

# YSA

# Discussion Bulletin

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## A PERSPECTIVE ON YSA FINANCES

by Douglas Pensack, Detroit local

Since the 1974 YSA convention in St. Louis, the YSA has made real progress. Since the beginning of 1975 we have been involved in several local antiracist struggles as well as the national struggle, centered in Boston. We have begun recruiting new layers, particularly Blacks and high school students. Our functioning organizationally has become increasingly sophisticated, including our finances.

The YSA's composition is changing. At the last two conventions it has been announced that the composition of the YSA was less than 50 percent college and high school students. This created political problems for us as on the one hand we had a campus orientation and yet we did not have enough comrades on campus. We are making progress toward elimination of this problem. (In Detroit, for example, a significant number of executive committee comrades are now on campus, one in high school.)

However, we have a short-run contradiction in the YSA, particularly in the center locals. That is: the composition of the YSA is changing for the better (more Blacks, students) however, it is exactly these types of people that are affected most by the economic crisis and/or traditionally have little money.

The other side of recruitment is graduation: comrades recruited in college during the antiwar movement are now working and in their mid-20s. These working comrades have been an important part of locals' sustainer bases. Now one by one these comrades are graduating from being dual members to being members only of the SWP. This process will continue.

So, we have a development which is positive in one sense but negative in another. What does this contradiction mean for us?

Our perspective on finances is that we strive to be a totally self-financing organization. The cornerstone of each local's financial structure is the sustainer base--what each comrade pays each week as a voluntary donation. It is the only thing we can really depend on.

There's only one problem: the sustainer doesn't cover all our expenses in most locals. This has been true for years. But, there are some differences between the YSA of a few years ago and now.

Our organization is expanding numerically, geographically, and in areas of work. This expansion

costs money, more money. Also, we in the capitalist world find ourselves in a grave economic crisis. It is a crisis that not only makes it difficult for many comrades to financially support the YSA but also causes sky-high inflation that steadily increases the costs of our operating expenses--everything from paper and newsprint to traveling expenses. Add on top of this the changing composition of the YSA previously described and you have a real financial crunch.

It is not a long-run problem, I believe, but a conjunctural problem. Our per capita sustainer base is falling and will probably continue to fall for a certain period of time. A decline in real sustainer can thus only be alleviated on a national scale by recruitment. Simply, with a lower sustainer per capita, the YSA will need more members (in the long run) to continue even its current level of political activity without any cutbacks. Therefore, for financial, as well as obvious political reasons, recruitment is the YSA's number one priority and should permeate all aspects of its functioning.

This document is not meant to encourage changing our past orientation toward finances, but merely to point out the changes in the objective situation for the YSA and how we should view these changes.

The current situation means that outside fund-raising will become a more significant part of most locals' budgets. It means that financial directors and executive committees will have to be conscious in putting in the amount of effort necessary to ensure the success of our fund-raising projects. This includes everything from fund-raising parties and rummage sales to more sophisticated speakers bureau work. Wherever possible, comrades should try to get budgets or other grants from universities and colleges. In my opinion, the financial health of the YSA, at least in the next political period, depends on the success of these projects.

We should not feel defeated by this. It is a temporary condition that will be changed for the better by the advance and expansion of the YSA. However, we have to be realistic about our finances and not substitute what we'd like to see for what is. Things are really looking up for the YSA and we have to be extremely conscious of our finances in order to ensure that our growth is not slowed by a financial situation out of kilter with the openings that currently present themselves to us.

October 20, 1975

## THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL LOCAL IN BUILDING THE YSA

by Tom Mindala, Bloomington local

During this year's preconvention discussion it's important that we again look at the role played by regional locals in the course of our work. It's especially important that we do so in light of the recent turn taken by the SWP at Oberlin. This article is an attempt to analyze that role from the perspective of the regional local.

As we consider the role of the regional local we must first define the political goals we hope to achieve through building YSA locals in the region. Obviously our primary goal is the expansion of the YSA in the region and, through that, the expansion of the YSA nationally. The correctness of this perspective has been proven by the number of cadre in our movement today who were recruited from the region. We have been so successful in this because of our focus on the recruitment of new cadre in the region and then transferring that cadre to the center. Regional locals many times have been seen as recruiting centers where we recruit a new comrade, integrate him or her, and then transfer him or her to the center. I agree with this perspective as far as it goes. The success of our movement will ultimately depend upon our strength in the major centers of this country and the primary task of the regional local must always be to help achieve this strength.

In order to be able to help in fulfilling the goal of strengthening ourselves in the centers, the regional local has three primary tasks that should always be the central focus in all of our work.

The most obvious of these tasks is the recruitment of new cadre to the YSA. This is the task of the regional local. All of our other work follows from the success or failure to recruit. While the success of the American socialist revolution is not going to hinge on the existence of twenty YSAers in Bloomington, Indiana, it may very well depend upon the consistent recruitment from the region to the revolutionary leadership that will be necessary to the success of the revolution.

In the course of our work every SCAR activist, campaign worker, and Militant reader has to be seen as a potential YSAer. To be consistent in recruitment we have to be conscious at all times of the importance of contact work with every activist, or potential activist we come in contact with. Without this perspective the best methods of organizing and coordinating our contact and recruitment work will ultimately fail.

Of course, recruitment consciousness without any coordination also leads to limited success at best. All fractions or committees who come into contact with people who show interest in socialism, or are activists in the mass movement, should be responsible for making them known to the local as a whole. It's the responsibility of the contact and recruitment committee, or its equivalent, to coordinate the attempts to get these people to actions and

events we sponsor. Contact lists should be available to call these people and personally invite them to these events.

The second primary task of the regional local is the integration and education of our cadre. A high level of recruitment is of little value if we are unable to integrate our new cadre and teach them the politics of our movement. Too many times newly recruited comrades are left in the periphery of fractions or committees or, worse yet, not given an assignment at all. In many respects the integration and education of our cadre is more difficult than recruiting them. It's crucial that we don't just drop new people once they have joined. How many times do we hear it said that this or that contact should be talked to at every opportunity and invited to all our actions only to ignore the new comrade once he or she joins. This can be devastating to new comrades who many times are disoriented or uneasy after joining in the first place. We have to be sure we don't allow this to happen, and if necessary we should assign experienced comrades to seek out and talk to new comrades. We would be surprised what we can learn about ourselves (YSAers) from new comrades or contacts. We in Bloomington have benefited from comments and criticisms of this sort a number of times.

It's important that once new comrades begin functioning in their own right as YSAers we continue our attempts to integrate them and not take the attitude that they are integrated and no longer need close attention. The best way to ensure that this doesn't happen is for the leadership to be in constant communication with the whole local. Close communication within the local will solve this and many other problems.

It's also important that all fraction and committee heads see that integration of new cadre is a priority in their work. Many times we think a new comrade is integrated simply because he or she has an assignment on a fraction or committee when actually that isn't the case.

An important aspect of the integration of new cadre is their political education. Too many of our educational class series fail to achieve the desired results because we don't approach them with the proper perspective. Educationals must be integrated into the work of the local and not just a list of interesting topics. They should be seen as a tool to integrate our cadre into various aspects of our political work while at the same time providing a broader perspective of what the YSA is and hopes to achieve as a revolutionary youth organization. To achieve this you have to have a well thought-out series which is set up with definite goals in mind. Once an educational class series has been decided upon it is then necessary to properly motivate it. A good class series won't be very successful if you don't get comrades and contacts interested in participating in them.

The education of our cadre shouldn't be seen as limited

to an educational every week or so. We should approach all aspects of our work, especially mass movement work, as an opportunity to educate our cadre. Fraction and committee heads should be especially aware of this. Too often we wait until a mistake is made to point out the correct political line or method in a situation. It's in this regard that post-intervention fraction meetings are most useful. Sales teams and Pathfinder tables should also be seen as learning experiences for comrades. There's no better way to learn our politics than to be in the situation where you constantly have to explain or defend them.

I think that there is little question about the importance of these first two tasks of the regional local. Recruitment and integration-education are essential to building the YSA in the region and the centers as well.

The third primary task that's essential to the work of the regional local is maintaining some level of stability. In discussions I've had with comrades this tends to be counterposed to transferring cadre to the centers of our movement. The question I ask here is are they necessarily counterposed to each other? I don't think they have to be at all. As I stated earlier, the primary tasks of a regional local are to recruit new cadre for our movement and transfer that cadre to the center. On the other hand, we must consider what is essential to a program of consistent recruitment and transfer when approaching this question. Comrades around the nation many times ask why the Bloomington local is so successful in recruitment. It's certainly not because Indiana University is a hotbed of radicalism. The key factor in Bloomington's success has been the relative stability of its leadership over

an extended period. Now this doesn't necessarily mean we have had the same leadership over this period. What we have had is enough experience available to be able to constantly develop new leadership in the local.

Over the past year Bloomington has transferred about twelve comrades to centers around the country. These were many times our most experienced cadre but due to our consciousness of the need to consistently develop new leadership we have been able to not only maintain our level of work but in many areas extend and improve it. This is where the integration and education of people we recruit is so important. Without a conscious perspective of developing new leadership in the regional local, transferring cadre to the center and stability will then be counterposed. We can reach a balance between the two through our education and integration program in the regional local.

A good program of political education can achieve both results. It should first help develop leadership abilities needed to give stability to the local's work. At the same time, through the process of learning our politics, our cadre will eventually see the importance of transferring to the center. With this perspective we will not only strengthen our movement in the centers but we will also create the stability in the regions which will ensure that this process will be more consistent.

These are the tasks which I see as important to the role of the regional local in building the YSA. It's through these tasks that we will reach our goal of building the YSA in the region and nationally as well.

October 30, 1975

## ON HAVING SUMMER CAMPUS FRACTIONS

By Gerald Levy, Lower East Side, New York local

The National Committee Draft Political Resolution projected that we want to maintain and extend the campus orientation of the YSA nationally. In actual practice our campus work and fractions are a seasonal operation where we ambitiously do campus work in the fall and spring but just pack up shop and desert the campuses over the summer until the following fall. The experiences that I will relate here where we had a campus fraction last summer in the Lower Manhattan local, although growing out of an unusual situation and while they cannot be mechanically applied to every local, do, I think, point to some very definite opportunities that many locals can take advantage of next summer.

In the Lower Manhattan (now Lower East Side) local we made a decision to have a campus fraction at New York University over the summer. This was something unique in the history of our local and this fraction was the only campus fraction in any of the New York City locals over that period. This decision was the result of an accident where we realized that because of transfers from Boston and Atlanta and the personal situation of two locally assigned comrades we would have four members of our local attending classes at NYU during the summer session.

We alleged, at the time, that the prime advantage of having a summer campus fraction would be to lay the groundwork for the political work that we wanted to do at that campus in the fall. Generally, it takes a few weeks in the beginning of September to get campus fractions reorganized, to recontact the people on campus who we've previously done political work with, and to really gear into the new semester. The overwhelming advantage, therefore, of having summer campus fractions is that you can maintain the momentum coming out of the Spring semester, do some very important political and organizational work on the campuses over the summer, and then you are in a position where because you've maintained the apparatus of a fraction, to just roll into the fall like a well-oiled steam roller already gassed, lubricated, and sure of its course. It allows you, in effect, to get a head start on all of our campus opponents by giving us back these few critical weeks.

There are other advantages of having summer campus fractions than just getting our work in the fall off to a running start. One very definite advantage of doing summer campus work is that none of our opponents on the left are on the campuses then. This means that we can have free rein over the leftward leaning students and don't have to worry about "dealing with" our opponents. This is clearly a better situation for independents around our

movement as they can't be misled or confused by the other groups and grouplets claiming to be "Marxist".

One situation that varies from campus to campus is the number of summer students. At NYU we were fortunate to have approximately the same number of students attend the summer sessions as would normally go to school in the regular academic year. It is my guess that there are many other locals which have campuses where large numbers of students go to summer school.

Still another advantage is that a very large proportion of these students will either be freshpeople or transfer students, and will thus be more open to our ideas than some of the cynical year-round students. It has been my experience that at the beginning of the fall when there is a new inflow of freshpeople, the campus fractions are usually able to make some very important contacts for the YSA. These people, new to college, are more interested in finding out about things in general and politics in particular, and by having summer fractions we can talk to a whole new group of students who are interested in our politics in a more relaxed atmosphere and free of our opponents. An added bonus for us at NYU was that there were significantly more international students in the summer than in either the fall or spring.

So as not to mislead anybody there are also some problems with doing political work on the campuses over the summer. Many of the activists who we have worked with around SCAR, and the YSA's contacts as well, don't go to summer school. Also, while there is the positive angle that there aren't any opponents, there is the disadvantage that there are few student organizations in general on campus then. The members of the various Black and Puerto Rican organizations were nowhere to be found at NYU over the summer. This also held for everything from the Women's Center and the Gay People's Union to the student governments and the campus newspaper. In such a situation it is very hard to wage a united front effort to build and publicize meetings. Thus in most cases it is not realistic to project doing much in the way of mass work during this time.

In addition to the changed character on the campuses there is generally a changed character in the locals over the summer as well. Most comrades are so burned out from the previous nine months of political work that they look upon the summer as a period of rest and relaxation. This, I think, is perfectly in order and justified (although we shouldn't get ourselves into this situation to begin with). The summer should be a time when the pressure can be eased off of comrades, where they can attend and do the reading for our summer schools, and have enough time left over to bathe in the sun,

swim in the sea, or whatever else we have fantasized about doing for the better part of a year. This is why carefully broached to comrades. They should first of all agree on the political pluses of doing this work and, in addition, these comrades should know that they can do this work and fulfill their fantasies and have a lot of leisure time all at the same time.

This was handled on the NYU fraction by the fraction head, yours truly, asking that comrades only do political work on the campus two days a week. We decided that on each of these days we would have a literature table up and this table would serve as an organizing center for all of our other political tasks on campus as well. I had to make it absolutely clear, however, that under no circumstances would these comrades be asked to do any other political work during the week. This plan met with everybody's satisfaction because it meant that we could both do political work on the campus and give the fraction members five whole days off in a week to do whatever they pleased. This plan worked out very well and it is something that other locals might want to emulate.

This plan necessitates, however, the very wise budgeting of what scarce political time comrades have on campus and means the establishing of clear political priorities for each day and regular fraction meetings to plan this out.

In such a situation it is necessary to very carefully think out what can be done in your situation and project some realistic goals. Given the situation over the summer it could mean for instance that it might be unrealistic to project doing women's liberation work or USLA or UFW defense work which we would normally do in a regular semester. It means (and this is true, I think, for small campus fractions year round) that a few specific concretized areas of work must be settled on as opposed to trying to do everything at once. The NYU fraction decided to do sales, Pathfinder, and antiracist work.

The relation of the local as a whole to the work of the summer campus fraction is very important for both the local and the fraction (as it is year round). The work of the NYU fraction provided a focus for the sales work of the Lower Manhattan local by directing non-campus comrades to NYU to sell. This is important for sales in the local as a whole since campus sales are more politically significant sales for our

local than just street location sales (which is where we sold our press in previous summers). Our work at NYU over the summer both served as the center of our political work over the period and also helped to get non-campus comrades more involved with the work of the campus fractions (which should be a central goal of every local no matter what time of the year it is).

This experience at NYU netted some very real material results. For sales, we averaged selling about 50 papers a week (which is pretty good for a fraction of 4). In contrast to this, during most of the months of the spring semester we sold fewer papers than we did in the average week over the summer. One week we set a new record for sales in our local by selling 110 issues of the July Young Socialist at NYU in two days! Also, the overwhelming bulk of these papers were sold by the comrades on the fraction and all of the fraction members sold these papers fairly evenly. For Pathfinder, we had tables up two days a week. These tables attracted students to the YSA, helped to sell a lot of papers, and to establish the YSA as a real force at NYU. We sold on the average \$15-20 worth of Pathfinder literature each time we had the table up. We had several planning meetings for SCAR and built the Joanne Little forum in NYC on the campus. Finally, (but not lastly), we met several people through our summer work who are now contacts of the YSA this fall.

The experience at NYU was successful enough that our local set up a team (but not a fraction) of comrades to do political work at Hunter College over the summer. These comrades likewise met with high sales of our press and Pathfinder literature. Locals which do not have enough campus comrades over the summer may find it more practical to set up a team such as this than a campus fraction. Since many people in the YSA don't work in the summer most locals should be able to dredge up some comrades for a team of this type.

These developments were important for our local's work as a whole. We sold more papers at NYU than at any other place over this period, this was the only place where we set up regular tables, and it provided a focus for building our antiracist work.

Comrades can thus see that this was a very beneficial experience for my local and I believe that many other locals could meet with the same type of results if they try having campus fractions and/or teams next summer.

November 6, 1975

## ON ORGANIZING SCAR CHAPTERS IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS

By Mindy Brudno, Philadelphia local

Just before the February 14 SCAR conference, I was assigned to antiracist work in the high schools in Cleveland. Prior to that, no consistent high school work had been done.

We began with a handful of names (campaign endorsers and people who had come to a meeting for Jonathan Kozol a few weeks earlier). The first thing we did was to call each and every person and have prolonged discussions, explaining in detail what SCAR is, how it was formed, and where it was going. We learned everything we could about the people, and most importantly, got from them names of others they knew that might be interested, including names of teachers. We then followed up on these people, repeated the process, got more names, and so on.

A couple of weeks after the February student conference, SCAR called a citywide high school meeting. This meeting was built exclusively by phone, which was a drawback. The calling was very thorough, however, and car pools were arranged as well. It was attended by nineteen high school students representing six area high schools, as well as myself and the full-time SCAR coordinator.

### The meeting

This meeting was, in my opinion, the most significant single event of the spring for SCAR's high school work. It went very smoothly, with discussions on all the important political and organizational questions facing SCAR. We had a report on the conference, which included a background to the whole struggle in Boston, and the issues involved in the desegregation fight. We also had an organizational report, under which ideas were discussed for building SCAR chapters at the individual high schools. The mood was very optimistic, and out of this meeting SCAR projected another meeting for the following Saturday.

Several Saturday high school meetings followed, none of them anywhere near as large or broad as the first. Growth of high school SCAR chapters that we had hoped for was prevented by both objective and subjective problems that developed.

### The problems

The objective problems facing high school student activists are familiar to most of us. Repressive parents, reactionary school administrators, lack of transportation, lack of organizational experience, etc. These objective problems must be taken into consideration in making projections for high school work. Nothing is more demoralizing to high

school students, as we soon learned, than to constantly fall short of the expectations of the leaders of SCAR.

At this stage in the building of SCAR, the development of each individual as a SCAR activist is primary. Rather than placing demands upon activists which they probably cannot meet because of restrictions on their activities, we learned to stress realistic tasks which can be successful.

For example, in the beginning, we emphasized more than anything the need to build SCAR chapters in the different high schools. As a first step, we asked the students to get a room and a time for a meeting after school, which the city-wide SCAR offered to help build.

This seems like a fairly simple task, but when the students went about trying to secure a room for after school, they ran headlong into the school administration.

The city-wide leaders could have alleviated the problem by placing heavier emphasis on small, informal gatherings outside the school (in homes or elsewhere), setting up speaking engagements where that is possible, and getting to speak before various student and youth groups in the schools and community.

### Importance of teacher and group contacts

Jonathon Kozol's appearance in Cleveland in early February, and the identification of his name with SCAR, gave us a certain number of openings among teachers. A few of these teachers allowed us to speak to their classes, which proved quite worthwhile. I think that this is an area which invites further exploration.

Another area which we only began to explore, but which ought to be investigated further, is that of youth and student organizations in the high schools. In addition to student councils and newspapers, there are many other social, political, cultural, and other groups which could be persuaded to invite a SCAR speaker to a meeting. Not only are these ready-made, captive audiences of the most receptive youth, but the participants are generally of an activist bent. Some successes we had in this area were:

1) The local chapter of Liberal Religious Youth (a Unitarian group) invited a SCAR representative to speak at a meeting and many of their members became actively involved.

2) The staff of a small underground paper at one suburban high school became involved almost as a whole in SCAR.

3) Twenty or so students in a group called Black-White

Dialogue (an antiracist consciousness raising group) voted to forget their original purpose, and to affiliate with SCAR.

Black church youth groups, YMCA and YWCA, and other community-sponsored youth clubs, youth councils on human relations, and other such clubs should be pressured into at least giving us a hearing. Often they have "fighting racism" as a stated purpose of the organization, which gives us a handle to gain a hearing. Even the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts should not be ruled out as potentially fertile ground for recruitment to SCAR.

#### Propaganda campaign

One other important aspect of our antiracist work in the spring was propaganda blitzes at target high schools, coordinated with sales of the Young Socialist. Although SCAR did not gain a lot of immediate activists through leafletting or sales, we were able to publicize May 17 and the Joanne Little case very well, and we did get some names for fu-

ture contact. Also, sales of May 17 buttons and copies of the Student Mobilizer helped SCAR's finances as well as being of propaganda value.

#### What we accomplished

Although there were obvious weaknesses in our high school work this spring, there are several things we did accomplish. We did establish the name of SCAR among certain layers of high school students, as well as involving thirty or more in activity at various times. We did reach tens of thousands of high school students with propaganda on desegregation, Joanne Little, etc. We did build the legitimacy of May 17, as well as actually getting a handful of high school students to the demonstration. And we did speak directly with several hundred young people in classroom and other speaking engagements.

November 7, 1975



## DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN THE YSA

By Harvey McArthur, Philadelphia local

The YSA is today just the nucleus of the mass revolutionary socialist youth group that we must become. We do an awful lot of work, and have had a surprisingly large impact upon American politics; but our key goal must be to recruit, integrate, and develop the thousands of new activists that will be able to win hegemony amongst American youth.

Many of these activists will come to the YSA after having had some experience in mass struggles and political discussions; more perhaps, than many YSAers will have had. Yet it is the organized expression of revolutionary Marxism, the YSA, working in collaboration with the Socialist Workers party, that retains the historic lessons of the working class, and that can provide the leadership and organization needed by youth in the coming socialist revolution.

Bourgeois society stifles many of the attributes needed to make an effective revolutionary: organizational skills, the ability to work with others, the ability and confidence to speak before crowds, revolutionary theory, the history of our struggles, the desire to study, etc. This makes the process of integrating and developing YSA comrades all the more challenging, and all the more important.

Comrades Hebel, Kear, and Yankey have taken up some aspects of these tasks in Discussion Bulletin No. 3; but I believe that their critique of the YSA and their proposals for change are unsatisfactory.

A major omission in their contribution is any discussion of the role of YSA fractions and committees. We do not just consist of an executive committee and weekly local meetings after which all comrades disperse to do individual political work. The organization of fractions and committees geared towards specific areas of intervention or organizational work has proven the best way to use the time and talents available to the local.

Furthermore, these fractions do not exist solely to decide who can pass around a sales sign-up sheet, or who should run for student government. They are a vital part in our political decision-making process and in the development of all comrades.

A campus fraction, for instance, has to be able to evaluate the political openings confronting it, and work out a plan to use these opportunities to best advantage. Should we run in the student government elections next month, or is antiracist work too pressing just now? How can we make best use of our press, what sort of meeting can we build for the SWP candidates? What about the administration's refusal to allow money to be used to fund a bus to the NSCAR conference--how can we use this attack to fight for democratic rights, and to build the antiracist fight? These are the sort of political questions that many fractions have to deal with regularly. Working out the best answers requires the collective experience and ideas of the fraction as a whole--and is not left to the executive committee alone to work out.

These fraction meetings, and the informal discussions that go on in the process of carrying out their work, give new comrades a chance to see how we set our priorities, what it takes to organize a certain type of activity, how we relate to other political tendencies, etc. It is where any comrade can toss out an idea, develop it, and try to convince the rest of the fraction that it is correct. All comrades are involved in these processes--it is just not true that the executive committee simply throws proposals at us during local meetings.

Another important aspect of fraction work is that it is here that all comrades learn to work in a team; how to recognize strengths and weaknesses in others, and how to use their collective talents the best. It gives even the newest comrade a chance to take on as much responsibility as he or she can.

Comrades Hebel, Kear, and Yankey list five aspects of political development that are supposedly open only to executive committee members: 1) the experience of taking the initiative in discussions, 2) access to criteria for political decision-making, 3) a sense of accomplishment in seeing his or her ideas materialized through action by the local, 4) leadership responsibility, and 5) confidence in his or her intellectual abilities. These of course are not all that it takes to be a political leader, but they are all available to all comrades through fractions, committees, and in local meetings and informal discussions.

In addition, task and perspective discussions and pre-convention discussions give all comrades the chance to think out political and theoretical questions and to get used to presenting their ideas to others. YSA educationals can also serve this purpose, and presentations should not always be restricted to those comrades who have given them many times before.

Informal discussion between comrades is also an important step in political development. Working together on a fraction enhances the opportunities to get to know other comrades, feeling familiar enough to raise questions or suggestions with them, and being thrust into political discussions through everyday work. In fact, one of the important reasons why YSA locals should not get much larger than fifty or so comrades is that this informal collaboration would get stifled in larger locals.

It should also be noted that the executive committee and our local meetings are organized for specific reasons based on many years experience. The bulletin Organizing the YSA gives a good explanation of the necessity of having an elected executive committee to oversee the work of the local, to make sure that the perspectives of the tasks and perspectives discussion are implemented, and to make decisions between regular YSA meetings. Changing them as proposed by comrades Hebel, Kear and Yankey would only add confusion and disorganization to our work, without adding anything to the political development of comrades. The question of integration should focus on other things.

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I think that there are three important aspects to integrating and developing comrades: education, activism, and responsibility. Education has been discussed a lot recently, and I do not want to add anything to the points already made by Comrade Pensack in Discussion Bulletin No. 3.

Activism is the first key step in involving a new comrade. Participating in the YSA's campaigns-- sales, finances, election work, etc.--gives one a real chance to be part of the YSA, to share in the work and achievements of the local as a whole. Comrades can get to see our political perspective in action, to see what a difference we can make in practice and why building the YSA is so important. All of our organizational norms and traditions become clearer and make sense only in the context of regular activity. Such activism is an important part of developing loyalty to the YSA and to our political program.

Taking on responsibility on a particular fraction or committee is also important. Figuring out how to motivate a financial campaign to the local, how to present SCAR to other groups on campus, how to respond to a new issue in the elections--this gives comrades concrete experience needed to put principles and theory into practice. Organizational questions become much clearer: just how much work does it take to put out a leaflet, to organize a teach-in, etc? This is where a lot of informal political collaboration can go on. And this is where any comrade, no matter how new, gets to take on specific responsibilities and contribute in their own way. I remember the first leaflet I ever made -- I thought

it was a big help to the local as a whole, even though the organizer quietly buried my draft and helped me write a new one.

In all this, we should remember that we do want to develop well-rounded revolutionaries, not specialists in one area or another. Comrades should get experience in internal organizing like sales or finances as well as external work like antiracist work or campaigning. We should learn how to make a leaflet, how to deal with the university administration, how to write press releases, how to give speeches, etc. Personal commitments to family, school, or work may limit many comrades' time and flexibility; but the local and executive committee should pay attention to all these aspects of political development as much as possible.

Every comrade can probably think of weaknesses in their own local in regard to integration and development-- especially under the pressure of heavy political activity. But on the whole, I think that the YSA has done a tremendous job. The political and organizational knowledge and experience and the confidence of our comrades stands way above that of any other radical group. Loyalty to the YSA is based firmly upon an understanding of our program and a commitment to action, not on personal charisma, sectarian prejudices, or the lies and confusion that other groups depend upon. By continuing this process, building upon our present base, we should be able to continue this solid growth.

November 13, 1975

## ON OUR SUPPORT TO THE UNITED FARM WORKERS

By Rich Stuart, San Jose local

With the passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act (CALRA) in June of this year, the United Farm Workers of America entered a new stage in its struggle against California agribusiness. The YSA has viewed the farmworkers' struggle as an important one from the beginning. It's important that we familiarize ourselves with the new situation facing the UFW and discuss how we can organize our support for the farmworkers accordingly.

The UFW is a different kind of union. It is as much a social movement as a trade union. Much of its strength is derived from its base in the Chicano population. Women play a major role in the UFW. It is more democratic than other unions. Students and young people have helped to build the UFW and help it to survive attacks by the growers, the government, and the Teamsters.

Support for the UFW grew in the mid-1960's during the rise of the antiwar movement and the Chicano movement. The youth radicalization propelled the UFW forward and was largely responsible for the tremendous impact of the grape boycott and later the lettuce and Gallo wine boycotts.

The YSA and the Socialist Workers party have consistently supported the UFW. The Militant has been the only place people can find out the truth about what is happening with the UFW on a week-to-week basis. We have had articles in the Young Socialist, published a pamphlet on the UFW, held forums around the country with UFW speakers, used our election campaigns to publicize the plight of the UFW, and to encourage support to the boycott. In many areas our comrades have participated in picket lines called by the UFW against the sale of scab products. The YSA's campus fractions and high school comrades have joined and helped to build UFW support committees. In short, our record of support to the farmworkers is one to be proud of.

We have had serious differences with the UFW leadership, but our criticisms have always been raised frankly and openly. Our differences have led to constructive criticisms presented in a fraternal and comradely way. For example, we considered the UFW call for the government to deport undocumented workers potentially fatal to the union and we did everything possible to convince them to change it. Our criticism was motivated not by the desire to take sectarian pot-shots at the Chavez leadership, but by the desire to see the UFW victorious. It would have been irresponsible for us not to raise these differences, and we should continue to educate UFW members and supporters on other dangers facing the union as a result of the passage of the CALRA (re-

liance on the Democratic party, trust in the capitalist government to implement its laws, etc.)

Why was this law passed, and what are its implications for the UFW? The law was passed because the UFW could not be crushed by physical violence, sweetheart contracts, or expensive advertising campaigns. The growers and Teamsters agreed to the passage of the law. The growers saw the law as an opportunity to cheat farmworkers out of UFW representation through rigged elections, court suits and injunctions, drawn-out hearings, and appeals.

The California legislature and Governor Edmund Brown, a darling Democrat who was supported by the UFW, saw the law as a way to take the heat off themselves and wash their hands of this "uncomfortable" issue, leaving it to the courts and the Agricultural Labor Relations Board appointed by Brown. Brown paraded himself around in Kissinger-like style proclaiming that the law would bring peace to the fields at last. The media fell for his line and heaped praise on Brown's "miracle working."

Many people in and around the UFW tended to view the passage of the law as an unqualified victory, having illusions in Brown, the ALRB, the courts, and the cops, as well as having the mistaken notion that the growers might actually abide by the law and allow fair elections.

But it was only a matter of months until many of these illusions were shed. As soon as UFW organizers began to try to implement the law and petition for elections, they were met by a campaign of harassment, intimidation, coercion of workers, firings, deportations, court suits, injunctions, vigilantes, sheriffs, and Teamster goons to name a few. This campaign has not let up since the beginning of the fall. The inaction of Brown, the ALRB, and the courts in the face of the growers' open disregard for the law has provided the farmworkers a tremendous education.

In spite of the odds against it, the UFW has stood up and demonstrated the massive support it enjoys, winning a clear majority of the elections with many still undecided due to phony Teamster challenges. The whole experience since the passage of the law and the beginning of the organizing drive this fall has resulted in a qualitative strengthening of the UFW. An important feature of this increased strength has been the organizing of all farmworkers, including Mexican workers. This change in the UFW's position occurred at the August convention of the UFW in Fresno just before the election drive began. The union recognized that in order to win the elections, the support of all farmworkers was necessary.

Several other states have been watching the goings on in California since the passage of the CALRA and are considering passing similar laws themselves. Victories for the UFW will surely inspire farmworker organizing drives in other states.

Another offshoot of the recent victories of the UFW in the elections has been some confusion among people sympathetic to the UFW boycott. Some are confused and think that since the UFW won a majority of the elections that the boycott is over. Obviously, this is not true since the purpose of the boycott is to force the growers to sign contracts with the UFW. Winning an election simply means that the grower has to negotiate with the UFW. After seeing the growers' attitude toward the elections, common sense would show that their attitude toward actually sitting down and seriously negotiating with the UFW won't be much different.

Expanding the boycott is essential to forcing the growers to sign. If the growers had their way they would stall the negotiations for years, requiring new elections every year.

The Harris poll referred to in the November 14 Militant showed that up to 17 million people are boycotting scab produce and that the UFW is supported over the Teamsters by a six to one ratio. The potential clearly exists for the UFW to greatly expand the boycott.

The boycott has been most effective in cities where there is a large student population like the Bay Area, New York, Boston and Los Angeles. The YSA is also strongest on the campuses and high schools. Depending on how the UFW approaches the boycott, we could play a big role in building it.

Every area of the country will have opportunities to do some UFW support work, with some areas having greater potential than others. On campuses where there are UFW support committees, we can join the committees and show how to best build the struggle. In some areas there may not be a support committee, and we might initiate a committee or encourage the local chapter of the Student Coalition

Against Racism to take up the UFW boycott as one of its activities. We can encourage SCAR chapters to include UFW speakers in their programs. The boycott of grapes, lettuce, and Gallo is well-known and popular among high school students, and should be considered when discussing our high school work.

In San Jose, UFW support work has been a major part of the local's work this fall. At San Jose State University, YSA members are known as activists in the support committee and have won the respect of the other members of the committee. The San Jose State support committee is viewed as one of the best in the state, and is predominantly Chicano. In addition to the work we have done in the support committee, (staffing tables, picketing, organizing benefits for the UFW), we held a very successful forum featuring Harry Ring, speakers from the UFW, and the campus support committee. The support committee viewed our forum as an important event to relate to and intervene into by setting up a UFW literature table and encouraging people to attend. San Jose State SCAR members also participate in the UFW support committee and SCAR has had UFW speakers at its functions.

As a result of our UFW support work we have been able to develop a collaborative relationship with a layer of Chicano activists on campus and have involved some of them in campaign activity and discussions about socialism.

Other locals or at-large areas will find different situations but it should be clear that the broad support that exists for the UFW boycott means that large numbers of young people will be involved in some way in supporting the union. Through that activity, UFW supporters will be convinced of the need for a socialist society to eliminate the injustices faced by farmworkers. YSA members active in UFW support work can educate these activists on how to eliminate capitalist exploitation and build a socialist society.

November 15, 1975