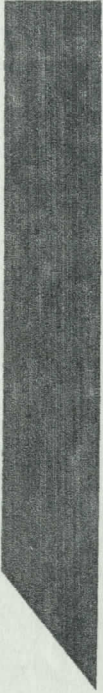



YSA INFORMATION BULLETIN




POLITICAL REPORT APPROVED BY THE EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION OF
THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE, NOVEMBER 29th, 1968.



Published by the Young Socialist Alliance
P. O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, New York 10003

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The experiences of the election campaign that we waged in support of the candidates of the SWP, the political events of the past year, and the growth of our young socialist movement, have given us a feel for what we can do, what we are capable of. Now we want to take our work in the campaign, the level of activity and expansion, and look at it as the basis, as the groundwork, for our continued expansion and growth in the next year.

This convention itself is the best measure of our growth and the results of our activity in the campaign. And it is this convention itself that will decide the future course of the socialist youth movement in this country. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the experiences of the past period of work, and to lay down the general outlines of our activities in the coming year, the line of which will be discussed in more detail under the other reports on the Afro-American struggle, the antiwar movement, and in the organizational report.

The best place to begin is with an analysis of the elections themselves, and the role that we played in them.

The 1968 elections occurred in the context of a continuing radicalization, above all among the youth on a world scale. The most important political factor, both for us and for revolutionaries throughout the world has been the continuing success of the Vietnamese revolution. The war has been the main single factor in the radicalization that is taking place on a world scale. The repercussions of American imperialism's continued escalation have produced a shift to the left of youth everywhere, the effects of which were discussed yesterday in the international report.

We see no prospect for the war being brought to an end in the near future. Johnson's bombing halt was not a step towards peace---the imperialists have escalated the war in the south and in Laos with the air power freed from operations over the north. The bombing halt was an attempt to swing the elections to Humphrey, and at the same time encourage the Soviet Union to take a more active role in arranging a "compromise" solution.

The period of the '68 election campaign was also the period of the deepening of nationalist consciousness among Afro-Americans to the point where now it has mass support. The black struggle has been marked above all in this election year by the involvement of wider layers of black youth, on the college campuses, in the high schools, and in the black communities.

The election year has also been a year of intensification of the conflicts within the imperialist camp, and the continued instability of the world monetary system, as the events of the last week illustrate. While as yet this crisis has not directly affected

Americans, either in terms of the value of the dollar, or in the form of a recession, it has severely shaken the confidence in the capitalist system as one based on solid ground and permanent stability.

It was these developments that set the stage for the election campaign, and these are the problems that Nixon is faced with. What does the election of Nixon mean, and what do the results of the election show? We don't have time to take this question up in detail, but there is one general point that I want to make. Some analysts of the election have proclaimed that the results show a shift to the right among the American people. They say that Wallace's campaign and Nixon's victory are indications of a rightward trend in reaction to the antiwar and black power movements.

We think that this is absolutely false--and is the reverse of what is actually going on. The results of bourgeois elections reflect only in a very distorted way the realities of social forces in motion. There are many reasons for this, but one of the most important as far as we are concerned is the fact that young people are almost totally disenfranchised. The median age in the U.S. as a whole is 26. But the median age of the electorate is 45. It's true that the first figure includes a lot of children, but it also includes high school youth, a large percentage of college youth, as well as many young workers.

The distortion is even more acute in the United States because there is no mass working class party through which a shift to the left could be expressed in the elections.

For example, how could the antiwar sentiment be expressed in the elections? We know this sentiment is increasing. In the one direct expression of it, a referendum in Dearborn, Michigan, the majority voted for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam. But how could the average American express this? Some antiwar votes went for Humphrey, some to Nixon, some even would have gone to Wallace if he hadn't made the mistake of nominating Le May.

No, what happened in the elections was not that the American people shifted to the right, but that capitalist politics and the bourgeois candidates shifted to the right, the inevitable result of the rightward pressure of the imperialist war in Vietnam on domestic capitalist politics. There was no talk in 1968 about the Great Society--the social welfare rhetoric gave way in 1968 to "law and order."

There is no evidence of a rightward shift among the American people. Just the opposite. Antiwar sentiment deepens, black nationalism is on the rise. While the union movement has not yet reached the point of radicalization, the workers have not passively accepted capitalist policies. Increased pressure from the ranks has been applied to contract negotiations, militant strikes especially among public employees are on the increase. Militant black causes have been organized, and sporadic oppositional movements

against the ruling union bureaucracies have appeared. Any suggestion that the workers should sacrifice for this war has been totally rejected.

There is another point raised by some on the left, like the newspaper The Guardian: Nixon's election forecasts a rising tide of repression. Well this isn't new. 1968 was supposed to be "the year of repression." I remember we discussed this at our last convention.

Will there be repression? Of course. The ruling class always rules through a combination of concession and repression. When their very power to rule is itself threatened, they will resort to total repression--fascism--whose function is to physically destroy all working-class organizations, the trade unions as well as the political groups. We are not at that stage yet.

Nixon will use repression. There's no question about it. But that's not the question. The question we are concerned with is what effect it will have. There has been repression under LBJ. Remember what happened here in Chicago three months ago.

LBJ used repression. But look what happened to him! We destroyed him. The people right here in this hall led the movement that politically demolished him. Now Nixon picks up where LBJ was left off. He faces all of the old problems without anything being changed.

Can Nixon crush the antiwar movement? Can he silence the high school students and the GIs? Can he turn back the radicalization among the black people? I don't think so.

When radicalization is on the increase, and when a movement refuses to let repression intimidate it, or divide it, repression can become what the imperialists call "counter-productive." It won't take long for Nixon to be as widely and profoundly despised by the American people as was LBJ. And as the masses of Americans come to realize that they've been had, we want to take over the slogan of the campaign and use it: "Nixon's the One."

Nixon's victory took place in face of a deepening radicalization that will haunt him. Our opponents in the election campaign did everything in their power to cut short that radicalization, and divert it into "safe" channels.

The most significant of our opponents in the campaign in terms of influence, are the open class collaborationists. In this camp are the liberals who supported McCarthy, and the Communist Party. Their line is to support one section of the ruling class in its tactical dispute over how best to preserve capitalism in the world.

The McCarthy campaign was based on exactly such a tactical difference, and we characterized it this way at our last convention. We said that the McCarthy campaign was opposed to the independent

antiwar movement, and that its purpose was to return young people to the trap of the Democratic Party which is responsible for the war. We said that the McCarthy supporters were being led right back to support the very policies they opposed, and that is exactly what happened when McCarthy asked his supporters to vote for Humphrey. In the process of course, we were able to win over many of the McCarthy supporters to support Halstead and Boutelle.

Also in this camp of open class collaboration is the Communist Party, which ran a campaign that was formally independent, a stance they were forced into because they found it difficult to campaign for Humphrey as the lesser evil, and because of the pressure that the SWP campaign put on them. Politically, their campaign was anything but independent. Rather than trying to get on the ballot, it seems they did everything in their power not to get on the ballot, beginning with their decision not to nominate their candidates until July, which was too late for a serious ballot attempt in many states. Their candidates campaigned not for themselves on a socialist program, but for Liberal Democrats or Peace and Freedom candidates.

In New York, they gave formal support to Herman Ferguson, a black militant running on the Freedom and Peace ticket, but in reality they campaigned against him and for Paul O'Dwyer, a McCarthyite Democrat. With that kind of support, as Ferguson found out, you don't need any opponents.

Another tendency that we had to deal with in the election was the Peace and Freedom Party. This was a coalition of disparate and antagonistic forces--the CP, Progressive Labor Party, liberal Democrats who couldn't support Humphrey, unaffiliated antiwar radicals, and the Independent Socialist Clubs, a left-wing social democratic group that uses a lot of radical rhetoric but maintains a "third-camp" position, that is, they refuse to support the Cuban revolution, the Vietnamese revolution, and refuse to defend the workers states against imperialism.

Merely to name the tendencies involved is sufficient to make clear that the alliance was not based on any political principles; as well as making clear the fact that it was an unstable grouping.

This kind of electoral alliance makes sense, is logical, if it's put together to win an election. Although of course we are opposed to that kind of politics, it at least makes sense. But the Peace and Freedom Party claimed, and they were correct, that they had no chance to win any elections, they were out to "organize," to "educate" people with their campaign. Well, the kind of education that that kind of political fruitcake can carry out became clear in the course of the campaign. The only thing that held the different elements together was the "minimal program"--a program with many planks that we supported, but a program of capitalist reform. By not calling for socialism, by not explaining that war, racism and poverty are problems of capitalism, the PFP didn't edu-

cate, it miseducated people. It created illusions about reforming the capitalist system. Programmatically, PFP was an incipient capitalist political formation. In both program and composition Peace and Freedom was a middle-class party.

We predicted that because of the contradictions contained in the coalition, and because it was an electoral bloc, it wouldn't outlast the elections. The disintegration actually began before the elections, with the fragmentation illustrated by the two presidential candidates, and seven vice-presidential candidates, each one with a different line.

Now I want to take up, in the context of our opponents in the elections, the question of the boycott position taken by the leadership of SDS. First of all, we should be clear on the difference between abstention and a boycott position. To abstain means to ignore an election. To boycott means to take a position of campaigning against the election, of repudiating the power represented in the election. Revolutionary socialists abstain often, when we think either that an election is unimportant, as minor offices, or when our lack of resources and forces makes it impossible for us to participate. We boycott elections under certain conditions. That is, in a revolutionary situation, the elections stand in the way of mass revolutionary struggle. This year SDS took an abstentionist position at first. SDS'ers were divided on the election. Not an insignificant section of SDS supported Halstead and Boutelle. Some supported McCarthy, some supported Ferguson, some supported Cleaver, and some were opposed to electoral activity in principle. As a result, SDS did not take an official stand on the elections, and retreated from the political issues by never even discussing it officially. But in the few weeks before the election, the leadership took a stand calling for a boycott of the election as the only revolutionary alternative.

Now, by way of answer to that position, let me read to you what some revolutionary socialists of a few years ago said on this question. "Anti-parliamentarism" (we can say 'anti-electoralism') "in principle, in the sense of an absolute and categorical repudiation of participation in the elections is a naive, childish doctrine, which is founded sometimes in a healthy disgust of politicians but does not understand the possibilities of revolutionary parliamentarism. Participation in the electoral campaign and the revolutionary propaganda from the parliamentary tribune is of special importance for winning over those elements of the workers who have stood far away from the revolutionary movement in political life. Electoral campaigns must be carried out not in the sense of obtaining a maximum of votes, but in that of a revolutionary mobilization of the masses around the watchwords of the proletarian revolution. It must be conducted by the whole party membership and not by the leaders alone. It is necessary to make use of and be in complete touch with all manifestations of the masses; strikes, demonstrations, movements among the sailors and the soldiers etc." It sounds like a pretty good description of our campaign doesn't it? This is from

the thesis adopted at the 2nd Congress of the Communist International in 1920, on the Communist attitude towards parliamentary reformism. So much for SDS's revolutionary traditions. By boycotting the elections and ignoring the fact that the overwhelming majority of the American people believe that through the elections they have a chance to register their opinion and to affect policy, the SDS abstentionist boycott line in effect gives support to the political monopoly that the ruling class maintains through the capitalist parties.

The SDS stance on the elections is a good illustration of ultra-leftism, and I want to spend a little bit of time on this, because ultra-leftism is something that we have been faced with, and will be faced with continually. Ultra-leftism is the substitution of the act of the individual or the act of a small group for the action that only masses of people can make effective. When we face an ultra-leftist action like the boycott position, we are careful to distinguish between the ultra-leftism of the organized tendencies like the Workers League, Youth Against War and Fascism and so on. Of course, these organized groupings play on and take advantage of the ultra-leftism of inexperience, to lead people into adventurist and ultra-leftist actions.

Ultra-leftism shares with opportunism a complete lack of confidence in the ability of the masses of people and their potential to act effectively. An opportunist relies on a McCarthy to bring about change, while an ultra-leftist looks to the action of the individual to spark the change. That's why Marxists make clear that ultra-leftism is the mirror image, the opposite side of the coin of opportunism, and that the switch from ultra-leftism to opportunism is very easily and quickly made. One good example of this in this election is a poster that was put out by New Paltz SDS. It says, "Had enough? Strike Nov. 5." It's a boycott poster, supporting the boycott, but at the top it says, "McCarthy, a breath of fresh air. Then they close the cell door." In other words, these elections were illegitimate, but if McCarthy had been the candidate of the Democratic Party, their position might have been a little bit different.

Now I want to take up in this context, the convergence of two of our opponents in the campaign, the ultra-leftists and the McCarthy supporters, at the Democratic Party convention demonstrations in Chicago, and why we were opposed to those demonstrations. The demonstrations were the culmination of a split over the perspectives for the future of the antiwar movement between us on the one hand and a bloc of the Communist Party and the radical pacifists on the other hand. We were opposed to the planned actions in Chicago because we knew that given the McCarthy challenge at the convention, given the forces involved in the demonstration, planning and organizing the demonstration, it would inevitably be seen as a pro-McCarthy demonstration, and an attempt to influence the outcome of the Democratic Party convention regardless of how "militant" the tactics used were. And that's exactly what happened. The pro-McCarthy forces, including the Communist Party, were interested in a pro-McCar-

thy demonstration pure and simple. (I'm not speaking here of the official McCarthy machine which called their people away from Chicago when they got wind of what was being prepared.) The second group, the radical pacifists Dave Dellinger, Tom Hayden, Rennie Davis and others, were interested in something a little different, in recruiting the McCarthy youth to their radical, multi-issue organization. An organization they've been trying to get off the ground for a long time, and haven't been able to do. They were considering recruiting the McCarthy youth after Humphrey got the nomination. That was why they refused to publicly criticize McCarthy on any point before the demonstration.

Their theory of radicalization was not that you explain what's wrong with McCarthy, and what's wrong with the Democratic Party; they think that the way to expose the system is to get as many heads busted as possible, on the basis of the truly perverse notion that after a beating, or after watching someone get beaten, you automatically become a revolutionary. The logic of this thinking is that the demonstrations that are the most successful, are those demonstrations where the most people get arrested, and the most people get beat up. The lack of political clarity and the fact that busted heads don't necessarily produce clear thinking, is shown in the outcome of the demonstration. It was none other than Eugene McCarthy who emerged as the hero both in the eyes of the public who saw the whole thing on TV, and in the eyes of most of the demonstrators in Chicago, and this is demonstrated by the applause that he got when he condescended to speak to the wounded from the National Mobilization Committee platform in Grant Park on the last day of the demonstration.

We have a slightly different approach to radicalization. We think that people become more radical when they see the power of masses of people in action. When they see what they can do. And we counterpose the model of the April 15th demonstration in New York, when there were an awful lot of polite cops, not because New York cops are polite by nature, but because there were half a million people in the streets and they were forced to be polite. When we participate in demonstrations, we're interested in having political clarity, clarity on the issues involved, and we're interested in winning. We're not interested in getting our heads busted, or getting other people beat up. Victories like the Oct. 26 anti-war demonstrations involving the GIs do a hell of a lot more to radicalize people, and to build a revolutionary movement than defeats like Chicago.

How did the Halstead-Boutelle campaign--the revolutionary alternative in 1968--measure up to our opponents in terms of speaking to the radicalization, the deepening radicalization that everyone else was running away from. Our campaign in support of Halstead and Boutelle was based on three things. First to recruit people to the ideas of revolutionary socialism and to win them to support of the SWP campaign and to the YSA. Secondly, to educate and to organize

around the main issues in the campaign--the war in Vietnam and the struggle for black control of the black community. And third, to provide a concrete example in action of a class struggle approach for those forces that are willing and ready to break with capitalist politics; and to propagandize for, and explain the necessity for an independent black party and for an independent labor party. This convention itself is the best measure of the growth of the YSA as a result of our campaign. Figures on the YSA's expansion in the past period, both numerically, and in terms of our geographical expansion will be gone over Sunday in the organizational report. But what I want to review here is some of the more interesting statistics on the campaign. There were more than 3,000 people outside of the YSA who publicly went on record as endorsing the SWP campaign. These endorsers came from 450 different towns and cities across the country, from 403 different schools including almost 100 different high schools. Over 700 of the endorsers were Afro-Americans. These endorsers included members of 84 chapters of SDS, which is probably as broad support as any candidate in the election got from SDS, 62 Afro-American student groups, and 20 Peace and Freedom groups. As far as the breadth of the campaign goes, if it felt like you were passing out a lot of literature, you were. There were an estimated one and three quarter million pieces of literature that were distributed in the campaign. Our candidates, both the national candidates and the local candidates, spoke to more than 600 different meetings, spoke directly to more than 140,000 people, and of course, through TV, radio and the newspapers, to tens of millions of others.

The response to the 1968 elections showed a great deal of confusion, and mistaken ideas on the part of the new generation of radicals. But all we have to do is to contrast 1968 with 1964 to illustrate the tremendous advance in the acceptance of our ideas that the deepening radicalization signifies. In 1964 everyone, with the exception of the YSA and the SWP, was campaigning for LBJ. What is important in the 1968 campaign is not the extent of confusion or the lack of clarity but just the opposite; the extent of understanding and the clarity on the question of independent political action that was indicated by the best reception ever given to the Trotskyist candidates in this country. Our job now is to take the base that we established in the campaign and use it to move out and extend our activities, our organization and our influence in every area. It means a continued high level of activity, of confidence, and audacity in recruiting young people to the YSA and in putting forward the YSA as the socialist youth organization, which we are, and not hesitating to take the leadership and the initiative in the broader movements in which we operate.

What we have to decide at this convention is how we move on from here. How we take what gains we've made from the campaign and continue to build the YSA and continue to advance the mass struggles of which we are a part. Now I want to go over in this context the question of the antiwar movement and the black struggle and our work on the high school and college campuses and return later to the question of our relationship and our attitude towards SDS.

How was the deepened antiwar sentiment of this year expressed in the elections? It's helpful to recall again what the situation was in 1964. Antiwar sentiment of course was not so deep then and the antiwar movement hadn't gotten off the ground, but there was significant antiwar sentiment that was all mobilized behind LBJ. It was the nearly universal belief of the American people that the way to peace lay in the election of LBJ. In 1968 the same pressures existed on the antiwar movement. Again, what we're interested in is not that some people capitulated to the pressure, and that significant forces were drawn into the election campaign behind the bourgeois candidates, but that significant forces resisted that pressure, and maintained their independent stance throughout the campaign. The pressure exerted on the independent antiwar movement by the class collaborationists who want to take the movement away from mass action in the streets was extremely intense. The adult coalition on a national scale didn't survive. The National Mobilization Committee is no longer a coalition but a tendency, one tendency in the movement. On the other hand, the local coalitions that exist in many areas were able to survive the pressure. The Student Mobilization Committee itself went through a split with a minority who wanted to divert the SMC from its approach of independent antiwar action. (The same minority incidentally went to Chicago in a bloc to disrupt the Democratic Party national convention.) But the October antiwar actions organized by the Student Mobilization Committee, in spite of all the pressures and the splits, were a truly historic advance for the antiwar movement and a breakthrough on two key fronts; among the GI's and in the high schools. These two areas represent the very thing that the ruling class fears the most. That is the extension of the antiwar sentiment and organization and the radicalization that goes with it beyond the college student population. This high school breakthrough showed its first signs last spring in the April student strike which was carried off just a few days after LBJ announced his peace offensive. And the high school participation was increased dramatically this fall with a very high percentage of participants in the October actions coming from the high schools. This GI breakthrough was also first indicated last spring when some 50 soldiers and sailors marched in the San Francisco demonstration on April 27. But this October showed the involvement of nearly 1,000 active duty GIs across the country in spite of the illegal harassment and the intimidation of the military authorities. The GIs and high school students are an indication of the future potential and the future tasks of the antiwar movement. Through the Student Mobilization Committee and through whatever adult coalition can be rallied, to the line of independent mass action in the streets, we will continue with our efforts on a campaign basis to build through mass actions, a movement that can end the war.

Just as we can see the dramatic growth of the antiwar movement by contrasting it to 1964, we can see the tremendous gains made by the black struggle when we recall that in 1964 in spite of all the differences between the different tendencies in the movement, whatever their disagreements on other matters, there was nearly unanimous agreement that the task of the black struggle was to call a moratorium on demonstrations for the duration of the election campaign so as to

insure the election or so not to embarrass LBJ. And the illusions of the masses of black people about the Democratic Party have not been overcome. 90% of the black vote went to Humphrey. But anybody who suggested that there be a moratorium on demonstrations and actions on behalf of Hubert Humphrey would have been laughed out of town. The most significant aspect of the black struggle has been its ability to win widening layers of black youth in the day to day struggles of the movement. Militant black student unions exist on almost every college campus in the country. They're involved in real battles with the administration over their political rights. Black youths in the high schools as well are being organized and set into motion in massive, militant actions around the right of the black community to control the schools. (I want to return a little later on to the question of the high schools.) Young black militants are the driving force behind the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) in Detroit, and other parallel movements. The black caucus in the UAW, along with other similar groups in other cities represent a tremendous potential and a real threat, not only to the corporations, to the bosses, but to the union bureaucrats. A fact that one third of the UAW membership is black is something that Walter Reuther is not going to be allowed to forget.

The concept of the independent black political party has found broad response and broad acceptance and has achieved its widest support to date in the Black Panther Party. As a party, the Black Panther Party is still developing its program and its positions. The step taken to run candidates against the white capitalist parties in the electoral arena was a totally progressive step in the direction of the Black Panther Party becoming involved in all aspects of the fight for black control of the black communities. We think, however that the Panthers made a tremendous mistake in forming an electoral alliance with the hodgepodge of the Peace and Freedom Party.

As black YSA'ers participated in the leadership of demonstrations both on the campuses and in the high schools and community struggles, as we have joined in efforts to help build a political and legal defense for black militants who are framed up and as we have explained our position on the need for a black party and the necessity for fighting against capitalism as the cause of racism, we've won respect among radicalizing Afro-Americans and have succeeded in recruiting many of them to the YSA. And it is this kind of activity that has to be continued and expanded in the coming year.

Now in this process of expanding the YSA, of building the revolutionary socialist youth movement, the main organization among the radical youth that we're going to have to deal with is the Students for a Democratic Society. And I want to spend a little time on the question of relationship of the YSA to the SDS. The talk last night outlined our attitude towards the New Left. So I don't have to go into that. But I want to talk concretely about the expression of that political situation in SDS. SDS has gone through a period of relatively steady growth since their first major political move calling the April 17, 1965 March on Washington which was the initiation of the antiwar movement. Any generalizations about SDS have to take into considera-

tion the fact that SDS is made up of relatively autonomous local groups, and that there are tremendous variations from chapter to chapter as well as from individual to individual in SDS. All the generalizations have to be qualified. SDS has always been composed of different cliques and political groupings as well as many young radicals who are new to politics who have been, in the main, antiwar activists. But SDS has been a victim throughout its entire history of pragmatic approaches, its lack of a theoretical foundation on which to base its actions. Because of this, SDS has never been able to provide leadership for the student movement. It is only able to respond to different pressures and different tendencies. ~~Rather than leading the student struggle, SDS~~ is always in the position of following it, of tailending it, as the example of the elections indicates.

The lack of theoretical foundations for SDS's actions are responsible for SDS being buffeted around like a balloon by every gust of wind from the class struggle. The relationship of SDS to the black struggle is a perfect example. SDS'ers generally support the black struggle. But they do it on the basis not of a political understanding but through a moralistic opposition to oppression, without any political grasp of the revolutionary significance of black nationalism, or of the need for a black party. I'm not saying that SDS'ers don't support the black struggle, they do support it, but they're unable to play any role in leading it, in organizing around it, or in explaining the need for a black party and they are still unable to project any developments beyond the current level of struggle.

A year or two ago, another example, SDS was talking about ~~draft resistance unions and on the community organizing.~~ Every convention, National Council meeting and regional meeting would pass resolutions stating that they were going to organize draft resistance unions in the community. And they carried out a lot of work, they worked hard at it, but nothing ever came of it. Now, in response to things like the events in France, on a world scale, developments among GIs, and the pressures of other radical tendencies, most importantly us, they're talking about labor committees instead of community organizing, and a GI orientation as opposed to draft resistance. But the change in the object of their "organizing" represents no fundamental change in their political approach. Many SDS'ers are looking to the working class for many of the right reasons but their approach is the same romantic paternalistic attitude that characterizes their community organizing projects. That is, students are going to organize unions, and organize among the working class. Whether trade union consciousness is there, or whether the workers are interested in being organized by the SDS'ers isn't a matter of concern. Also the GI orientation has replaced their draft resistance projects. Again, as a result of a real development among the GIs that SDS was totally unable to predict. If we had listened to SDS a year or so ago, any YSA'er who had accepted induction would have been hanged for war crimes.

Our main point of opposition to the SDS leadership, has been over the antiwar movement. Since their call for the 1965 March on Washington, the SDS leadership has continually retreated from the task of organizing a correct campaign against the war in Vietnam. And although many of their chapters have been extremely active in the antiwar movement, and working with the Student Mobilization Committee, the failure of the national leadership to understand the central importance of the war in Vietnam and the importance of opposition to it, has led them to adopt a sectarian attitude towards the antiwar movement and to view the antiwar movement as a competitor to SDS.

Now SDS has continued its growth in the last year, in general. But it must be pointed out that in areas where the YSA is strong, we tend to recruit the best of the SDS'ers, and as a result, of course, SDS suffers. Also, this growth is somewhat illusory, because while they have, for example, this past fall, had organizing meetings the first week of school, of several hundred members, many of the new radicals and new members are very rapidly disillusioned about what they find in SDS; that SDS isn't exactly the dynamic action organization that they thought it was. As a result some drop out, but most of them begin to look for an alternative organization. The atmosphere inside SDS has been increasingly factional in the past year. In the last six months in particular. The pressures from the elections, and our growth and our ability to recruit many SDS'ers has been a major part of the pressure the SDS leadership is feeling. Also, the functioning of a disciplined Progressive Labor Party faction inside of SDS has served to intensify this factional atmosphere. Their National Council meeting in Boulder, Colorado, ended in a coup d'etat by the Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers who took over the stage without allowing the scheduled elections to take place. A split recently occurred in the Ann Arbor SDS and I understand a similar situation exists in many of the other Michigan campuses.

What is our relationship to SDS? We seek to collaborate with them whenever possible on concrete actions. We recognize that SDS is a significant force in the student movement, and that there is the objective basis for united actions because we agree with them on many of the important issues. But we do not accept SDS's attitude that SDS is the movement. We are opposed to the concept for example that people interested in carrying out antiwar work should join SDS and operate through a sub-committee of SDS. There are many people who are willing to carry out antiwar work but are opposed to joining SDS. Some of them for very good reasons. While we want to work closely with SDS we are absolutely opposed to the tactic of YSA'ers working inside SDS as SDS members. We're opposed to an entry tactic into SDS. In some areas where there are only one or two comrades they may want to participate in the SDS meetings and under some conditions even hold formal membership in the SDS. But the key to our work, and the key to our recruitment of SDS'ers is continuing to carry out independent socialist activity contin-

ually as we've done in the last year, in our name. We don't want to be members of SDS taking responsibility for anything that SDS does or says or thinks. We can learn from this by the mistake of the Progressive Labor Party, which has operated as a tendency or faction in SDS to the complete exclusion of public independent work. Now it's true that they have recruited within SDS. There's no doubt about that, but by being submerged within SDS they've lost, even for them, the widest possible potential recruitment among the new wave of young radicals who are willing to accept socialist ideas, and are looking for a serious and disciplined organization.

In the next year we're going to be competing with SDS for the leadership of the student movement. As more and more students look to the YSA as the student campus organization. In the past year YSA'ers have participated in some of the major campus rebellions at Columbia, at Berkeley, San Francisco State, at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. As a result of these and other experiences, we've accumulated an important understanding both on the strategic and the tactical level of these struggles. YSA'ers will be able to play, on the basis of these experiences, a central role in initiating actions, orientating them towards the correct political direction, and conducting battles on the campuses that can be successful, whatever the forms of struggle are.

The most significant of the university struggles do not take place around the student power issues, narrowly defined. In the major campus rebellions and struggles, much broader social questions, such as the war in Vietnam, the black struggle, or broad questions of democratic rights, have been the issues around which the masses of students have been mobilized. In general, we are interested in explaining the role of the university in the capitalist society, and winning students to the perspective that it is necessary to abolish capitalist society before you can begin to talk about a free university. That is, we want to aid in the transition from student power consciousness to socialist consciousness. The understanding that a revolution in this country is necessary, and the understanding that the students by themselves can't do it. That's on the strategic level. On the level of tactics, within that context, we've learned some important lessons, from the campus struggles. We are opposed to actions by isolated individuals and small groups of adventurists. They just can't win a fight, that's all there is to it. The ultra-left verbiage of the "campus guerrillas" has absolutely nothing in common with revolutionary struggle. We want the demands of these struggles to be clearly defined and formulated in a defensive manner. That is, we want to be able to appeal to, and win over the masses of students on the basis of demands that they can support, that they understand, and that they see are within their rights. We want to make it perfectly clear that it is not the students but it is the ruling class and the administrations that are responsible for the restrictions of rights and the use of violence. The key to our tactical approach in these struggles is involvement of the largest possible number of students and the broadest sections of the student body, through united front type action committees and through broad mass decision making meetings.

YSA'ers will in the coming months, as we have in the past, be part of the leadership and the initiators of such actions. Both among black students and among white students. There's no reason why we can't continue to be aggressive in initiating and participating in the leadership of these struggles on the basis of our program for mass action and victorious struggles.

The same audacious and aggressive approach is called for in our work in the high schools. If anything, even more so. Our strategic and tactical considerations are the same, although the forms of struggle are often different. The high school radicalization has been in response to basically the same forces that have affected college and university students. But to grasp the central importance of the development in the high schools, and the crucial importance of our ability to win them to the YSA and to socialism, we only have to stop and think where the high school students are going to be next year, or in two or three years. Some, but not many, will be participating in the campus struggles. Many of them will be in the armed forces, participating in the struggle in the armed forces. Many of them will be in the plants or in office work as the newest members of the working class. We're serious about reaching towards the working class, and it is the high school students who represent the broadest potential and the broadest acceptance of our ideas in this period and it is in that direction, both among black and white high school students that we want to move.

The most significant actions in the high schools today are being carried out by the black high school students, often with the support of a section of the white students. The central issue here has been the right of the black community to control the black schools. Chicago has seen the most intense of these struggles, and I hope it will be reported on in the discussion, but this is a nationwide phenomenon, as shown perhaps most graphically in the developments in New York, where the black high school students have the support in a very active sense of the entire black community. The demonstrations and boycotts, have listed a number of demands of the black students, the most important of which are three: the study of Afro-American history, not in a token way, or as a minor addition to the curriculum, but in a central way, a serious way. Secondly the right of the black community--of black people--to control the schools, to control the school boards, to have black administrators, black principals, black counselors and so on. And thirdly the demands on the city governments to improve the physical conditions of the schools, the elimination of overcrowding, etc .

One important difference on the strategic level between the black student struggles in the high schools and the black student struggles on the campus is the fact that in most large cities, and in most of the schools in those cities, the black population is a majority. Now that has a lot of implications, in the method of struggle, and the ability of black high school students to carry out a successful campaign.

The high school struggles that have occurred are the opening shots in a war of a new generation of young radicals against the capitalist system. When high school actions develop, we want to take the attitude of throwing ourselves into them with everything we've got, even at the expense of letting some other things slide, so as to mobilize the entire YSA in support of these actions. We want to participate in them, distribute our literature, be there on the scene, and not hesitate, when we're involved in them, for our high school comrades to take the leadership and to take the initiative in these actions, and directing them along the most revolutionary political path.

In this process of expanding the YSA and moving out in all the areas that I've mentioned, we anticipate that YSA'ers and the YSA will come under legal attacks from the state authorities. This does not mean that we hesitate in any way, or that we fail to carry through our program along the lines that I've outlined. But it does mean that we have to be on guard and ready to defend our organization and our members when we're attacked. An organization that can't defend itself certainly isn't capable of playing a role in making a revolution. At the same time, however, we do not want to take useless, unnecessary, pointless risks in subjecting ourselves to attack for no reason. And for that reason it is essential that every person interested in joining the YSA understand our attitude towards the use of pot and drugs by members of our organization. This is not a moral or a philosophical problem as far as we're concerned. Although we don't happen to think that the solution to the ills of this society lie in the direction of expanding individual minds, but in the direction of making a socialist revolution, we don't condemn the use of pot and drugs by others, and we are certainly opposed to the restrictive laws that are on the books. But that's not the question. As a revolutionary organization, we absolutely cannot allow ourselves, or any of our members, to be put in a position of being victimized for violating these laws or any other laws. The ruling class would like nothing better than to get the chance to go after the YSA on that basis. And we have much more important things that we want to fight them about. For that reason, it's important for every new person coming around the YSA and interested in joining that they understand that we absolutely will not tolerate a breach of discipline on this count. If they're not willing to accept that policy, then we're not willing to accept them into the YSA. And there must be no illusions that this is something that we say for the record, and wink at later on.

Now let me conclude by reviewing the concrete tasks for the YSA as outlined in the political resolution. As I mentioned, the thing that differentiates us from SDS more than anything else, is our theoretical understanding. Our groundwork in Marxism and the science of Marxism. When a person joins the YSA, unfortunately a Marxist understanding doesn't come along with the initiation fee. You have to pay a little more for that. That is, you have to pay the price of taking the time to read and to study and to assimilate the ideas and the traditions of our movement.

That's the only way that we can carry out our tasks effectively in the coming period. And to fail to do that would condemn us essentially to the role of SDS, that is, being unable to take the leadership and direct the struggles, but merely to follow and tailend. The education of all YSA'ers remains for us a central task, and something that must be included in the work of every local and every at-large area.

Secondly, we want to continue on a campaign basis to build the mass movement in opposition to the Vietnam war. Through building the Student Mobilization Committee, and advancing our line of mass action in the streets against the war. The key focus of our antiwar work in the coming period will be to continue our work among the GIs and orienting towards a mass spring action based around the GI orientation that will be discussed in more detail in the antiwar report. We want to continue our campaigns in support of the Afro-American struggle for self-determination, and defense of all the victims of racist frameups and continue our efforts to establish close ties with all the organizations of the black community and on the campuses. To continue to advance, above all, the concept of an independent black political party. Our movement has the best supply of literature on this question, and on Afro-American history, on black nationalism, and so on. We want to continue to circulate this literature with special emphasis on the Young Socialist and the Militant and their reports of the day to day struggle in the black community. All of us, both black and white have to make it a campaign for ourselves, to study the history of the black struggle in this country and to grasp the revolutionary thrust, and the revolutionary significance of black nationalism. And above all, we want to continue our efforts to recruit black militants and black radicals to socialism, and recruit them to the YSA.

The central focus of our work as it has been, and as it will continue to be, until the point where we can make a revolution in this country, is building the YSA through recruitment. The main area of recruitment remains for us on the college campuses, and on the high schools. A prime task in the next year is to bring as many of the new radicals into the YSA as possible. And from what we've seen in the past period, through the campaign, what is possible is quite a bit.

Now let me conclude with one final point; we have every reason to believe that the events that occurred last May and June in France will be repeated in the United States, at least in its broadest outlines. Now what we want to do, is to be in a position to write a slightly different concluding chapter to the struggle. That is, instead of the Communist Party that was responsible for betraying that revolution, and preserving capitalism in France, and in Europe, we want a mass revolutionary movement that can act decisively to make the revolution, not to break it. To build such a movement is the central task that we have in front of us.