

P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003

September 16, 1971

TO ALL COMRADES

Dear Comrades,

As more of the facts about the slaughter at Attica become known, revulsion at the deceit and treachery of the government increases. Officials stated that the invasion of the cellblock held by the rebellious prisoners was carried out in order to "save" the hostages and, moreover, that the hostages who were killed during the attack died at the hands of the prisoners. Within twenty-four hours it was verified that not only were 31 prisoners shot down and murdered by the invading troops, but every single hostage who died as well.

The fact that top ruling circles were so obviously complicit in the slaughter, including Nixon and Rockefeller, has prompted immediate links between Attica and other government-executed murders at Kent, Jackson, and Mylai. The step-by-step complicity of high government officials also underscores the seriousness with which they viewed the rebellion, as well as their determination to make an example of the Attica rebels to other prisoners across the country.

Reporters and columnists from the bourgeois press, including Tom Wicker of The New York Times, are writing of the horrors they witnessed at Attica--in obvious sympathy with the prisoners and their struggle.

Already mass meetings and actions demanding that the truth about Attica be uncovered and amnesty for the prisoners granted are mounting on campuses in the East and the Midwest.

The key task now in response to this slaughter is to expose the lies, treachery, and complicity of the prison officials and the government, and to get the truth out about Attica. A campaign to counter the propaganda aimed at indicting the prisoners must be launched. Almost unnoticed in the time since the attack has been the discrete removal of hundreds of Attica prisoners under the pretense of "easing the overcrowding." In reality the rebels are being dispersed to other prisons so it will be easier to victimize them. And in order to pacify public outrage, Rockefeller has organized a commission to investigate the massacre. It has not escaped notice, however, that this commission, appointed by the man who ordered the massacre, is a mockery of justice and is simply designed to whitewash the government atrocity. Our response has been to attempt to initiate an independent citizens' investigating commission which would have the sponsorship of many prominent individuals and organizations and which could seriously counterpose its investigation to that of Rockefeller's handpicked "official" commission.

Throughout the country the YSA should immediately launch an emergency campaign in defense of the Attica prisoners. Teach-ins, or speak-outs, organized with the widest possible support, should take place in every local and at-large area. Enclosed is a statement by the YSA National Executive Committee that briefly explains our perspective on how the student movement can best respond to the Attica massacre and defend the prisoners. The NEC statement can be used, either directly or as a guideline, for writing leaflets, articles for campus newspapers, etc., in the name of the YSA.

In areas where the YSA has already initiated mass meetings the response has been excellent. Black and Puerto Rican organizations are extremely anxious to act in protest of the slayings and can be drawn into sponsorship and the active building of these teach-ins.

These meetings, planned and organized with Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and Native American organizations in particular, should focus on the central concept of getting out the truth about Attica. While these teach-ins will take place mainly on the campuses, we should investigate every possibility of organizing meetings of this type in the high schools as well. At this time, these mass meetings are the way in which the greatest opposition to the slaughter at Attica, and to any further victimizations of the Attica prisoners or any other prisoners across the country, can be expressed.

In many areas it may be possible to organize and build significant actions--in some cases the teach-ins may project an action in protest of the Attica massacre. Along with the demand that the truth about Attica be revealed, the demand of "Amnesty for the Attica Prisoners -- No More Victimizations!" can be put forward as well. The central focus of the campaign, however, must be to expose the lies and to get out the truth to the largest number of people.

Chapters of the Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley should actively build these meetings, distributing campaign material, particularly Andrew Pulley's statement on the Attica massacre. YSJP chapters should also invite announced state and local candidates of the SWP to speak at the defense meetings, rallies, and other actions. In addition, YSJPers can help organize tours of local prisons for SWP candidates and, if this right is denied the SWP candidates, help build protest actions.

Another aspect of this emergency national campaign is the increased sales of The Militant during this period. The Militant is the only national newspaper which will get out the truth about Attica in order to counter the propaganda of the bourgeois media.

Most Militant bundles were increased significantly since the campaign began to get The Militant's coverage of the wage-freeze into the hands of thousands of workers. The upcoming issues of The Militant will continue to cover Nixon's assault upon the American workers through the imposition of the wage-freeze and will feature coverage of the Attica events. Thousands of workers who bought the last two issues of The Militant will be interested to read what it has to say about the Attica slaughter.

We want to continue to increase sales of The Militant on the campuses and in the high schools. Large sales of the upcoming issues of The Militant will be an excellent way to continue to expand the circulation of the paper and will be another major step forward in our current campaign to increase the bundle sales of The Militant. Increased sales of the upcoming issues of The Militant will make it easier to gain 30,000 new readers through the sub drive as well.

Finally, the YSA National Office is in the process of publishing a button and poster in commemoration of the Attica massacre. The poster will be a quote from the September 9 statement of the Attica prisoners ("We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. . . What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed.") over a picture of prisoners defending a cellblock hallway. The button will simply say "Mylai, Kent, Jackson, Attica." Both will be available shortly so all locals and at-large members should place their orders right away. The buttons will cost 25¢ each for orders under 20, and 15¢ each for orders of 20 or more. The posters will cost 50¢ for orders under 10, and 25¢ each for orders of 10 or more.

Locals and at-large YSAers should send in articles covering actions in defense of Attica to The Militant. It is also very important that the YSA National Office receive regular reports from all locals and at-large YSAers on the progress of this campaign, plans for the teach-ins, demonstrations, and sales of The Militant. Reports on nationwide activity which YSAers are carrying out around this campaign will appear in The Young Socialist Organizer.

Comradely,

Frank Boehm

Frank Boehm
National Chairman

(clip and send to YSA, P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003.)

LOCAL OR AT-LARGE AREA _____

ADDRESS _____

	NUMBER	COST
ATTICA BUTTON	_____	_____
ATTICA POSTER	_____	_____
TOTAL COST		_____

ENCLOSED IS \$ _____ PLEASE BILL US

_____ SEND AIRMAIL: BILL US FOR EXTRA COST.

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

The Young Socialist Alliance strongly condemns the murderous assault on the Attica prisoners. The slaughter was a calculated decision from the highest circles of the government. Preparations were made days in advance to use overwhelming firepower against men armed with clubs.

This was the answer of those in power to prisoners--and to all others--who dare assert their humanity, and the fact that the overwhelming majority of prisoners were Black and Puerto Rican further enraged the racist rulers and their henchmen.

The real criminals are those like Rockefeller, who ordered the attack, and Nixon, who applauded it. It is these men who are the beneficiaries of and the defenders of the capitalist system that wages aggressive wars abroad, such as in Southeast Asia, and at home creates unemployment, denies people even the pitifully insufficient dole known as "welfare," cages them like animals when they choose the only course open to them, and then murders them when they dare protest.

The slaughter at Attica must not go unanswered! The calculated brutality used was not aimed only at quelling the rebellious prisoners, but was also meant as a warning to all who would resist the present order. The same attacks on "militants," "outside forces," and revolutionaries which were levelled by Rockefeller have been used against the Black, Chicano, labor, antiwar, women's, and student movements in the past, and will undoubtedly be used again in the future.

The assault on the Attica prisoners was encouraged and supported by every racist and reactionary. It was the type of action designed to serve as a rallying point for these forces and to create a climate of fear and intimidation aimed at those who dissent, in whatever form, from the government and its policies.

A massive united defense of the Attica prisoners must now be mounted. Attempts to victimize activists in all social movements through police frame-ups is standard practice throughout the U.S. and must be fought. An injury to one is an injury to all!

The Young Socialist Alliance calls upon all youth to act together in behalf of the Attica prisoners. The commission chosen by Rockefeller to conduct the "official" investigation into the slaughter is a farce. The same man who ordered the massacre has selected troops who faithfully executed his order to conduct the "impartial inquiry." In order to uncover the facts of Attica and expose the treacherous complicity of the government, we urge that an independent citizens' investigation be made. In addition, it is imperative that teach-ins to get out the truth about Attica to masses of American people be organized on campuses, high schools, and in the communities throughout the country along with meetings and demonstrations of solidarity with the Attica prisoners.

Amnesty for the Attica Prisoners -- No More Victimizations!

Support the Struggle for Prisoners' Rights -- No More Atticas!

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TO ALL NC MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

Within the last two years the size of the YSA National Office staff has nearly doubled--and we expect even further expansion this fall. This growth has necessitated a change in the relationship between the National Office and the National Executive Committee.

Until recently the National Office--as a body appointed by, under the direction of, and responsible to the NEC--has, in addition to its other tasks, taken on the responsibility of organizing and preparing meetings of the NEC. Most reports presented to the NEC are discussed and prepared first in meetings of the YSA National Office. This has been done in order to present the best possible reports and facilitate the deliberations of the NEC. However, as the National Office staff grew this procedure became inefficient.

With a staff of 11, 12, or more comrades, just organizing meetings at a time suitable for the entire National Office became difficult, and this tended to lead to a situation where fewer meetings of the National Office took place than were actually necessary.


Because of the size of the staff, N.O. meetings usually were quite lengthy as well. Since it is in the National Office that the initial discussion around the various reports to be presented to the NEC took place, these long meetings that the entire staff attended were a hindrance to the efficient functioning of the office. This was most clearly demonstrated this summer in the preparation for the plenum reports to be presented to the NEC. With the approach of the YSA convention and the necessity of preparing resolutions and reports, this problem would have become even more acute.

In order to facilitate the functioning of the National Office, two steps were taken. First, the tradition of National Office meetings to prepare and organize NEC meetings was ended. This required no action by the NEC as this procedure was not a formal one. National Office meetings in the future will be held only for the purpose of organizing the internal functioning of the office.

Second, in order to carry out the necessary function of organizing and preparing NEC meetings, a subcommittee of the NEC was established that could take on those responsibilities. This subcommittee, called the Organization Committee, was constituted by the NEC at its September 2 meeting, and is recorded in the NEC minutes, set #15. The Organization Committee was appointed by the NEC and is responsible to it. It is a small working body which can meet regularly and frequently.

Ending the tradition of National Office meetings and establishing the Organization Committee of the NEC was a major step forward in the organization of the national center to better fit our growth. It will greatly facilitate the functioning of the National Office, which is crucial--this fall more so than ever before.

Comradely,



Frank Boehm
National Chairman