Jose State College continued to work on this May 19 demonstration. Now I'm going to stop on that for a second and come back to it later because something else intervened and I want to try to put this in an overall context.

I was saying that some of the Black students at San Jose State College and the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance had fairly friendly relations as a result of this conference. One of the things that happened at San Jose State College which was, I think, an exception to what Black students all over the country did when the U.S. invaded Cambodia and mowed down the students at Kent and Jackson State and mowed down the people in Augusta. The Black students at San Jose State boycotted the actions. They didn't want to have anything to do with them. They said it was a "white" issue. Now the problem with that was the first day of action on campus was very small. There were 200 people who fell into an ambush by the police and for that whole day Black students on the campus were generally harassed and taken to jail.

This concretely pointed out that you cannot escape attack by saying it's a "white" thing. Directly connecting it to the repression that was going down was a direct result of their wanting to keep people cool around the invasion of Cambodia and around the shooting down of the Kent State students, and there's no way of getting around it. So myself and Pulley spent about four days at San Jose State, propagandizing these students.

After the first day, we attended a six hour meeting. This meeting was attended by 80 to 100 Black students and the Black student leadership ranged from the lunatic fringe to the ultraleft. They were just out of it. They had hardly any relationship to the campus. When we convinced them to call this meeting of Black students, they saw

that they attracted 80 to 100 Black students that they had never seen before on campus. So they said "Well maybe these Trots got something going and maybe we could trick them later on and still manage to hold on to these 80 to 100 Black students."

We finally convinced them after six hours of discussion, that maybe they should intervene in the strike committee, lay out the demands from the Stanford conference, that is free all political prisoners, immediate withdrawal of all Black GIs from Southeast Asia, and Black control of the Black community. To us that had a two-fold purpose. One, it got the Black students actively involved in the struggle and two, it partially clarified in their minds that there is an integral relationship between what's going on in Southeast Asia and what's happening in the United States, in terms of repression and in terms of Black people moving politically in an independent manner. Now all these people knew that I was a revolutionary socialist. This was not hidden. They had invited me out earlier in the year to speak at a meeting and we had had a long knock down, drag out political discussion.

So what happened was that 80 Black students marched over to the strike committee headquarters and laid down the demands. There was just absolute chaos in the strike committee before we got there. You could see the ultraliberals fighting with the ultralefts and there were 30 PLers down there by this time. And so that situation was utter chaos. The Black students marched in and acted as a wedge to break the strangle-hold that the ultraliberals had who wanted to bureaucratically control it and the ultraleft PLers had who wanted to bureaucratically control it. It says something about PL.

Nevertheless we wanted to move this thing in a political fashion and also to educate a layer of Black students. And this is exactly what happened. They went to the strike committee leadership and began to project, counter to the line of PL, the idea of mass actions. Four rallies were held at San Jose State. I was at all four of them and I spoke at all four of them -- as a spokesman for the Black Student Union at San Jose once, and as an SWP candidate three times. What happened at those rallies was that the PLers would get up and say let's take the administration building and Peace and Freedom would say the same thing. I would always speak before the person from the Black Student Union spoke and would have to sort of lay the groundwork for what we were supposed to do. I was supposed to do it that way. We worked it out, it wasn't just my idea. So I would lay down things like, "We've got 10,000 students here at this rally out of 20,000 students on the campus. What we should do is throw up picket lines

around the campus to reach the other students and use the strike center to run off material to get out in the community to propagandize around the war in Southeast Asia and to get people moving against it." And the spokesman from the Black Student Union would get up and essentially say the same thing which would totally discredit the PLers.

One of the rallies had eight speakers. Six of them were PLers, one was me and one was the Black Student Union and the people did what we said to do, which sort of put PL in their proper place. They tried the whole time to sabotage it. What was going on here was that a certain layer of Black students were beginning to relate to the fact that people say the Black masses are the vanguard of the struggle, but here they could see in a concrete struggle how they could take a leading role in it and direct it in a way that would lead to success for the strike.

Unlike some places where the strike died out after ten days, people may remember that Reagan closed down the schools and as soon as that weekend was over it was opened up. These Black students had never done anything political before, they had always been engaged in these crypto-political thrashing actions that ultralefts usually have around campus. But they had never before taken the perspective of mobilizing masses of students against the administration and against the government and they for the first time saw how successful this was. They would go to strike meetings where there were thousands of people coming from places all over California. And they could see that there were people all over the country involved. They picked up the paper and saw 350 campuses across the country on strike. As the Jackson State events really sunk into their heads they understood what many Black students didn't understand across the country, that it's not going to be white students that go out and organize Black people to protest the fact that Black people are getting vamped on. They understood that. I heard this time and time again everywhere I went, that white students didn't do anything when the people at Jackson State and Augusta were mowed down. But when the people at Kent were shot it was a national student strike. And we pointed out that the students at Jackson State were shot as a result of harassing action but in the beginning of that they had been protesting the war in Southeast Asia, and that really caught them off guard. They didn't know how to deal with that.

All through the San Jose strike the Socialist Workers Party campaign got known. We got known as the organization that's dedicated, that seeks to mobilize masses

of people. We fought all trashing actions successfully, won every single vote on our action program and people began to relate to us in that manner.

Now back to the May 19 demonstration. Through this whole action in San Francisco we were still working with the students at San Jose State College. Unfortunately their experience, or lack of experience, and the numerically small number of cadre that we had, meant that we could not influence them to take on a large section of the work that goes into building a mass action. Nevertheless we kept pushing them and kept pushing them, had a memorial meeting in Berkeley with 500 people, clearly posed the ultra-left line to real revolutionary politics as represented by our party and some of them began to see. They still remained ultraleft, but they knew they couldn't get away with ultraleftism when they were around us. So all through the thing they had to go through this process of education. On May 19, for example, one of the speakers who was a minister, a sort of hip minister in San Francisco, Cecil Williams got up and said, Black people need representatives like Herman Fagg (he also threw in Ron Dellums, who's a Black Democrat) because of the hip religious thing that communism is the religious thing we need, but nevertheless, it showed that enough heat had been put on him to make him put our campaign and our candidates on the same level in the movement as these Black Democrats.

I think these are the kinds of examples of using our campaigns to intervene in mass movements in California, that we've had success with. Now the major problem, of course, is how to follow this up and all through the campaign we've been trying to work on how to follow up on these contacts. We've got more Afro-American contacts, Afro-American endorsers, through our campaign than any other state campaign that the Socialist Workers Party has run. Also more Chicanos and more women.

This represented a breakthrough for our campaign, both in the activist aspect and in the propaganda aspect and so what we look forward to when we drum up our machine again in the fall, is to go back and hit these same areas and to begin to bring some of the people around us and to begin to recruit them.

Susan Lamont, New York: How to use the election campaigns to recruit to the YSA.

I can't deal tonight with the whole range of YSA activities in support of the SWP campaigns. What I want to focus in on is an extremely important part of that activity, the formation of Young Socialist Support Committees or Young Socialist Campaigners. Their names and their activities vary from place to

place. I want to deal mainly with three questions:

(1) Why do we want to form such Young Socialist Support groups?; (2) What are they and what are they not?; (3) What kinds of activities can we project Young Socialist Campaign Committees becoming involved in and carrying out?

First, why Young Socialist Campaigners? We know that when we return to the campuses this fall there are going to be literally hundreds of thousands of newly radicalized and activated students who were drawn into political activity for the first time during the May events. They're going to be returning to the campus or coming onto campus for the first time looking for action. That is what our whole fall offensive is all about, drawing these young people into action and recruiting them to the YSA. This fall has the important added element of being an election year, and the heightened interest in politics and political activity which occurs among the entire population during an election year is going to be even more intense on the campuses. The capitalist candidates are all going to try to relate to the demands being raised by the growing mass movements and the issues being raised by the different radicalizing layers, and we can expect the liberal and "peace" candidates of every shape and size, from the first day of school, to be pouring money, personnel, time and effort on to the campuses to try to bring these new activists back into the fold. As Mary-Alice said the other day, the May events put the fear of revolution in these people's hearts and they want to do everything they can to make sure it doesn't happen again. One thing we also know is that, especially from the very rapid expansion of the YSA which we experienced this spring, there are more and more young people who are going to be open to our ideas, the ideas of the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party, and to the alternatives that we have to offer.

We want to project here, at this conference and at the YSA national committee plenum following this conference, the formation of Young Socialist Campaign Committees on as many campuses as possible to help get out our socialist ideas and program for action to students and of course to recruit them to the YSA. The Young Socialist Campaign Committees will play a key role in carrying out this perspective in the fall.

Now what are Young Socialist Campaign Committees and what are they not? I think the key to answering this question is flexibility. The Young Socialist Campaign Committees will vary from area to area and from campus to campus, both in the number of people involved and in

the types of activities they will carry out. We can project recruiting to the YSA a whole layer of campaign supporters. But we do know, both from our national experience with the Young Socialists for Halstead-Boutelle in 1968 and also with our somewhat more limited experience with our current statewide campaigns, that there are many more students who will want to support the SWP campaigns and become involved in campaign activities than are ready to join the YSA. The bigger we become the more this is going to be true. The more our movement grows, the bigger our influence and periphery will be and there will always be many more people who will be drawn to our election campaigns, to our movement, around one or another issue who won't be quite ready to take the step of actually joining our movement. It is those people who we want to draw into campaign activities.

At the very minimum, a YS Campaign Committee would be a mailing list of people who have endorsed the campaign or who've shown an interest in our campaign. We'll want to send these people sample copies of The Militant and campaign materials, notices of meetings and campaign activities and of course try to get them off the launching pad of the mailing list and into concrete activity. I think in most places YS Campaign Committees will be groups of endorsers who will meet periodically to discuss, plan and carry out campaign activities under the leadership of the YSAers.

I also want to say a little bit about what a YS Campaign Committee is not. The campaign committees should not be over structured. They should not be junior YSAs. They're organizational vehicles for drawing our supporters into campaign activity and it would be a mistake to try to have them be over organized. In some places these committees may meet on a fairly regular basis; in other places this may not be true.

What kinds of activities can YS Campaign Committees do? I'm not going to attempt to make an exhaustive list of what they can do. The main thing is experimentation and audacity in thinking about the types of activities Young Socialist Campaign Committees can carry out. One very important activity that we can project is to run student government election campaigns, which we want to do on every campus that we can. Most of the comrades have read about the experience of the Atlanta comrades in the Young Socialist Organizer. They ran a Young Socialists for the Socialist Workers Party Campaign for student government officers at Georgia State. Not only did it have the advantage of being tied into the state-wide SWP campaign that was going on at the same time but they were able to involve non-YSAers in the

actual slate of candidates for student government. In the beginning of the campaign I believe only one of four candidates was a comrade. By the time the campaign was over they were all comrades. We may not always be so successful in recruiting all of our supporters, but these campaigns are certain to be very fruitful.

There are a number of other activities that YS Campaign Committees can carry out. An important one is to raise money for our statewide campaigns, which can be done through honoraria and different forms of fundraising activities. They should have regular campaign literature tables, not only on campus but in the community. In New York, a number of the women supporters of the SWP campaign, on a regular basis set up literature tables in different parts of New York and were very successful in getting out campaign literature, selling buttons and so on. It was a very successful way to involve them in our campaign. YSCCs can arrange campus debates with other candidates and with other campaign supporters, sponsor and build campaign meetings for our own candidates, write articles for the school press, organize referenda on campus similar to the Choice 68-type referendums, get our candidates or campaign speakers on the campus radio stations possibly with a regular radio program, or sell subscriptions to The Militant as a regular part of our fall sub blitz, help get sponsors for the fair ballot fights that are going on in a number of states. There are many, many more ideas that I'm sure comrades can think of.

Another important type of activity that we'll want to help draw our supporters into is to help us with our participation in mobilizations and happenings (I don't know what else to call them) like Earth Day, where we'll want to have our Young Socialist Campaign Committees come out and help sell Militants and distribute campaign literature.

I'd like to conclude with one other aspect to the Young Socialist Campaign Committees and that's the relationship of these committees to our regional work. The SWP campaigns are state-wide campaigns and a major part of the YSA's fall offensive is going to be the extension and regularization of regional work including getting publicity and support for our campaigns on a regional level. We'll be able through our regional tours and the tours of the SWP candidates to expand our network of campaign supporters throughout each state. Campaign supporters in these outlying campuses, at the very least, can be asked to set up meetings for our candidates and get honoraria, and in many areas will actually carry on more

regular campaign activity. This is also an excellent way to recruit to the YSA.

I want to tell the comrades about a recent local that was formed and that's the local out in Riverside, California, which is perhaps the best example of how regular regional work plus campaign tours can be used to recruit to the YSA. We recently got a local of the YSA there which now has 13 members and it was through regular trips by SWP candidates Herman Fagg, Andrew Pulley and Dave Frankel that we were able to recruit this local.

I want to reiterate the point that Joel made on our ability to use the two week moratorium prior to the election campaign. We want to think out in advance and plan and organize for this two week period. We want to fight for it where the administrations aren't granting it. Where they are we want to be sure to have everything planned out well in advance so that we can maximize involving our campaign supporters and the impact that our campaign can have in this final intensive push before the election.

Ray Hamilton, DeKalb: What to do and what not to do in setting up Young Socialist Campaigners.

Tonight I'm going to speak on our experiences in building a Young Socialist Campaigners group at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois and also discuss how to organize and how not to organize a Young Socialist Campaigners.

When we were first approached with the idea of building a Young Socialist Campaign support group by the SWP Illinois state campaign committee, DeKalb was in a good position to make an initial attempt at this because of its close proximity to Chicago and also due to the fact that we've had a fairly well established local there for quite some time and it has been in a strong position among the political organizations on the campus. We decided because of this to attempt to set up a Young Socialist Campaigners group. We're glad we made this attempt because, paradoxically, it was even more successful in recruiting than in building the campaign itself. Out of the ten people that joined it, we recruited seven, including two disenchanted Weathermen.

We wanted to use the campaign to reach out to the newly radicalizing layers of the campus population with our revolutionary socialist program and draw them towards action based on that program. We felt that the best way to do that was to establish a new organization with a fairly broad base that would function separately from the YSA. This organization would be open to anyone who saw the campaign as an effective alternative to the

capitalist candidates, whether or not they agreed with the program. In other words, they didn't have to agree with any specific part of the program. They just had to agree that this was a good alternative to the capitalist candidates. We were able to draw quite a few people around who otherwise wouldn't have joined it, for instance the Weathermen. They were disenchanted but they didn't agree with the YSA. They thought "Well yes, it's better than the capitalists. We'll join that."

The setting up of Young Socialist Campaigners has several advantages. First of all it makes it possible to build a campaign far more energetically than the YSA could ever do. It makes it possible for those activists who do not have the commitment to join the YSA, but are still close to us, to become active in socialist politics.

You'll generally have a periphery around the YSA of students who like the YSA but the discipline scares them to death. So this gave them an opportunity to become active in socialist politics and quite naturally through the campaign they were put in the position where they found themselves defending our program and gradually came to accept the program and said "Well, the discipline isn't that bad. I think I'll join the YSA."

Also this would give us the possibility of having an officially recognized group on campus which could obtain funds for speakers. This is one of the important things a campus group could do. In many instances you have these speakers bureaus. YSCs give us an opportunity to get additional Socialist Workers Party speakers on to the campus by having another officially recognized group.

I'll go into how the Young Socialist Campaigners were set up and also into some of the mistakes that we made.

The first thing we did was gather together our periphery of about five students. We approached them with the concept that all they have to do is feel that this group is an effective alternative to capitalist candidates and become active in it. They were quite eager to get involved in socialist politics but they were still a little bit afraid of the YSA.

After we talked to our periphery, we brought up a campaign speaker, Willy Petty from Chicago. He gave a forum and, although the Campaigners was not yet officially formed, our periphery helped pass out a leaflet explaining what the Young Socialist Campaigners was and then asking everyone to come to a meeting later on. Out of that meeting, Young Socialist Campaigners was formally organized and was very shortly officially recognized on the campus.

Regarding the structure of this organization in relation to the YSA, we decided that a minimal number of YSAers would join this and that they would play an advisory as opposed to an active leadership role. It was probably a mistake that they played an advisory role because it didn't make for the most effective leadership within the organization. It is desirable to have a number of comrades in the YSC. The bulk of the work was to be done by the campaigners. Our big mistake in setting this up was that we set it up almost exactly the way the YSA was set up. The only differences between the Young Socialist Campaigners and the YSA was that it didn't have an executive committee, it didn't pay dues and it wasn't a democratic centralist organization. However, it was organized on a fraction basis. In other words the YSC had an antiwar fraction, a women's liberation fraction, everything but a campaign fraction. This caused some problems. We had one situation where the Young Socialist Campaigners was having a ROTC forum, explaining the issues of ROTC rather than the campaign. You see, what we had in effect created was a multi-issue organization. What you want is a single issue organization based on the campaign. What Susan said was right. It shouldn't be overly structured and it should be fairly loose.

The basic reason we set up the YSC on a fraction basis was that we felt in order to relate the campaign to the various issues on campus, pollution, women's liberation, antiwar, some degree of specialization was needed within the Young Socialist Campaigners so that they could relate the campaign to the women's liberation movement, to Earth Day, etc. That wasn't true, and it got us into a weird situation.

In spite of these organizational difficulties, we still had a tremendous amount of success in putting forward the ideas of the campaign. I think that points out how dynamic this campaign is and all the benefits that can be derived where you have a good, correctly organized Young Socialist Campaigners. Now during the time when the Young Socialist Campaigners was active (its active life span was approximately three weeks) we recruited seven people to the YSA. During that time, however, it organized meetings for two campaign speakers, including Peter Camejo from Massachusetts.

We also had to organize a fight to get the administration to free up the funds to let Peter come. The student government had okayed the funds for Peter Camejo to speak but for some reason the administration didn't want Peter to come on the campus and they found a law that said that a state school couldn't subsidize a candidate running for public office. Well the YSA and the Young

Socialist Campaigners got together to organize very quickly a mass delegation to the University Vice President's office. Within a half hour of the time the Vice President had vetoed it he was faced with a delegation of 30 socialist students and also a reporter from the student newspaper. That enabled us to get some publicity too, and within three days we had the money to bring Peter Camejo to campus.

Other things the Young Socialist Campaigners did was to set up a campaign table and distributed campaign literature. It used the literature from the center in Chicago and also printed up some of its own position papers on various issues on campus. It also accepted the responsibility of selling the campaign newspaper, The Militant, and helped us surpass our sub drive quota for the spring. It also participated in regional trips along with the YSA, got fifty names for the campaign, and distributed a lot of campaign literature.

Another activity was exposing a "peace" candidate we had running around our campus, a super-liberal teacher who was really quite a nice guy and all the kids liked him. But he didn't come out for immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Vietnam and we challenged him to a debate. It wasn't possible to get him to debate us but we did pretty well to expose him in front of his supporters.

As far as the perspectives for the fall go, we feel that it's really worth it to set up another Young Socialist Campaigners group. The DeKalb YSA is really looking forward to doing that. They're going to do that both around the state campaign and setting up a campus campaign. With the increased radicalization of the campus with the Kent and Augusta upsurges, there'll be a lot of students around Northern, as I imagine there will be around all schools, who'll be looking around for some sort of viable alternative to the present system. We feel that the Young Socialist Campaigners is going to give them a place to get involved in politics, look around for some group they want to join on a permanent basis, hopefully the YSA.

Sharon Cabanis, San Francisco: How to run a statewide campaign of major scope.

The best way to cover the scope and the size of the California campaign is to take a couple of concrete areas of work where we've done especially well.

The 1970 California campaign is the biggest and the largest in the country, if only you just look at the geography, or the geographical distance between branches, which is up to 600

miles, and the fact that there are four SWP branches and, at this time, eight YSA locals to coordinate, plus regional travelers in the north and the south, and eight candidates.

I want to first of all explain how we've tried to coordinate the campaign on a state-wide basis. We have a slate of eight candidates -- four of them are full-time, and the others work most of the time, but all of them are available on a state-wide basis. This has been very important. It was mentioned by Susan that three candidates played a major role in recruiting a new YSA in Riverside. By having the candidates available state-wide, they can intervene on a moment's notice, as we did with the campaign in the May events. In the first week the candidates spoke to over 87,000 people. Also every area where we have a campaign committee, has the benefit of the different candidates coming through and speaking on tours.

One of the problems with coordinating the campaign has been to set up a way of consulting around the state, and getting the full agreement of people on the different stages of the campaign as it developed. The initial political projections were usually voted on by all the branches, but at the same time, as we went into stages like the spring offensive, the summer, and now the fall offensive of the campaign, we need to bring the state leadership and the local campaign committees together so that we have a common agreement about coordinated tours, finances, and that kind of thing.

There are three ways we tried to set up this coordination and consultation. One is through regular mailings, where we try to send out reports periodically on how the campaign has done up to that time, and also where we'll be going from there -- the new budgets that we project for the next two or three months, ideas about the new tour schedules, new ideas we might have about some special fund raising, like a banquet, conferences, etc.

Another thing we've done is that the staff which works in the state office (at this time there are two and a half of us, one part time, two full time) tries to go around and speak to the different campaign committees of YSA locals and branches and lay out our ideas about a new stage of the campaign. After we've done that, we hold a state campaign committee meeting. The state campaign committee was set up in March, and is composed of three elected representatives each from the four branches, and the state campaign committee meets in order to discuss periodic phases, like how are we going to actually implement the campaign in the fall.

The other aspect of statewide coor-

dination has been the finances. We projected that we'd be able to raise and spend at least \$30,000.00. At the end of the summer, we have raised at least \$20,000.00. We have a projected budget for the fall of \$15,000.00, so I think it's likely that we'll go up to \$30,000.00. One of the important considerations in this kind of a budget, which seems to most people to be phenomenal, is that we have several campaign committees functioning in California that all work together building the campaign. The most important thing is that the large and ambitious character of the campaign has helped to raise money for our campaigns from people who will support us. The more we get out, the faster the money comes in. Raising money flows out of the political perspective we have, the more ambitious, the more audacious the campaign that we've set up, the more that we can not only raise money, but reap gains, bring people around the YSA and the party.

There are a couple of things that we've done to help with the financing of the state-wide campaign. It's a little different from the way YSA locals and SWP branches support the national office. There's no set way to support a state office that pays candidates and a staff, produces materials, and keeps an office functioning. What seems to be the best method that we've found is having a quota system where the state campaign takes pledges from committees for money that they try to raise through honoraria, special fund raising, soliciting contributions, and selling materials. We figure out a quota that we'd like for them to take for the month on the basis of our budget, and submit it to them where they then make up a budget trying to include that quota. The quota system is very good, because it encourages each campaign committee, and the campaign directors, to think about fund raising from the beginning of the campaign. When you're projecting a tour way off in October and November, you're always thinking.

One of the most important ways we've found to raise money besides contributions, honoraria, and sales of materials, is the cultivation of a periphery of supporters who can give substantial amounts. A few people will give monthly pledges to the campaign and others can be brought around the campaign and talked to and asked for large contributions at periodic time intervals or for special projects. For example, we did this for the Far East tour that Andrew Pulley made, and we're going to do the same for a wind-up banquet at the end of the campaign. Developing this periphery not only lays a basis of support that we can draw on for this campaign, but will be of great assistance when we launch the '72 campaign.

The audacious, bold scope of a camp-

aign like California's I think is also reflected in the international tours that we had this summer. These tours show how the SWP campaign can begin to reach out with our ideas not only to people in California, but to people literally around the world. Our campaigns can help build the revolutionary socialist movement and the antiwar movement internationally, through our candidates.

The Far East tour is a good example of this. Andrew's not back yet. He's still in Japan; but at this point reports that have come in from all of the countries where he's been have been ecstatic. You've probably seen the press clippings on the bulletin boards at the campaign tables which illustrate the reception he has received. Everywhere the reports say that he's helped build our movement. He has been able to help explain what happened in the United States in May, and the depth of the radicalization in the United States. When he returns, I think the impact of his tour within California is going to help to build our election campaign. No other tendency in California has done anything like this.

Briefly, I want to mention the Aztlan tour, which, although it didn't go outside of the United States, is still an international tour that's very significant for both the party and the campaign not only locally but nationally. This tour took Froben Lozada and Antonio Camejo over 7,000 miles in a car, driving through Colorado, Texas, and Southern California. Everywhere the reception was tremendous. The articles in The Militant will give you a more complete report of this tour. One of the purposes of the tour was to help build support for La Raza Unida Party and the Chicano Moratorium. Having our candidates there to help build support for the Chicano movement, was very significant not only to show that we support them but that we can contribute ideas for helping to build the party.

Discussion

John Votava, Atlanta: I want to talk about the Young Socialist campus campaigns because of the important role they play and how they can be one of the key projects for any of the Young Socialist Campaigner groups.

First of all, the importance of these campaigns for recruiting. I'm sure everybody who's here has talked to people who have said, "Sure, we agree with your campaign," but they don't want to join the YSA. As Ray pointed out, it's true that if they agree with the platform, they often will help promote it or even run on a Young Socialist ticket with YSAers on our platform. That brings them into socialist activity and gives them a

better view of us from a closer position. At the same time if the campus YSA is small and not too well known it looks a little better to show that you have broader support.

Often student newspapers will give a campus campaign a lot of publicity. At Georgia State University we called our first news conference kicking off the campaign and the Young Socialist group in the lounge of the Student Union. That helped us get school newspaper coverage.

Another thing is the concrete programs we should develop for the campus. It's not sufficient just to take Black control of Black communities or the SWP election brochure and mechanically use it for the campus program. We can take concrete issues on the campus, do some research on the questions and develop meaningful demands. For example, everybody knows that most women in campus jobs are employed as secretaries. The highest administrative roles they play are Dean of Women and things like that. We can put out position papers on issues like this and can make our platforms very concrete.

We can relate the issues of the Vietnam war and racism to the campus. For example, in the state of Georgia, the text that's used in class to teach Georgia history is full of racist statements. It's a standard text used in state universities. Research can be done on that and brought to the attention of all students.

Campus campaigns can also relate to city issues that come up. During the Young Socialists campaign at Georgia State, the city employees strike occurred so we added another demand to the campaign. We demanded that the university and the student government contribute to the strike fund and that the university's facilities be opened up for the strikers and the Black community to use to organize the strike.

It's important to put out at least one attractive piece of campaign literature. In the student government elections, most of the students are lazy opportunists and don't put out decent material. They get out something like "Vote for me, I'm nice" and it's usually real cheap looking.

Bernie Senter, San Diego: As was emphasized before we want to look on The Militant as the campaign newspaper and try and project the newspaper in every campaign activity wherever we go. It would be a very good idea that as the campaign supporter groups are set up, that these groups take their own quotas, and organize their own weekly sales of The Militant, as the campaign newspaper.

On fundraising -- one idea that's being discussed is that almost every branch in California will be holding a campaign victory banquet following the elections. Of course this banquet will be the highlight of the climax of the campaign. We project this as the event at which we're going to be able to win the most recruits. As soon as school starts we will have the tickets ready, and sell them throughout school.

Also another idea that was projected, was that following large meetings and forums, where candidates are speaking, that instead of letting people walk away and not get involved in anything, is to organize right afterwards a short meeting of the Young Socialist Supporter group for all those people interested in helping or working with us.

Pam Kolis, Chicago: I'd like to mention that for the first time in the state of Illinois, the Socialist Workers Party is officially on the ballot. I'd like to make a point on the importance of stressing that we're a state-wide campaign, and the importance of doing regional work. I think that when school opens the comrades working away from the regional center in other parts of the state should have campaign literature and buttons, and should start compiling a press list in the area for publicity when speakers come down. Before the speakers actually come down, there should be a base already established, of people who know about the Socialist Workers Party. Before candidates arrive key reporters who seem friendly about movement activities should be informed about the meetings in that area.

I'd like to stress the importance of having a literature at all campaign meetings and the importance of the person who sits at the literature table and urges contacts to actually sign up for activity. This person is just as important as the speaker. The speaker motivates people to do activity, but it's the person at the literature table that gets the names, sells the literature, and makes the actual contact.

I think that regional campaign conferences should be called over a campus break period if possible, when comrades will be free and not have school to attend. If this is not possible these conferences should be put on tape and made available to the region.

New Speaker, Minneapolis: I'd just like to cover a couple of ideas on the Young Socialist Campaign Committee, which will undoubtedly be taken up in the high school workshop, but they are also relevant here. We're going to have excellent opportunities, especially in the large metropolitan areas, to get our campaign speakers into all the high schools, and

present our ideas to these high school students. One of the issues that we're going to have is that the 18 year old vote is going to be coming up in 1972. Juniors and seniors in high school today are going to be expected to vote in '72, and certainly we've got to get out and present our ideas to them, so that they can make good decisions about which candidates they're going to support in '72. In Minneapolis we haven't done anything specifically to establish speaking engagements in the high schools, but one thing that we have talked about is sending to high school social studies departments an attractive package of campaign literature including all of our posters, brochures, stickers, and a cover letter, explaining which topics candidates are able and willing to speak on. The letter would indicate our willingness to participate in debates and symposia with the other candidates.

This request can be motivated by explaining that we're running a serious campaign and we'd like to present our ideas to students who will be voting in the next presidential election. I think the result of a Young Socialist Campaign Committee in the high schools is going to be a little different than that on the campuses. It won't be one in which money is raised, where guest speakers are flown in so much, and it won't be so agitational, but especially in areas where high school recruitment has not developed so far yet, it's going to be a good opening for high school recruitment, getting lists of names of high school students who are interested in our program. When we begin the 1972 election campaign, we're going to have names of students who are in high schools now, but who will be in colleges or who will be working across the state and are already receptive to our ideas.

David Thorstad, New York: I want to say a word, primarily to members of campaign committees, about the election campaign column in The Militant. I do this because the best newspaper coverage you're going to get in your campaigns is in The Militant, and it is not clear to me that the campaign committees are as aware of this as they should be. The fall subscription blitz, and the other expanded opportunities we're going to have with the opening of campus, highlight the necessity for the campaigns to have a consistent approach to using The Militant and feeding in the information which can be reproduced in the campaign column and in other articles.

The campaign column was initiated to do two primary things. One was to show in brief items the breadth, variety, and imagination that our campaigns have. This would not only impress people who are not in the movement, as well as those who are, but it would present a convenient medium whereby comrades could exchange ideas

which they had implemented in their campaigns.

The second reason for which this column was initiated, was an attempt to get the campaigns to utilize The Militant in a consistent, conscious manner. Briefly, what we want for this column are the following two things: first of all, we are not especially interested in what our candidates say. I don't mean by that that you shouldn't send news releases of statements by the candidates into The Militant. However, most of the time we can predict what our position is going to be on any number of questions, but more interesting, not only to us, but also to people who subscribe to The Militant, is what other people say about what we say, or what they say about our campaigns in general. That means that you should be very conscious of sending in clippings of publicity you get in the newspapers. On that point I would suggest identifying some of those newspapers.

The second, and primary thing you should keep in mind, in sending us information on the campaign, is simply reporting on what kinds of activities our candidates are involved in. I don't want to tell you what kinds of activities you're interested in putting in the paper; you can tell that by simply reading the column. But I emphasize it because these types of reports are not being sent in as frequently as they could be. That is, there is a certain level of activity being maintained by the campaigns, which is not necessarily reflected in The Militant at this point, and in the fall that level of activity is going to step up. Just today, I heard of a meeting where Willy Petty spoke on a street corner, in the Black community in Chicago where 50 Militants were sold in an hour. This is the type of activity that if reported to The Militant would have been printed. If you're in any doubt whether or not to send in an item, send it in.

Now, finally, three brief points:

1) Send in photos of the candidates; we still lack photos of some of the candidates, and preferably, send in action shots. Show them doing something not just posing for a picture. You can continue to send in photos, as the candidates continue to be active in the campaign. We'll never have too large a supply of photos of our candidates, as you can probably notice from reading The Militant.

2) In initiating the column we requested that all campaigns assign one person to be in charge of corresponding with The Militant. As of this date, only four or five campaigns have actually done that, so it would be to our advantage if somebody would actually be assigned to regularly do that, and inform us.

3) Please send in copies of all camp-

aign publications, leaflets and propaganda.

Diane Feeley, San Francisco: At the University of California, Berkeley, Mrs. Hearst, of the famous Hearst newspaper family, called for an investigation of the facilities that were used during the May events where telephone calls were made, and so on. We may see more of these attacks on the antiwar university concept in the fall, and I think the campaigns should be very sensitive to it and issue statements very quickly, defending that concept. It's very important that our candidates be able to speak on that concept in the fall in the colleges when they open up.

Linda made the point that going to hearings was very important. You'll be surprised at how large some of these hearings can be. I went to a bus fare hearing in San Francisco, and there were something like 400-500 people there. Most of them had never heard of a socialist. By attending and speaking at that hearing, the Progress, a throwaway newspaper delivered to all neighborhoods in San Francisco, reported that a very broad spectrum of people were there, including the Socialist Workers Party candidate.

I also wanted to mention tours. We've done a couple of them in California, and we have others projected. In Antioch, California, which is about fifty miles from San Francisco, there is a series of fiberboard plants -- Crown-Zellerbach, which makes toilet tissue. They have tried to avoid the protective legislation for women simply by not adhering to the state law. The women in the union there have formed a women's caucus, and are very, very militant. They had invited me to the plant, and were even going to set up a tour, when I suggested that maybe the campaign could do it. They wanted me to come and see the types of conditions under which they were forced to work in the factory. It was really at their request that we went there, and we're trying to get into another plant.

Another candidate toured with about twenty other women's liberation activists, a women's prison in the Los Angeles area, and these things can be a very important way of involving some of our campaign supporters, and of writing up articles on specific aspects of the hospital system, or other local issues.

In San Juaquin Valley, for instance, where the farmholders make at least an average of \$50,000.00 a year; and the workers make \$3,000.00 per year per family or less, and some don't even have homes. So I think that's an important aspect of making our transitional program applicable to the local conditions.

It's also very important to use the equal rights article from The Militant

all the SWP Senatorial candidates signed. Duplicate it, distribute it, and be able to explain our position about the Equal Rights Amendment.

Lastly, I want to mention that I was visiting an old friend in prison the other day in San Francisco and somebody from the San Francisco State strike was also there. When he came out, I visited him for a couple of minutes, he said, "Oh, here's my Senatorial candidate." He's somebody who's not particularly friendly to the YSA, but I thought it was really meaningful that people who aren't particularly close to us are starting to talk about "our" candidates -- that's what we want to happen.

Steve Beren, New York: When elections come, people begin to think about political ideas, and the reaction of bourgeois candidates is to avoid this, and get people to think about doorbells, levers, Democrats and Republicans. We run campaigns to take advantage of people thinking about ideas, and to the extent that our campaigns are big, the election becomes a forum for ideas, and to the extent that it becomes a forum of ideas, we change the relationship of forces because we recruit.

We don't talk about not winning the elections, because what we're really interested in is the relationship of forces between the socialists, the workers and the capitalists. In '68, when the YSA grew and doubled, because of the Halstead-Boutelle campaign, the capitalists didn't double the number of people who they had, so really we won that election.

Now, how are we going to win the election this year? When we get on TV or radio -- even for a few minutes -- we speak to more people than we ever get a chance to at the biggest antiwar demonstrations. I want to relate some of the things that New York has done in this area.

In addition to equal time, in New York they have, as they do all over the country, call-up radio shows. One comrade called up a radio show and spoke for a few minutes or women's liberation. She was so interesting and such a good speaker that the announcer decided to let her host the rest of the show, and the entire show was dominated by socialist politics and women's liberation politics.

CBS-TV broadcast an editorial July 4, saying that in 1776 revolutionaries were real great, but now they are no good. So we answered that, and said revolutionaries are very good. We said they're not destructive and have a lot of good ideas. We got a response in the mail saying "I agree with your answer to the editorial, here's a check for \$50.00."

At our campaign table at the antiwar

demonstration on August 8, Hiroshima Day, we had a person who, because of the number of editorials and the amount of times we had been on the radio, asked to see the person who did the editorials.

Another thing is that in all these cases, the basic thing is that we think our party is the only party that can really talk to the issues. So we are very serious. We watch the TV and radio listings. We make sure that on every point we know all the regulations. All the comrades should read the campaign reports for the last few years, especially the report by Bill Massey listing all the different regulations. The key is to be audacious and very bold.

Debby Woodroffe, Detroit: I want to talk about the women's liberation aspects of our campaigns, because I think it's obvious from what's been done in different areas that this can be one of the most dynamic aspects. To set the tone for some of the ideas I have about women's liberation support groups, I want to tell you a brief anecdote from Detroit. I don't know if the women's liberation fractions know that the Young Women's Christian Association has a women's liberation caucus within it called Young Women Committed to Action. In Detroit they called a meeting for all the women candidates to give their position on the war in Vietnam, and how women could relate to that. Included on the panel were several very ambitious Democrats and Republicans, as well as some underground Stalinist candidates. We went to that meeting with Evelyn Kirsch, one of the female SWP candidates in Detroit, and asked to have her added to the panel along with the other women. They put her at the end, after ten women, thinking people would leave before she spoke. What happened was that all ten women gave very banal speeches about the boy next door, and just very personal, moral explanations about the war. They had no program whatsoever to offer to the women who had come to see how the candidates could help them end the war. When Evelyn spoke, she gave our whole program and listed our demands to show how the campaign was related to this issue, and how it could solve it. At the end of the meeting, they had a coffee hour, and every single independent woman in that audience gathered around our candidate and totally ignored all the Democrats and Republicans.

That gave us a feel for the tremendous potential that exists in getting female supporters for the campaign. The first thing we did was to set up on paper a women's liberation campaign support group, and have that group call a series of classes that we held at Wayne State University. We had a series of five of them, taught by our comrades, on topics like "What's the Role of Third World Women in Women's Liberation," and "Who's

the Enemy, Male Chauvinism or Capitalism," and things that are being discussed right now by women in the movement. These classes filled such a vacuum in the women's liberation movement because no one else was offering open classes of this sort. They drew about forty women every time with a consistent layer of about twenty women who considered themselves endorsers and returned time and time again.

At the conclusion of the class, we organized a three day conference on women's history, called around the demand of "Write Women Back into History," and had several speakers on Black women's history, the history of the suffrage movement, and featured Jo O'Brien on the British women's liberation movement. What we did was to use the women who had been around the class, to help us build that conference. We had them make posters for the campuses, hand out leaflets, and talk to the press. The press aspect of this has been one of the key things. There's a lot of young women reporters who work on the women's pages, and are not interested in garden parties, or that type of thing. They're interested in what women are doing in the women's liberation movement, and they're just there because that's where they're relegated due to discrimination in the newspapers. They are natural allies, and it's key to get in touch with them. They featured our campaign conference and announced it for us on the pages of the major paper in Detroit. A lot of people came to it because of that.

At the conference we had about seventy independent people come over the two days. We were able to give them a really thorough educational program, and an interpretation of women's role in history. They came to realize what our campaign is, and how it's different from the other parties. Can you imagine the Democrats sponsoring a ten-hour conference on the role of women under American capitalism? They wouldn't do that kind of thing. They do not offer any kind of concrete service to the women's liberation movement to help build it in any way. They just try to dissipate it. Through that conference the women who attended saw what we were trying to do, and we got a lot of endorsers through it. Also a lot of women that came from the region asked to have us speak at their campuses when school opens. We also made a lot of press contacts and since the conference the press has been calling us all the time, asking our female candidates what our position is on issues like the Equal Rights Amendment.

In the fall, we will have this tremendous layer of women around us, and we want to encourage them to continue to build our campaigns in an active way beyond just doing mailings. We're going to try to find hearings that they can go

out to and testify in the name of the SWP campaign, and send them around with the different candidates and have them introduce the candidates. We're planning to have another class series in the fall that they can help teach. Because our campaign is seen as being a builder of the women's liberation movement, we want to involve our supporters in that kind of activity, and one of the things we're going to be doing is to involve all the supporters in participating with us in the left wing of the women's liberation movement, particularly a big teach-in on women's liberation that's going to be held on the Wayne campus this fall.

Joe Miles, Boston: I'd like to talk about the campaign in relation to GI work. I think that using the campaign to talk to GIs about the war and socialism we'll be relating to one of our most important audiences. The depth of anti-war sentiment in the Army is unbelievable. To find someone who supports the war, you've got to look under a rock. Some of the ways we can do this is not only with ex-GI comrades, but by trying to get candidates out to the bases and talk with GIs as much as possible.

Derrel Myers, Minneapolis: I want to make a point in relation to what Linda said about the idea of us putting out press statements and saying things that people will be much more receptive to than just an overall program for socialism. Along the lines of the points Lenin made in What is to Be Done?, one of the tasks of revolutionary socialists is to expose the inequities under capitalism and all the forms of repression.

I was very impressed with the report made on the San Joaquin Valley, by the candidates from California. I think that's the kind of thing we should keep our eyes and ears open for because this really is the era of exposure, where people are beginning to see all the various manifestations of the contradictions of capitalism. For example the popularity of people like Ralph Nader, and the exposure about how children's breakfast cereals have no nutritional value. People are interested in these things, and our campaigns can distinguish themselves, by relating imaginatively to these issues.

For example, I think our candidates can do research on military bases, and put forward requests to the commanders of the bases asking that our candidates be permitted to tour the bases and discuss with the GIs, because they're voters. Our candidates want to know the conditions there.

When there's an explosion in a prison, I think that our candidates should request that we be given all the facts, that there be public hearings, and that we want to know what's going on in the

prisons. We want our candidates to be allowed to go into the prisons and talk to the prisoners, and issue press statements. For example, we have requested the governor of Minnesota that we want to visit this prison and find out what's going on, and inform the public of it. There are a lot of those types of things we can do, and comrades can use their own imagination.

There was a big explosion in the Minneapolis papers about how nursing homes aren't really nursing homes; they're just places for old people to die, where they get very inadequate care. These articles received front page coverage.

I think we'll also find people who are doing research on various questions, like ecology, military research on the university, etc. After a few people like this heard about our campaign and talked to us they asked us whether our campaign could use some of this research.

Paula Reimers, Philadelphia: The Philadelphia campaign is a fairly low-budget campaign. We don't have much money to spend, so one of the techniques we've developed for making leaflets is to take articles from The Militant, on especially important subjects, like the Equal Rights Amendment and Maxine Williams' article on Black women's liberation, and lay them out as campaign pamphlets. On the back of the leaflet we indicate that it is reprinted from the weekly socialist paper The Militant. The response, especially to the one on the Equal Rights Amendment, has been very good.

Summary

Joel Britton: The comrades who have spoken tonight have raised a lot of good ideas and suggestions for our campaigns. I think we've had some very good examples of how our campaigns are used to build outside movements like those presented by Debby and Herman. We often make that point, that this is one of the differences between our campaigns and the capitalist campaigns. These are good concrete examples of how that can be done.

I think another good example of how we do the same thing, and can become a real factor in the politics of social movements, and the politics of cities and regions is Tony Camejo and Froben Lozada's campaigns in California. We are finding that if there is any kind of halfway representative Chicano conference, and we participate in it and Tony and Froben and other comrades step forward as spokesmen and spokeswomen, and we have literature, etc., then it greatly restricts the degree to which liberal Democrats within what they'd call the "Mexican-American community," or the "Americans of Mexican" descent, have a free hand in these conferences. This is possible because of the deepening radicali-

zation that is reflected in these conferences, and our participation can often make a decisive difference in what happens at these gatherings. We can win a tremendous amount of support and further reinforce the aspect of our candidates building mass social movements.

One of the things that hasn't been mentioned too much, but which is very important, is getting endorsements for our campaigns. This is something that tends to get neglected sometimes, because there's not always a full concept of what to do with endorsements and names on mailing lists. Often it becomes a gigantic expense, if month after month, regular mailings go out to people. The key thing is to get as many names as possible of people who endorse the campaign, whether they're Afro-Americans for the Socialist Workers slate, Chicanos, women's liberationists, young socialists, or any other category of supporters. Get their names and addresses and send them sample mailings and a sample copy of The Militant. We may want, even though we're having a sub drive this fall, to do this as a national thing. We may ask all the campaigns to send in their complete lists of endorsers, or those who don't have subs, to The Militant, and we will send them three or four sample copies of The Militant so they can read The Militant during the final windup of the election campaign. That was done during the '68 Halstead-Boutelle campaign. To be effective this means that comrades in each state must conscientiously go after endorsements.

It's very important to have the concept that someone should be an endorser even if they're not willing to get a Militant subscription or willing to be actively involved in a campaign. Those names can be used to great effect in ads, as was done in Atlanta where Roxanne Dunbar made the mistake of becoming an endorser, then reneging later, and was subjected to an open letter from Linda Jenness.

The campaigns definitely tie in with the perspective we laid out for the fall Militant sub blitz that will be discussed later. Since The Militant is the campaign newspaper of all our campaigns across the country, it's very important to mobilize supporters of the campaign in all the states, even where we don't necessarily have party branches or YSA locals, to help build the sub drive. We found that in the last drive, by sending out appeals both in The Militant column and in letters to campaign endorsers, we were able to get many of them to take small quotas for the subscription drive and pitch in and help build the circulation of The Militant. They did this even though they were not in the YSA and the party, and had no direct connection, other than having been an

endorser, or on the mailing list.

We should really think through the new possibilities we have with the 18 year old vote coming up next year, with the May events having occurred, and with the projections being made on many campuses for two weeks of moratoriums on classes for students to be involved in electoral politics. I believe it was at Wayne State in Detroit where the comrades got a course approved for credit. It's sort of like a lab course, where you got credit for working on someone's campaign, so the students at Wayne State will be able to get credit for working on our campaign. We have to fight for that kind of thing on all the campuses.

Of central importance, and that's why we had two people on the panels speaking on it, and I was glad to hear so many people speaking on it from the floor, is the use of the campaigns to recruit to the YSA. The central vehicle for this is the Young Socialist Campaigner concept, and also the experiences like Debby reported on, as to women's liberation campaigners, Afro-American supporters, Chicano supporters, and so on. The growth of the YSA can be significantly increased this fall if this is systematically organized and thought.

At this conference we've been explaining that American capitalism is in a deepening social crisis and that there's something new almost every day or two that's scaring the hell out of people. Some essential part of the functioning of society breaks down, whether it's transportation, telephones, electric power, not to speak of transporting nerve gas, which is very frightening to masses of people. In New York City a car went out of control and ran into an apartment building, and the entire building, on one side, collapsed. People went falling down three or four floors. It's a fantastic thing and is obviously having a big impact on people. All of these issues, as well as the broader social movements that have grown up in the last few years, are things that our campaigns can relate to.

I was extremely happy to see what happened in Seattle, with Stephanie Coontz being invited to the prison. More and more we can go after things we wouldn't have dreamed of doing a couple of years ago with our campaigns and have a big impact. We can demand to see officials and get tremendous radio and TV time. I agree with Dave that we'll probably get the most accurate coverage of our campaigns in The Militant, but we should not at all assume that most of the coverage of our campaigns is going to be through The Militant, or even the best. In some ways, if our campaigns are really organized properly, we'll get so much publicity in the media that with the present size and scope of The Militant,

we could not possibly cover it all. With all the various local issues that come up, and the interventions of the campaigns into these questions, we will become more and more widely known.

I think Linda's comments on the functioning of our candidates and campaigns and how to be taken seriously are really excellent, and should be taken very seriously by all the campaigns around the country. I think there's a marked difference sometimes, in just the very look of the Atlanta candidates when their pictures appear in The Militant. They look like they're ready to take power, to take office, and are ready for business. That's the kind of appearance we want to have. We're not running as alternate life-stylers or anything like that. We want to be taken as seriously as possible by the broadest possible sections of the population. I want to endorse that 100%.

Another thing, just to re-emphasize it because it wasn't discussed too much, and that is our ability increasingly to take on and debate our capitalist opponents. This is something important to be sent into The Militant whenever that happens. Whenever we're on the same panel, whenever any of these bourgeois candidates are forced to take note of our presence is an important political event, and would not have happened a few years ago. They refused to be on the same platform with our candidates. Increasingly we are able to confront them, either from the audience or actually on the same platform, and that's an extremely significant thing and we should do it as often as possible, and make the most of it when we do.

One thing on money: there's a marked difference between the spending of campaigns in areas where we have similar size branches, and I would assume, potential for money. It's extremely important to be aware of the relationship between money and the scope of the campaign we can run. To some extent the amount of money we get is dependent on the scope of the campaign. It may sound weird, but you have to have an energetic, major scope campaign before you can really get the kind of money that's necessary to run the campaign. It's sometimes required that a local internal fund drive be held to get the money to start that, or loans from periphery, sympathizers and so on. It's very important, because the kind of initial material we put out and the kinds of things our candidates can do can generate contributions we wouldn't get if we didn't start off that way.

It seems that from everything the panelists and the comrades from the floor said, that we face tremendous prospects in the fall, and I'm sure we're going to make the most of it.

OBERLIN CONFERENCE EVALUATION

REPORT TO POLITICAL COMMITTEE -- SEPTEMBER 22, 1970

by Joel Britton

The plenum of the National Committee in February projected holding an activists conference in the summer. This idea evolved in our discussions and the Political Committee later concretized this proposal in the form of projecting a combined educational and activists conference -- combining political education with activists panels and fraction meetings. The purpose of the conference was to help tool up the party for new opportunities for growth and expansion. Such a conference would give us an opportunity to discuss with a broad layer of the party and youth activists from all over the country how best to go forward. The Socialist Activists and Educational Conference turned out to be a major achievement for our movement.

The first major achievement was the absorption by the party and YSA activists of the political line of the 1969 party convention and the 1970 plenum. The character and the depth of the radicalization, the concept of the combined character of the coming American revolution, our analysis and strategy for the youth movement, the antiwar movement, the women's liberation movement, the national struggles for self-determination, the state of the labor movement, and the kind of organization necessary to lead these forces to victory in the American revolution -- these were the themes developed in the Prospects for the American Revolution series and other educational sessions. One indication of the importance of this aspect of the Oberlin Conference is the fact that many comrades thought that we were breaking new ground, that these were new ideas that we were developing. Quite a few comrades who had gone through the discussion leading up to the last party convention and the convention itself, and who had read our materials from the last plenum said they had not fully absorbed the ideas that were put forward there until Oberlin. So it was a very important achievement of the conference that these ideas and concepts permeated more deeply into the ranks of the party and the YSA than would have been possible without this conference.

The second major achievement was the rich exchange of party building experiences and the projection of the major campaigns for our movement in the coming period. This was done through the Party Builder and YS Organizer before the conference and the activists panels and workshops, fraction meetings and informal discussion that took place during the conference. It is helpful to remind ourselves of the main areas of

of work discussed in the activists panels, workshops and fraction meetings that were also the subject of extensive informal discussions with leading activists in the field, fraction leaders, people in charge of areas of activity.

The discussions at Oberlin about building the revolutionary press made it possible for us to realistically project a subscription drive for 15,000 new readers of The Militant and 2,500 new ISR readers -- compared to the 4,000 new readers goal that was projected at the party convention a year ago.

We were able to confidently project an ambitious windup this fall to the 1970 SWP election campaigns. To prepare for the last big push of the campaigns we drew a partial balance sheet of the campaigns so far stressing both their achievements and deficiencies.

The reports to the panel on our work in defense of the Arab revolution were given from all over the country and indicated a tremendous amount of this work is being done. The Peter Buch propaganda tour was projected at that panel and has become an important part of our campaign in defense of the Palestinian revolution.

George Novack tells me that he thinks the conference resulted in a qualitatively new financial consciousness in the American Trotskyist movement. This was indicated by the slide show on our financial needs for expansion projects which resulted in an unprecedented response by comrades and the many hours of the discussions that Judy White held with organizers and financial directors on branch finances.

Our regional perspectives which we had been discussing and making some progress on the last several years will be accelerated by the new YSA perspectives for a more structured approach toward regional organizing.

Many, many hours of discussion took place on our branch bookstores and on promotion of Pathfinder literature. There were very good panel discussions on weekly forums, educational work, campus organizing and high school work, USIA Justice Committee work, the Mandel case and defending our movement from attacks by the ultraright.

Many discussions were held on gearing up fully for the fall antiwar offensive to culminate in the October 31 actions. This was the first national

gathering of our movement, where we have been able to so thoroughly evaluate our experiences in the women's liberation movement -- it raised our work in this new movement to an entirely new level. Successful Black and Chicano fraction meetings were held where our developing Third World cadre exchanged experiences and discussed how to make our work more effective. A very good trade union workshop was held.

This should remind the comrades of the numerous and varied categories of branch functioning and work in outside mass movements that were discussed extensively in the panels and at fraction meetings at the conference. Not only were comrades from the center able to have extensive discussions with comrades from all over the country, but equally important, comrades from one part of the country were able to talk with comrades from another part of the country and share their experiences informally as well as in panels.

I think it's safe to say that all this discussion, formal and informal, has led to an entirely new consciousness of the importance of all these aspects of our work and new insights into "how to do it." It was very important that the conference was a national conference. We decided very early not to have several regional conferences this time around. A national conference allowed comrades from all over the country (every party branch was represented -- and many of the YSA locals) to learn more about the scope and depth of our tasks than if we had had a series of regional conferences. The large daily sessions that we had with comrades present from all over the country, enhanced a sense of solidarity and political homogeneity among all of the participants. This was a very important aspect of the conference. It indicated that we're at a new stage in terms of what we have and what we can do in the seventies. We learned more about the party through our observations and discussions than we could have in any other way.

The credentials report is very interesting. There were 675 comrades and guests registered for the conference of whom 614 were in the SWP and/or YSA which makes it the largest gathering of party and YSA members in our history. Five hundred fifty to six hundred were there for all or most of the week. Actually for the last day or two of the conference, an estimated thirty to fifty people came who didn't register, so it's safe to say there were at least 700 who participated in the conference at one time or another. Nearly 400 party members were at the Oberlin Conference and over 400 registered as members of the YSA. Two hundred eleven comrades were there who were in both the YSA and the party,

two hundred twenty five were in the YSA only.

It was clear, not only from looking at the sessions every day but from the credential figures that the average party member is younger and younger. The average age of those who registered at the conference was twenty five. The median and mean ages were twenty three, and twenty three was the age that the greatest number of comrades were -- seventy seven were there who were twenty three years old. Two hundred fifteen were there who were twenty one or under and one hundred thirty nine registered who have been in our movement less than one year. The average time in our movement of comrades who registered was four years and three months.

These figures confirmed the estimates that we made at the 1969 National Committee plenum in the political trends and organizational tasks report by Comrade Barnes (Internal Information Bulletin No. 2 in 1969). He pointed out that not only had recruitment to the YSA been increasing, but recruitment of primarily young people to the party was increasing. The party was beginning to grow, not simply going through the process of replacing people as they were dropping away but growing absolutely. He spoke of "the changing character" of the SWP and "our tasks in anticipation of future growth." We were more and more becoming a party of young activists with young comrades taking on a greater and greater load of the day-to-day leadership of the branches. These developments indicated the importance of giving much more attention to branch structure and functioning. It was at that plenum that many aspects of our organizational work that were to be discussed in great detail at the Oberlin Conference were raised and discussed.

The following quote from that report was very much confirmed by this conference. "The internal composition of the branches has changed markedly to include a growing percentage of active forces, young people with the perspective of a lifetime as Bolsheviks before them, and who are open to being assimilated into the Socialist Workers Party. In the branches this change is reflected in the growing numbers of young activists who are members of the party but not the YSA -- that growing layer of young party activists who have graduated from the YSA but who are active and make up a growing percentage of the branches. This change coincides with the need to expand the scope and regularity of branch functioning."

These observations were confirmed shortly after that plenum in a membership survey. It showed that seventy per cent of

the comrades in the party at that time, had been recruited since 1960 or later, underlining the fact that we can no longer think in terms of the party being an organization primarily of older people or as an educational, advisory or service organization for the YSA. This was totally confirmed at and symbolized by the Oberlin Conference.

We are in the process of transcribing the tapes of the lectures and panels and will be publishing much of this material in The Militant, ISR, Young Socialist Organizer, pamphlets, educational bulletins and organizational bulletins.

A few words on the organization of the conference. At least one comrade at Oberlin was quoted as saying "The only way to make the conference better would be to make it bigger." Of course this is an exaggeration, there were things that could have made it better other than making it bigger. But I think that probably summed up the general attitude of most of the comrades. It would have been a little larger if we had been able to get the schedule of educational sessions and activists panels out earlier than we did, to give comrades a more concrete idea of what the nature

of the conference was going to be and the discussions that were going to take place there. It would have made for a slightly larger attendance. But it would not have changed the basic character of the conference.

I am sure the comrades are all very much convinced of the merits of having such conferences on college campuses or similar facilities whenever possible. It made it possible for us to have the conference at the pace that we did, with the proximity to all of the facilities for activities other than the activists and educational sessions -- sports, the cabaret, informal discussion.

I am sure that all the comrades who attended share our thinking that the conference was a tremendous success for our movement. We are already seeing indications in the minutes, letters and reports from the branches that our movement is better tooled up for the coming period. Improvements in the election campaigns, increased sustainers to the national office, serious preparations for the subscription drives are all signs of this. We will see the fruits of the conference for some time to come in many, many ways.

CREDENTIALS

Total Registered: 674

SWP - 389
YSA - 436

SWP only - 178
YSA only - 225
Both - 211

Visitors - 60

Women - 270 or 41%
Men - 404 or 59%

1969 YSA Convention - 821 total
(67% male, 33% female)
1969 SWP Convention - 661 total
(63% male, 37% female)

Age:

Youngest - 11 months
Oldest - 69

Average age - 25
Median age - 23
Mean age - 23

21 or under - 215

Co-thinkers: 27

Sample of Previous Political Affiliations (not complete):

SDS - 62	Student Peace Union -
RYM II - 4	10
SSOC - 7	Black Panthers - 2
Weatherman - 1	Peace & Freedom - 5
DuBois Club - 9	Communist Party - 5

Current Affiliations: (not complete)

Women's Liberation - 90

Antiwar - 324

SMC - 238
Adult Coalitions - 46
Vets for Peace - 6
GIs United - 1

Black and Chicano Organizations - 4

Third World support groups - 4

Years in Movement:

Minimum: 3 weeks
Maximum: 37 years
Average: 4 years 3 months
Less than one year: 139

Breakdown by Region: (figure in parentheses
is 1969 SWP Convention)

East

New York - 146
Boston - 61
Philadelphia - 35
D.C. - 17
Providence - 8
New Jersey - 2
N.Y. at-large - 1

Total - 270 (295)

Midwest

Chicago - 55
Detroit - 48
Cleveland - 42
Madison - 19
Twin Cities - 15
Ann Arbor - 7
Cincinnati - 7
Milwaukee - 4
St. Louis - 3
Kansas City - 2
Bloomington - 2
Kent - 2
Akron - 2
Columbus - 2
Antioch - 1
LaCross - 1
Carbondale - 1
Ypsilanti - 1

Total - 214 (178)

West

Berkeley - 25
Los Angeles - 20
San Francisco - 18
Seattle - 9
San Diego - 5
Portland - 5
Riverside - 4
Utah - 2
Denver - 2
Fullerton - 1
Phoenix - 1
Tacoma - 1
El Paso - 1

Total - 94 (94)

South

Atlanta - 36

Austin - 15
Houston - 15
Tampa - 4
Virginia - 2
Memphis - 1
North Carolina - 1
Knoxville - 1

Total - 75 (41)

Breakdown by States: (26 states represented)

New York - 147
California - 73
Massachusetts - 61
Illinois - 56
Michigan - 56
Ohio - 56
Georgia - 36
Pennsylvania - 35
Texas - 31
Wisconsin - 24
D.C. - 17
Minnesota - 15
Washington - 10

Breakdown by Branches:

New York - 146
Boston - 61
Chicago - 55
Detroit - 48
Cleveland - 42
Atlanta - 36
Philadelphia - 35
Berkeley - 25
Los Angeles - 20
San Francisco - 18
D.C. - 17
Austin - 15
Houston - 15
Twin Cities - 15
Seattle - 9
Portland - 5
San Diego - 5
Denver - 2

Total - 569

Trade Union Affiliation:

115 trade unionists

teachers' union - 24
SSEU and Welfare Workers - 5
United Transportation - 4
UAW - 5
Teamsters - 13
AFSCME - 9