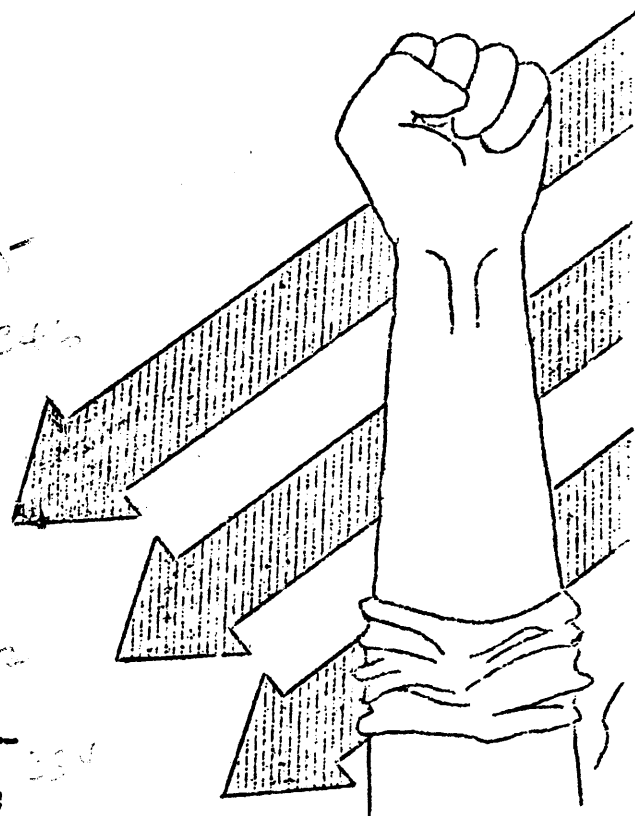


YOUNG SOCIALIST

REVIEW

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10¢ PER COPY

Vol.1 No.4
NOV. 25th
1954

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION
BULLETIN OF THE

YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE

①

EDITOR'S NOTES.....

WHAT THE YSR IS

The Young Socialist Review is the information and discussion bulletin of the Young Socialist League. The YSR is prepared by the YSL National Office.

The aim of the YSR is to constitute a forum for the expression of all points of view within the YSL. It is, therefore, completely open to any member who may wish to contribute his views -- and to any group of members. Contributions from non-members will be accepted, if of sufficiently high interest. (The editor reserves the right to decide in the case of each such article.)

For obvious reasons it should be understood that articles signed by individuals do not necessarily represent the views of the YSL. Any material that is "official" will be clearly labeled as such.

Copy should be submitted to the YSL National Office, Third Floor, 114 W. 14th Street, New York 11, N.Y. If at all possible submit copy already stenciled, single spaced. If this is not possible, then submit material type-written, double spaced. Non-typewritten copy will not be accepted.

It should be clear that the YSR is not restricted to members of the YSL. Though issued primarily for our members it is open to all friends of the YSL and other interested individuals. Members should make every effort to get copies into the hands of this wider audience. Send in your bundle orders now.

Back copies of all issues of the YSR are available from the N.O. The supply, however, is limited. The Three issues of the pre-unity joint discussion bulletin may also be ordered from the N.O.

Unless otherwise stated, all labor expended in the production of YSR is donated.

THIS ISSUE

The production of this issue of YSR was held up mainly because of a lack of copy, and is certainly a "thin issue". If YSR is to be maintained on any but the most irregular basis this condition must be corrected... and if the YSL is to be an intellectually alive organization a regular and frequent discussion organ is essential. Send in your articles for the next issue NOW. Don't take the attitude that (1) you can't write well enough or (2) someone else will do it. Literary style is not important for discussion purposes, though you will improve and develop through writing, and the other comrade is probably waiting for you to write the article you are expecting him to write. Again, SEND IN YOUR ARTICLE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE NOW.

Scott Arden, Editor

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BIG POWER NEGOTIATIONS

By Charles Marshall

Big power negotiations are the regular, everyday means by which the imperialist forces of the world maintain their relations. One of the immediate results of such negotiations is the denial by these forces, where they are able to do so, of the right of the small and colonial nations to self-determination. Our general point of view must be that the co-existence of the two major blocs means the continued existence of imperialist exploitation. Within the context of the present situation we see that some of the movements and groups which call for co-existence are, as yet, inarticulate gropings towards the development of a third camp force.

We, however, must reject such a capitulation to the forces of imperialism, understanding that it is impossible for big power negotiations to lead to any settlement of the crisis of our time. This, in spite of the fact that we might often be found in the left wing of movements calling for co-existence. Our function there, however, must always be, as socialists, to press for an open, third camp struggle against the two imperialist blocs.

In totally rejecting any favorable attitude towards big power negotiations we do not call for war. What we cannot do in any way is to make ourselves belatedly partners to such deals as Yalta and Teheran or to such imperialist divisions as took place in Germany, Korea and Indo China. The breathing space provided by these deals essentially provided the opposing blocs with a chance to consolidate the forces that each controls, to prevent progressive developments in their respective areas and to arm themselves in preparation for yet more violent war. Further, they allowed and continue to allow both the U.S. and the Soviet Union to lull people into thinking that these negotiations can provide a solution to the problems facing them. That nothing further is required. Although the time thus gained has also enabled the continuation of the struggle for the third camp we cannot say that we favor big power negotiations or that it is they that provide conditions conducive to the growth of the third camp.

In fact it is in the face of the pressures made possible by big power negotiations that we must press for continued progressive developments in the U.S. and Europe, and in the backward areas of the world.

The way for us to achieve a solution, to snatch victory from the two imperialist forces, to enable the third camp to grow (which is the only solution to the war and poverty which are these scourges of our time) is to continually oppose those steps which permit the big powers to dominate the world scene, as negotiations do, and to press for the development of independent forces, independence movements and union between the exploited classes of the world.

and

THE GENOCIDE CONVENTION

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A Morality Play
by Bob Bone

SCENE: the YSL September Plenum. A babble of voices, called to order by the Chair.

CHAIRMAN: Comrades, the next order of business is a discussion of the genocide convention. Comrade Mulligan has asked for the floor.

BUCK MULLIGAN: I have here a short resolution condemning genocide with which you are all familiar, since it has appeared in YSR. I wish at this time to read it, and to urge its adoption by this body. (He reads):

(At this point, I want to quote the Harrington motion in full, substituting * the phrase "genocide" for the phrase "H-bomb", and making appropriate, but minimum, editorial changes. Addign a sentence at the end urging that the YSL ratify the Genocide Convention) *

AUSTIN GRAVES: I've thought a good deal recently about the question of genocide, and I for one can't imagine any situation in which its use would be progressive. I am therefore prepared to support the Mulligan motion.

MA. MA. MAN: I must say I am surprised at Comrade Graves for advancing a position which is unhistorical, unMarxist, and therefore untenable. I would only point out, by way of clarification, that it is not necessary for me to cite an instance of the progressive use of genocide, but only to show that the progressive use of genocide is not theoretically excluded.

:STAN STENTOR: I want to warn those comrades who consider themselves Marxists that what we have to deal with here is a pacifist deviation. Those who oppose genocide on absolute moral grounds are taking the first step toward non-violence. And who knows where this line of reasoning may lead? After condemning genocide in principle, the comrades will next be asked to condemn the H-bomb! As for me, the greatest conceivable evil is Stalinist enslavement, and if it comes to a choice between that and genocide, I might be forced, however reluctantly, to defend myself against Russian Stalinism by running the Russian people through gas ovens.

C. RADEK: My objection to this motion of Mulligan's is that it is too narrow. I fail to see how we can condemn genocide without condemning Russian slave-labor camps as well. Statistics clearly show that over the years more people have died in Stalinist slave-labor camps than were killed as a result of Nazi genocide.

At this point, the main thread of discussion disappears amidst a maza of procedural and constitutional haggling. In the end, the Plenum postpones action on the Genocide Convention "pending further discussion".

Curtain

*see Mike Harrington's Resolution on the H-bomb, YSR, Volume 1, number 3. For the resolution as it would read with the changes see page 5 of this issue.

POLITICAL MORALITY AND THE H-BOMB

by Bob Bone

Unfortunately for the YSL, the fictional scene described above is not wholly

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imaginary. Something very like it occurred at the September Plenum, and those who were present will have no difficulty in recognizing the cast of characters and the arguments which they advanced. One has only to substitute one crime against humanity for another -- the H-bomb for genocide -- in order to have a fairly accurate record of the Plenum proceedings.

I frankly find it appalling that a socialist organization should adopt a mincing attitude toward the dropping of hydrogen bombs on civilian populations -- the only question with which the Harrington resolution deals. I find it equally appalling that certain comrades should discover all kinds of mental reservations which prevent them from expressing themselves on this subject in a clear and forthright manner. I should like therefore to direct my remarks principally to these comrades, in the hope that they will see the fantastic disproportion between their hypothetical objections on the one hand, and the very real threat of the H-bomb on the other.

Some comrades undoubtedly held back on the Harrington resolution because they felt that it was an entering wedge for a pacifist ideology. Harrington himself did his best in the course of discussion to confuse the issue in this regard. Yet the plain fact is that this particular resolution no more raises the issue of pacifism than a resolution condemning genocide. To oppose a particular kind of violence (like political assassination, long rejected by the socialist movement, is not to oppose violence as such. The Harrington resolution opposes the H-bomb not because it is a weapon, but because this weapon, when used against cities, reaches the proportions of an atrocity.

The point I want to drive home is this: that the use of the H-bomb against civilian populations, is, like genocide and slave-labor camps, in and of itself a crime against humanity. Its stark horror, in simple human terms, is so immense that even to discuss the possibility of "progressive" consequences is to be something less than human. Eventually the H-bomb and the new technology of destruction which it symbolizes must be dealt with by socialists on the level of political theory, but first of all; it must be dealt with as an atrocity.

Viewed for the moment in this light, the question of the H-bomb in my mind transcends the bounds of political theory and enters a human dimension. I oppose genocide, for example, not because it is anti-socialist, but because it is anti-humanitarian. These, to me, are not questions of theoretical "correctness" but of whether, so to speak, one is for or against the human race. Perhaps in our time they are ultimately questions of mental health. I frankly find talk of the "progressive" features of a hydrogen war just a little insane. Something has happened to a person's sense of proportion when he talks of saving people from Stalinist enslavement by vaporizing them.

I am aware that this kind of approach raises a philosophical problem, or at least an emotional bloc in the minds of some comrades. Ultimately, these comrades who would rather remain silent on the Bomb than violate their traditional antipathy toward moral absolutes. But they thereby raise their own principle of historical relativism to the status of an absolute. They are unable to distinguish between undesirable or even reprehensible political methods which may nevertheless be justified under certain circumstances, and political methods like genocide which are always a crime against humanity and which must therefore be categorically condemned. Physical torture and collective guilt are instruments of Stalinist policy; could they, under any circumstances whatever, be instruments of ours?

In practice, at some point or other, these comrades draw absolute moral distinctions. But for fear of being "unMarxist", they hesitate to admit it in so many words. There is a crypto-ethic, nonetheless real because it is hidden even from themselves. NoNo comrades, what is wrong with a few (not too many) clearly enunciated humanitarian principles, advanced without fear or shame -- and without apologies to Karl Marx -- to the effect that we as a movement, even if the other guy plays dirty, will not torture, gouge eyes (even of Stalinist spies), initiate genocide, or drop hydrogen bombs? Can anyone argue that such assurances from us are superfluous, after the crimes committed by the Stalinists in the name of the Class Struggle, the only true Proletarian Party, History, Progress, etc.? Why should anyone trust us, unless we declare in advance that there are some things (only a few, to be sure) that we will not do; some shit, as E.L. Cummings put it, that we will not eat?

I urge in conclusion that the YSL-NEC adopt the Harrington resolution on the H-bomb at the earliest possible moment. I hope and trust that members of the NED H-n achieve a unanimous vote on this issue, thereby demonstrating that we recognize a crime against humanity when we see one. (5)

-END-

(Insert for "Resolution": The Young Socialist League is not a pacifist organization although it includes and welcomes pacifists in its ranks.

However, the use of genocide by modern nations has reached a point where even non-pacifists must take a principled and categorical stand.

The practice of genocide as a means of "solving" minority problems is an act which is morally and politically unjustifiable. We therefore categorically condemn such practices, no matter what government may resort to them.

We hereby affirm an absolute rejection of genocide as a political method at any time or under any circumstances.)

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⑥
FOUR NEW APPROACHES FOR THE YSL.

By James Herman

(Four Motions Appended)

A Point on INDO CHINA:

How can a third camp be created in Indo China? The primary factor there is: that the vast majority of the people support the Viet Minh, a movement led and controlled by Stalinists, who are, even in Stalinist terms, extremely subservient to the Russian Universal State.

Two obstacles immediately come to mind: (1) an open isolated third camp is rapidly destroyed, practically before it has begun, by either or both the French and the Viet Minh, (2) a third camp within the Stalinists controlled "independence" movement, openly "contesting the fraudulent claims of the Stalinists to leadership," is also destroyed by the local equivalent of the G.P.U.

This very delicate situation calls for a two pronged plan, both factors supplementing each other in the struggle for the third camp. The minor factor is working within whatever existing unaffiliated movements there are; given the weakness and the cultist nature of these movements only mild results can be expected. The major factor is working within the movement to which the Indo Chinese people subscribe: the Stalinist-controlled Viet Minh. The purpose of this is to get the necessary nucleus for the third camp as an ideology and as an organization. The only manner to accomplish this would be to have an underground set-up within the Viet Minh, which would educate and recruit as many as possible Indo Chinese: Participating as individuals in military struggles against the French (and for the Stalinists) only to the extent necessary for survival as individuals within the Viet Minh.

When the minimum base for the third camp both within and without of the Viet Minh is established, then shall the real struggle begin: through a third military organization fighting both the Viet Minh and the French for the benefit of the masses of Indo-China.

The only way to get a conscious third camp is by going to the people: shall we let hysteria blind us to this fact?

(See appended motion 1)

NEUTRALISM, COEXISTENCE AND THE THIRD CAMP

The neutralists make one fundamental mistake, which we should make our philosophic bone with them: that big power talks equal understanding equal co-existence.

Coexistence lies in the realities of today, and not in "mutual understanding." Co-existence lies in the fact that neither imperialist power sees any gain in a war right now. When this situation changes, war commences, with or without big power talks.

Big power talks have one positive and one negative effect. The positive effect is relaxation of world power which is conducive to de-militarization, and the hope that "sides don't have to be taken." Both of the results of the relaxation of world tension hurt the imperialist camps, and can be put in a third camp context.

The positive effect is more or less constant. The "relaxation" is usually felt to the same extent on each big power conference. On a scale of 100, let us tabulate the positive effect as "50."

The negative effect is the confirmation of the imperialist status quo. This effect is variable. Yalta and Potsdam because of their extreme nature were "80s" of "90s." On the other hand, Geneva changed little: the people were not deprived of anything they had previously— they did not mind remaining on the side of a particular imperialism. Let's give it a "20."

Therefore, we cannot oppose big power talks blanketly. We must compare their positive and negative aspects before rendering a verdict. At the same time we must emphasize who is discussing, whose ate, and give our socialist slogan of "withdraw all foreign troops."

We must attack the neutralists upon their concept of "co-existence," join with

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then on such specifics as reduction in armaments, and offer them our program of the third camp.

(See motion 2 at end of article)

(On the Geneva Truce: See motion 3 at end of article)

ANVIL AND THE LIBERALS

Anvil is the only nationwide student anti-war magazine with a non-Stalinist, but radical social perspective. Obviously it would be a damaging blow to the third camp, if such type magazine were abandoned to become a loose radicalish-liberalish-watered-down - socialistic magazine, which would be in effect a critically pro-war magazine.

I am a believer "in bridging the gap between socialist and liberals." But I would not like to see Anvil, a magazine, which has served our purposes in the past, and can put our viewpoint on the campus today, become that bridge.

Can an anti-war magazine be a bridge between socialist and liberals? The only kind of liberals that are anti-war, are Stalinoid liberals, whom we do not want, and have been discouraged with our analysis of Stalinism in Anvil. Can we bridge to the "radical-liberal" with an anti-war magazine? The answer is NO. The radical-liberal is for (1) more point four, (2) for a labor party, (3) for certain guarantees of colonial independence. But he is also for the military buildup. The RADICAL-LIBERAL IS A PRO-WAR LIBERAL.

Anybody reading an anti-war Anvil would be very close to the YSL politically, or would be a curious minded individual. The curious minded individual would just as well read our literature as anybody else's. The other type could have only one objection to the YSL: an organizational one.

Therefore I believe an issue of Anvil should represent, and be written by the YSL, publish YSL articles and ads, but not be officially a YSL magazine.

(See motion "4" at end of article)

CIVIL

CIVIL LIBERTIES

It is necessary to add to our "democratic" (or "principled") defence of the civil liberties of Stalinists a "factual defense" of their civil liberties.

In view of the blatant falsities perpetrated by most of the bourgeois spokesmen upon the nature of the CP; using these distortions as tools to further endanger the freedom of all Americans, it would be wise for us to take a position on the charges that the CP is a nest of spies, or that the CP has the capabilities or material for fomenting an armed uprising in the United States.

It should be emphasized by us that in the past the average American who joined the Communist Party did so because he sincerely believed that the CP could lead the US into the ways of peace, socialism, etc., and not in order to spy or to sabotage.

We should point out that the American CP differs from the Soviet spy rings in that its main theme today is to encourage people to bear misconceptions about the nature and the role of the Soviet Union.

As the forces of repression advance, so must we stiffen.

* 4 motions appended were introduced before the NEC plenum by the chair at my request.

Motion #1.--Amendment to Walker R solution on Indo-China: (not accepted by Walker):
In the Stalinist part of Indo-China, as one alternative tactic, the Third Camp should concentrate to a large extent within the Vietminh on an underground cadre basis. When the groundwork has been laid and the opportunity arises, the Third Camp forces--with these cadres as part of their strength--will struggle against both the Vietminh and the French.

--Defeated--

⑧

Motion *2.--Resolution on Big Powers:

CO-EXISTENCE AND BIG POWER TALKS

Co-existence is that state in which a capitalist U.S. and a Stalinist Russia live on this earth together.

Today there is no force on earth capable of destroying both imperialist camps except an improbable desire for an all-out war. (i.e., both sides and civilization destroyed.)

Today neither camp can be destroyed unless the other camp destroys it. (i.e., one side destroying the other.)

The YSL recognizes that these are the only immediate alternatives to co-existence and rejects them. The YSL recognizes the immediate necessity of co-existence.

The YSL rejects the concept that the basis of co-existence is, or will be, mutual understanding by way of conferences, committees, notes, etc.; but rather on the basis of what is necessary and desirable for the two ruling classes of the US and Russia.

However, the YSL does not reject Big-Power talks blanketly, because of possible progressive factors connected with them.

The YSL re-affirms its belief that the workers, peasants, and colonial peoples of the world should and must, as soon as feasible, deny U.S. capitalism and Russian Stalinism the right to exist, as well as co-exist.

TABLED

Motion * 3. -- Resolution on Peace in Indo-China:

The progressive aspects of the Indo-China truce far exceeded the reactionary aspects. The imperialist talks at Geneva merely confirmed by word what had been existent by deed: that the great majority of people in Indo-China were supporters of imperialism on a military and ethical basis. The Stalinist controlled mass military struggle only strengthened Stalinism and shed the blood of the Indo-Chinese people for a cause that could only hinder their genuine aspirations of freedom, progress and dignity.

It would be a myth to assume that either imperialist camp could have united Indo-China. The aim of the French was not to concede Indo-China but rather to obtain a limited jurisdiction for themselves. If necessary, the French could have gotten enough military support from the West to stabilize the struggle, as the Korean struggle was stabilized around the 38th Parallel for many months.

The Indo-China truce ended useless imperialist bloodshed, strengthened the forces of non-dependence on the U.S. in France, and by virtue of Ho Chi Minh's failure to "drive the foreigners out", created discontent with the Stalinists among the people of Indo-China.

Defeated

Motion * 4.--Amendment to Arden Resolution on Anvil (not accepted by Arden)

Strike out "instead of a specifically YSL magazine" and substitute "being run by, and agitating for the YSL organizationally and theoretically".

DEFEATED

and

ILSON LETTER OF RESIGNATION

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Dear Comrades:

For some time I have been in sharp disagreement with certain of the YSL's fundamental principles. Organizations have fundamental principles and secondary principles derived from them. If a member disagrees with secondary principles he can air his disagreements internally and benefit both his organization and himself. If he disagrees with fundamental principles he must engage in a long and increasingly bitter factional dispute, during which he will be in no position to contribute to the real activity of his organization. Friendship will turn to hatred. Or he must resign. Having tried to discuss a few of my most important disagreements, having been met not so much with opposition as indifference, I must choose the latter course. I have tried to work as best I could within the framework of dissent provided me. I have tried reconciling myself to remaining by all sorts of personal compromises. These devices will no longer work.

For those (if there are any) who might want to know the political reasons for my resignation, I can summarize my distinctive positions thus: I believe that the struggle for the new society grows directly out of the day-to-day experience of the people. The achievement of revolutionary consciousness by the people does not represent the fusion of the ideology of a vanguard with the blind strivings of the masses, but a development of the mass movement itself toward self-consciousness and organization; a development accelerated as the increasingly rigorous requirements of Capitalism gradually constrict the area of permissible voluntary political activity. Therefore the revolutionary must interpose himself in the most pressing struggles of the day, lending clarity and cohesion to the struggle to reach increasingly unreachable goals - rather than carry on propaganda by means of a categorical comparison between the inadequate tactics of the people and the correct ones he proposes. The Practical archetype of my approach is - let us say - a leaflet about the relation between the dangerous hydrogen bomb and ruinous American foreign policy. The practical archetype of the other approach is a weekly political newspaper whose changeless typography and style soon cease to convince anyone except the already convinced.

The revolutionary should pay special attention to the Community Councils, those voluntary organizations for civic improvement which are a peculiarly interesting feature of highly industrialized Capitalist democracies. The real distribution of political potential throughout the population is excellently reflected in these Councils, the proportion of whose membership that is drawn from a given social stratum indicating the extent to which that stratum occupies itself with problems beyond those concerned with daily bread. The League for a High School on 92nd St. may prove a far better arena for political activity than many union locals.

The economic contradictions of Capitalism have been resolved by political means, national and international in scope, which now affect not only the proletariat, but all the rest of society as well. This is not to deny in the least that the working class is a revolutionary class. It is merely to assert that other groups are becoming "revolutionized" also. At the same time the means of production are virtually crying to be liberated, and can provide us with prosperity and freedom in far less time than was heretofore imagined. Therefore both because it is no longer necessary and because it may never have been able to succeed, the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat" is anathema to me. I counterpose to it democracy - the supremacy of the majority of society over the dissident majority of any class. Democracy must be not only the end, but the means also.

In short it is necessary in the present period to build a broad movement of the disinherited, and as more workers come to feel themselves alienated from the society they built, they will swell our ranks.

Among the most important dangers facing us is the possibility that the revolutionary organization will either fail to take the initiative in a revolutionary situation, or will, having taken it successfully, transform itself into a new ruling group in society. I trace both these inadequacies to that type of organizational structure which features a formal bureaucracy. I propose to transfer the functions of the formal bureaucracy to the membership as a whole - not by any means "abolishing

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the organization", but instead making its members more effective, creative, and flexible.

The YSL has treated me well - probably better than I deserve. It is painful to report that its internal development is fulfilling my most disheartening suspicions. Out of the MAC has been carved an Educational Committee, a Secretariat, and numerous other officials in addition to its two regular officers. The MAC's usurpation of the authority of the New York membership in the case of the attacks upon us from NYU and the Columbia Conference affair; the "secret" negotiations with SDA about Academic Freedom Week and who knows what else; the increasing direct direction of New York affairs culminating in an MAC directive to the New York Unit concerning an emphasis in activities which only the Unit is competent to determine; the too-easy subsidization of our members (their names are familiar to all) on almost any excuse they can construct; and, worst of all, the refusal of the MAC to authorize a National Membership Conference in violation not only of elementary democracy but of the obvious general will of the National Executive Committee: all these things and more have reduced membership participation not only in policy making, but in carrying out policy, to unprecedented lows. Especially in New York extreme measures must be resorted to in order to obtain an attendance of half our membership at a regular business meeting.

Although for these and other reasons I feel I can no longer submit myself to the discipline of the Young Socialist League, what unites me and it is greater than what divides us: a fundamental belief in the ability of the people to rule themselves. Never abandon the fight for a new kind of society where, according to the non-categorical attitude, each individual can for the first time be treated precisely as an individual - not as a mere representative of a class or type of humanity. If in what divides us you are right and I am wrong I wish you success. If not, I wish you luck.

Fraternally,

Robert Ilson

end

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CONVERSATION AND RESIGNATION -- A REPLY TO COMRADE ILSON

By Scott Arden, for the National Action Committee

Comrade Ilson's letter of resignation requires an answer mainly for the record -- that is, to clear up some of the confusion that his document might create and to put it in its proper perspective.

To begin with, it is an absolutely irrefutable fact that Ilson has had, and continues to have, a variety of notions which are shared by considerably less than a majority of the members of the YSL. His most striking notions (those concerning questions of organizational structure) are shared, to be painfully frank, by probably no member of the YSL.

The comrade in question presented his ideas to the YSL both verbally to the New York Unit (of which he was a member) and to the national organization as a whole through his "Conversation Piece" articles in the Young Socialist Review and the pre-unity discussion bulletin. Rather than attempt to characterize these articles, which in their own way are most remarkable, we prefer to let them speak for themselves. Factually it should be noted that no one, seemingly, considered them worthy of a reply -- despite their controversial nature.

That this situation might have led Comrade Ilson to feel unhappy is very understandable. It is also understandable that his discontent led him to decide to leave the YSL. His final decision to resign surprised very few members of the N.Y. Unit since some months previously he had offered his resignation. He withdrew his first resignation after a short time but it was clear that his "differences", and the fact that he still could not convince anyone, still grieved him. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that Ilson's first resignation came just after he was defeated by the membership when he ran for a post on the New York Unit Executive Committee. Further, this resignation came shortly after he offered to serve on the National Action Committee. Is it possible that Comrade Ilson's strong objections (on principle) to "bureaucracy" do not apply to himself?

Unfortunately, Ilson was not content this time with simply stating his real differences and his real unhappiness. As a result his letter of resignation clouds over the actual reasons for his leaving, and at the same time might give rise to a number of false ideas. It is understandable, again, that the comrade would like to achieve some reasonable justification for his resignation but we would prefer that he did so at his expense, not at the expense of honesty.

Briefly, the YSL was formed last Feb. by a merger of the Young Peoples Socialist League (formerly the youth section of the Socialist Party) and the Socialist Youth League (prior to Feb. the youth section of the Independent Socialist League). Resulting, as it did, from this merger of two separate organizations with different traditions, the YSL was in actuality a new organization -- encompassing features of both of the previous groups and, in cases where common agreement could not be reached, leaving some questions open (i.e., no official policy) to be resolved in the course of building the YSL.

The YSL, even today, does not have a "finished program" that covers every point of political and organizational policy. Our policy is, generally, broad and our membership includes many kinds of socialists who find that they can work together democratically within the framework of the YSL. Those who are in a minority on any particular question (and there are different points of view on all sorts of questions) are given every chance of presenting and pressing their minority point of view.

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Comrade Ilson admits this and in no way accuses the YSL of treating him in any undemocratic fashion. He does, however, imply that in some way the YSL has developed, since Feb., into a different kind of organization.... and this is not the case.

Ilson, prior to unity, was a member of the YPSL, and in the YBSL he holds more or less the same ideas that trouble him today. Having failed to convince the old YPSL of the correctness of his notions he, perhaps naturally, built up false hopes in the direction of the YSL. That is, the YSL being a new organization, he felt it might be possible to win a majority to his point of view.

That he failed to convince anyone does not reflect on the YSL, in our opinion, and certainly his resignation cannot in any legitimate sense be based on some mysterious and dangerous "internal developments" since Feb.

We have, no doubt, made mistakes and we have certainly not solved all of our problems. But Comrade Ilson should force through this straw-wall he has erected and be his usual honest self. He did not resign because of any change in the YSL; he resigned because the exact opposite was the case.

His specific charges against the YSL are at best distortions and betray a talent for creative fiction which may in itself be good or bad but which has little place in a serious political document. The "powers" the NAC "usurped" from the N.Y. Unit were voted to it by the Unit. The NAC did not refuse to authorize a National Membership Conference in violation of "the obvious general will of the National Executive Committee" -- the NAC called a mail referendum of the NEC on the question and the NEC itself made the final decision against holding the conference. The "too-easy subsidization of certain of our members" is pure fantasy and can only be based on some dream the comrade had one night -- it certainly has no basis in terms of fact (i.e., the YSL's financial condition, its official financial reports, or its practices -- past or present).

The "political reasons" he gives for his resignation cannot be dealt with seriously. Many of the points he makes are ones on which we have no especial quarrel with him -- in such cases "his ideas" (right or wrong) are actually the ideas of a substantial number of YSL members. With a certain amount of careful sifting, however, we can discover those "differences" that are the important ones. And they are, without major exception, those ideas he expressed in his "Conversation Pieces" -- his ideas on organizational structure.

It would be repetitious to reprint now what appeared so clearly in those previous articles but which is smudged over in his letter. Briefly, he is opposed to a formal organization of any kind. He proposes a loose sort of alliance of "associates" with no membership, no dues, no officers, no committees, no discipline, no national structure, etc. In short, no organization. Those ideas and no others are the ones that he can find no support for in the YSL.

In the final paragraph of Comrade Ilson's letter he tells us that what unites us (i.e., he and the YSL) is greater than what divides us, a statement which tends, logically, to conflict with his decision to resign. We are tempted to think that if he tempers his conversation with a little reading and experience he might well decide to speak a different piece. If not, the only road open to him is that of the crack-potism of the pseudo-left.

and

* (correction. Insert: "--further, the YSL does not have an official policy or position on most of the political questions he raises.")