

Horowitz

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September 14, 1970

Dear Comrade Smith,

In the Organizational and Financial Report you delivered to a plenum of the National Committee (published in the September 2nd Organizer) you stated that "May has made it clearer than ever -- and comrades have heard and discussed this repeatedly throughout the past week in Oberlin -- that the YSA will remain on the campuses until the revolution." What exactly does that mean Comrade?

Of course the YSA will "remain on the campuses until the revolution" -- and after it -- but do we intend to concentrate on the campuses even after the present radicalization deepens to include sections of the industrial proletariat? Will we continue sending most of our comrades (the majority of whom are not students) into a student milieu to do political work when it is possible for them to function effectively in the trade unions among workers? A clarification of these points will be greatly appreciated.

Fraternally Yours,  
s/Terry W. Bell  
19 Buckingham St.  
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

September 30, 1970

Terry W. Bell  
19 Buckingham Street  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Comrade Bell,

I am writing in response to your letter of September 14, in which you ask for clarification of a statement in the NEC Organizational and Financial Report I delivered to the YSA NC plenum in Cleveland last month. In the report I stated that "May has made it clearer than ever -- and comrades have heard and discussed this repeatedly throughout the past week in Oberlin -- that the YSA will remain on the campuses until the revolution." Your question was, exactly what does that statement mean?

The international resolution adopted by the 1969 YSA Convention, The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International, contains the statement that "the current student radicalization is not just a conjunctural phenomenon, but a permanent one that will be of continual concern to the revolutionary movement from now on." (Page 12.) My statement is basically that the general student strike in May offered fresh confirmation of the permanence and importance of the student radicalization to the class struggle referred to in the convention document. The YSA, as the revolutionary youth organization, has the responsibility to win the student sector of the population to Trotskyism.

The position of the revolutionary socialist movement is spelled out in a number of documents on the role of the student sector to which I would like to refer you. One is the document mentioned above, which was originally presented to the world congress last year by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International; it is the most complete statement of the Trotskyist approach to the student movement and the evaluation of the role students as students have to play in a socialist revolution. Prior to its adoption at the 1969 YSA Convention, a number of other documents pointing in that direction were adopted as we developed our theoretical assessment of the qualitative change that has taken place during the past two decades in the social weight and political impact of students as a sector of the population.

The same needs of neo-capitalism which have brought today's universities into being have also had an impact on the high schools so that many of the same kinds of conditions exist in modified form for the millions of high school students, the overwhelming majority of whom are from working-class and Third World homes. High school students more and more are tending toward the same kind of political action which has come to characterize all but the most isolated college campuses.

You will find discussion of the change in the student sector mentioned above in the resolution on "The New International Youth Radicalization," adopted by the November, 1968 YSA Convention (pages 3, 4, and 5); in the political resolution -- "The '68 Campaign and Beyond . . . Socialist Youth Politics in America" -- adopted at the November, 1968 YSA Convention (pages 4 and 5); and in the political report approved at the November, 1968 YSA Convention, presented by Larry Seigle, printed as a YSA Information Bulletin (pages 13, 14 and 15).

In the three documents from the November, 1968 YSA Convention mentioned above, one can also find the initial formulations of the "red university" strategy which was finally given that name in the world congress document and which was applied in the Program for the Student Revolt to this country. The campus program was first adopted by the NEC in late summer of 1969, and it was discussed and adopted along with the political resolution, "The Deepening Radicalization: Revolutionary Perspectives for the 1970s," by the 1969 YSA Convention. The relevant part of the political resolution is on pages 6, 7 and 8.

I also refer you to the forthcoming Pathfinder Press pamphlet on the antiwar university, drawing together the experiences of last May.

Comradely,  
s/ Lee Smith  
YSA National Office