

YOUNG SOCIALIST

NOVEMBER 1958, VOL. II, NO. 1, (Whole No. 5)

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Documents and Proposals:

Resolution on Socialist Electoral Action, adopted 6-28-58

Draft "Where We Stand", adopted 7-16-58

Letter Urging Conference Postponement -- Los Angeles, 7-15-58
Editorial Board minutes (conference postponement), 7-21-58

Memorandum on the Building of a Revolutionary Youth Movement,
adopted 8-3-58

Draft Motion on Editorial Policy for the "Young Socialist",
and Proposed Agenda for the YS Conference, adopted 10-19-58

Discussion:

Answer to Martha Wohlforth -- Tom Leonard (Minneapolis, 7-10-58)

Some Food for Thought -- George Payne (Harrisburg, 8-17-58)

The Necrophiliacs -- Richard DeHaan (N.Y., 8-6-58)

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Documents Concerning the Further Development of Necrophilia
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On the Social-democratic Front:

Press release on the Rusher-Wohlforth debate scandal, 6-20-58

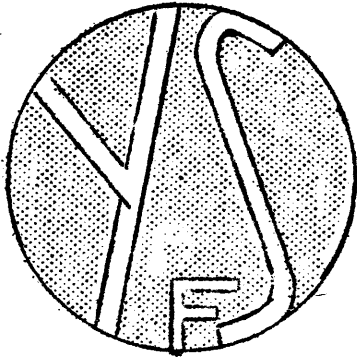
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Reply by the YSL and YPSL, 8-22-58

Report on the Labor Day YSL and YSL-YPSL conventions



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Report on the Labor Day YSL and YSL-YPSL conventions

"Young Socialist Forum"
196-A Connecticut St.
San Francisco 7, Calif.

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE
114 Second Avenue
New York City 3, New York
GRamercy 5-7920

RESOLVED: The Young Socialist Alliance welcomes the victory for united, independent socialist electoral action achieved at the conference of June 13-15. This political confrontation proved once again that socialists of diverse conviction can profitably unite in support of common socialist goals on a minimal basis and without sacrifice of individual principle. We have every confidence that this victory will be consolidated by fielding a ticket which provides representation for all major constituents of the campaign. Such a slate would give meaningful expression to the realities of the American socialist movement, and would receive our fullest support.

(Adopted unanimously at the meeting of 28 June 1958.)

/s/ Richard DeHaan, Chairman
YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

The above resolution was endorsed unanimously by the Editorial Board of the Young Socialist at its meeting of 29 June 1958.

/s/ Tim Wohlforth, Managing Editor
YOUNG SOCIALIST

Draft "Where We Stand"

We favor the abolition of our capitalist system which derives its life blood from the exploitation of man by man in the name of profit. We advocate the replacement of this system by a socialist system in which the means of production are owned, and the political power controlled democratically, by the people.

As Marxists, we identify with the only class that can bring socialism into existence, the working class. We recognize the existence of struggles between classes as the essence of social relations in the modern capitalist society and side unequivocally with the working class. This means concretely full support to the trade union movement in its struggles with the capitalist class, while criticizing the union bureaucracy when it sacrifices the needs of the workers to maintain "labor peace" and their own privileged positions. This means no support to the capitalist parties since such support would mean crossing the political picket line. This means supporting socialists who run against these parties.

We are internationalists, for the only socialism that was ever worth anything is international socialism which recognizes that the working class is as much an international class as the capitalist class with its cartels and military alliances. We socialists support our brothers in other lands-- fight along with them against the rulers of the world who poison the atmosphere with their nuclear tests, who hold down the colonial peoples, who are planning a third world war against the Soviet bloc. We must support the conquests of workers in other lands, and defend the nationalized property existing in one third of the world against any "roll-back" by capitalist imperialism.

The socialism we advocate is democratic in its essence. Socialism loses its meaning if it oppresses the many -- if it does not allow for the fullest democratic rights to the working and exploited peoples of the world.

Draft "Where We Stand" - page 2

Thus socialism means not the suppression of democratic rights as exists in the Soviet lands, but rather the full flowering of these rights. Therefore, we support fully the struggle of the working class in the Soviet lands to wrench the political power usurped by the bureaucrats and place it in the hands of the workers themselves democratically organized in workers councils or soviets.

We support every step forward taken by the mass of the people even if such steps fall short of socialism. We support the struggle of the Negro people for full equality and call on the working class as a whole to come to the aid of their embattled Negro brothers in the South and throughout this land. We support every step taken to regain those civil liberties and freedoms, limited though they may be, that once existed in this country. Particularly, as young students and workers we demand fullest freedom of expression for American youth and teachers on the high school and university campuses across the land.

We dedicate ourselves to the task of building a new socialist youth movement in the United States and Canada to bring the liberating ideas of socialism to the young workers and students. Such a movement must be based on the fine militant traditions of American radicalism and link itself to the struggles of socialists of all lands for a new social order that will end the exploitation of man by man forever, and free the creative forces inherent in humanity for their fullest possible flowering.

* * *

Adopted by Editorial Board, June 29, 1958,
for presentation to the Labor Day Conference.

DRAFT MEMORANDUM ON PERSPECTIVES

June 29, 1958

The perspective for socialist youth must be understood in relation to the perspective of the radical socialist movement as a whole. While having a dynamic of its own the youth movement comes under heavy influence from developments in the adult field.

In the adult field the most likely course seems to be one of united activity, most notably electoral action. This stage (of united activity) seems to be replacing the earlier phase of mere discussion of ideas.

This new situation in the adult movement, which received its impulse from the shakeup in the international Communist movement now finds a base for further development in the U.S. in the deepening economic crisis and a lessening of the witch-hunt.

For the youth movement, the possibility now exists for important growth on the high-school and college campuses. Our job is to conduct such activity as will best bring militant socialism back on to the American campus. Such a policy will strengthen the tendencies toward unification of the existing radical youth.

The IBM clubs proved their validity as initial organizing centers for those tendencies which wished to build a vigorous socialist youth movement. The YOUNG SOCIALIST, while lacking organic connection with most of the clubs, provided the most effective support for the clubs. It is necessary to take a great leap forward and bring together the separate aspects of the movement.

In the coming period we should unify in a national organization all young socialists who are prepared to launch a campaign of open militant socialist activity and education. Such an organization will be the natural fulfillment of the IBM movement.

While continuing within the framework of IBM the move toward national organization signifies seeking forms best suited to an expanding socialist organization on the campus. It will prove even more attractive to those already radicalized youth who want more than mere private hot-house talk shops. It will attract all those who want a vigorous, outgoing movement of socialist activity.

Henceforth, discussions should serve the indispensable function of defining out attitudes toward all political currents of our time and providing the programmatic framework for our practical activity.

While maintaining the principle of independence from adult organizations, while continuing to encourage recruitment on a broad minimum basis (see political stand), the movement will grow to the extent that it undertakes the long term project of elaborating a revolutionary socialist program for American youth and to the extent that it participates in and/or initiates militant campaigns for academic freedom, civil rights, peace, a socialist electoral policy, etc.

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Adopted unanimously by the Editorial Board
7-16-58

Los Angeles
July 15, 1958

Tim Wohlforth, editor
New York City

Young Socialist Editorial Board:

In the past several weeks we have had a number of discussions with Young Socialist supporters from Detroit, Denver, Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, concerning the Conference Call that has been issued by the Young Socialist editorial board. We would like to tell you of some of our conclusions on how this conference can best fit the needs of the YS and its supporters.

Everyone we have spoken to agrees that there is a definite need for a conference, a conference of a particular kind. At this point we need a work-discussion meeting of the revolutionary-socialist cadres that have been doing youth work in the broad clubs throughout the past year. Its purpose should be to consider and define a general national orientation and then create the organizational means to carry out the policies it decides upon. It should be so arranged that the revolutionary socialists can review their many pressing problems in an atmosphere conducive to full and free discussion. This will be possible only if we are not inhibited by the presence of socialist youth not yet ready or willing at their present stage of development to participate in discussions on such a political basis.

Different viewpoints have already been expressed on a number of questions in both the written material appearing in bulletin form and in the less formal discussions that have been occurring in a number of cities. The most important questions that are being discussed, the ones that should be settled by a conference, appear to be the following: 1) What is the perspective in the coming period for the development of a socialist youth movement in the U.S.? What organization forms would be best to advance this progressive development? 2) What organizational form, if any, and at what tempo of development should the revolutionary youth use in the coming period to advance the perspectives that will be determined by the conference? 3) What should be the role of the Young Socialist newspaper: what political positions should it adopt, to whom should its ideas be directed, and what should be its organizational relation to the socialist youth movement?

It is obvious that these and similar questions cannot be discussed in an extremely broad conference of the type that was held in Chicago last February. The coming conference should be restricted to the revolutionary supporters of the Young Socialist. When the conference has first thoroughly discussed and settled the pressing problems before it, then it will be in a much better position to consider what concrete steps to take for the creation of a national youth movement.

To implement the type of conference that we feel is necessary we would like to propose the following: 1) Several months of pre-conference discussion should be held, around discussion documents presenting the views of the Young Socialist supporters. 2) To permit such discussion, and to allow ample time to organize the conference, we propose a postponement of the projected conference until the 4-day Thanksgiving holiday weekend, November 27-30. 3) During the interim period the editorial board of the Young Socialist consult with the local groups as to their ideas for the agenda and organizational representation.

There is one other suggestion we would like to make. In view of the fact that we have been orienting toward a youth movement independent of the existing adult parties, it seems highly inadvisable for the conference at this time to discuss formal and official documents representing the points of view of adult organizations. We suggest that the proposed discussion around Germain's speech on "Prospects and Dynamics of the Political Revolution" be taken off the agenda and that no document from any adult political organization be discussed as such at the conference. The youth throughout the country can adequately present their views on their own positions by publishing them in the pre-conference discussion bulletin.

We are sending copies of this letter to the listed individuals for the information of the people in those areas. We hope they will communicate to you their opinions on the proposals we have made.

Comradely yours,

Peter A., Los Angeles
Carl F., Los Angeles
Allen T., Detroit
Barbara D., Detroit
George M., San Francisco
Bob I., San Francisco

(Allen T. and Barbara D. are visiting in California.)

copies to: Norman H., Denver
John S., Seattle
Bob H., Detroit
Ed C., Chicago
Tom L., Minneapolis
Arthur P., Philadelphia
Wayne L., Milwaukee
Ernest S., Toronto
Richard K., San Francisco Bay Area
Jim R., San Francisco

Young Socialist - Editorial Board Minutes (special session) - Monday, July 21

Proposed Agenda: 1. Los Angeles Communication
2. Mexican Article
3. Time of Next Meeting

Present: Jim L., Mike K., Dick D., Tim W.; Absent: Elli, George, Bert

1. Los Angeles Communication: Motion by Tim-

Resolved:

The Young Socialist editorial board acknowledges receipt of a communication dated July 15 from a group of the most active supporters of the Young Socialist requesting an extension of the discussion period prior to the coming National Conference. Since we consider the National Conference as a gathering of supporters of the Young Socialist, to meet the needs of these supporters, and since a group of these supporters feel that a Labor Day Conference would be too soon to develop fully the pre-Conference discussion, we move to postpone the Conference until the Christmas vacation period. We feel the Christmas period is a more convenient date for college and high school students than the Thanksgiving date suggested in the July 15 letter. Furthermore, it will allow for a national tour prior to the conference to a) help build up the conference and b) allow for the fullest consultation with each local area prior to the conference.

We therefore further resolve that the present conference article be stricken from the August issue and that the August issue instead contain a box stating the following: "In response to the urgent requests of a number of our supporters to have more time to prepare for and participate in the proposed National Conference we are postponing the Conference until after Labor Day. Watch the September issue for full details on the Conference."

We urge every area in the country in line with point (3) on page two of the aforementioned letter to communicate directly to the Editorial Board their thoughts and feelings about the Conference. These will be taken into consideration in line with our continuing policy of wishing the fullest consultation and participation of all our supporters in the plans and work of the YS.

Carried unanimously *

* Bert and Elli were consulted by phone and favored a postponement of the conference as outlined in the above motion.

2. Mexican Article: It was decided to run an article on the Mexican elections as a replacement for the stricken conference article.

3. Time of Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Sunday, July 27 at 6 pm in order to permit George Payne to attend. (He is presently in Pa.)

* * *

MEMORANDUM ON THE BUILDING OF A REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT

— submitted by Tim Wohlforth to the
Editorial Board of the YOUNG SOCIALIST

In order to help in the process of clarification of the discussion that is going on nationally among supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST we are attempting in this memorandum to spell out the general ideas and perspectives that we, the editorial board, have developed over the last few months. We hope this will be of some help in understanding the present stage of development we are at and the tasks we envision for the coming National Conference of YOUNG SOCIALIST supporters.

The regroupment process among youth has proceeded in a highly favorable direction in the past two years. The main obstacle to the development of a revolutionary socialist youth movement, the Stalinist-dominated Labor Youth League, collapsed as one of the consequences of the crisis in the Communist Party and was dissolved. The best elements in the Young Socialist League resisted the turn of the Shachtman grouping toward the right wing of the Social Democracy and carried through a successful struggle in defense of socialist principles. The youth of the Socialist Workers Party did everything possible to help in this process and a fusion occurred between them and the YSL Left-Wing Caucus. Various independents and former members of the LYL have added their forces to this promising formation. The outstanding achievement in this regroupment process was the consolidation of the nucleus of a new youth leadership on a national scale.

The political capacities of the new coalition of forces was demonstrated in striking fashion by the sureness with which we turned from the internal factional struggle of the YSL to outward-going activities. The national newspaper, the YOUNG SOCIALIST, which we established as the axis of the turn, quickly proved its attractiveness to wide circles of youth, both the radically minded and those first nearing political consciousness. A national conference of broad character, held in Chicago last February, was an outstanding success. A series of militant actions have won the new formation favorable attention and established its serious character in the mind of the radical public as a contender for leadership of the youth. Groupings of various physiognomy, origin and political definition have either been organized or have been attracted to the new polarizing center. In these groupings, whether or not officially, the YOUNG SOCIALIST occupies the center of attention as an ideological guide and source of inspiration.

This promising beginning augurs well for the future, since the opportunities remain great. The Communist Party, hitherto dominant in the field, has proved incapable of emerging from its crisis up to now. Yet the objective need for the organization of the American radical youth is becoming more pressing. The turn in the economic situation and the heightened international crisis are cutting deeply into the thinking of the youth, giving promise of soon yielding a new crop of energetic young radicals impelled in the direction of revolutionary socialism. The opportunities clearly call for a program of expansion.

It would, however, be a mistake of considerable magnitude to believe that the YOUNG SOCIALIST grouping is unchallenged and has a clear field before it. While the Communist Party has as yet been unable to renew its bid for the

radical youth, this situation may not last indefinitely. Meanwhile the consolidation of the Social Democracy, with the inclusion of the Shachtmanites, has provided the Social-Democratic youth with fresh resources. On the campuses they are now attempting a comeback. Their specious appeals to democracy, coupled with the normal revulsion many youth feel toward Stalinist practices in the Soviet bloc, have netted them gains in important areas. This we assess as a manifestation of danger which it would be folly to minimize and which calls for vigorous measures.

The major problem facing the YOUNG SOCIALIST grouping is thus how to respond most effectively to the objective opportunities. The solution to this will carry with it the answer as to the best way of meeting the Social-Democratic challenge.

At bottom the problem is dual in nature. It involves (1) determination of the best organizational structure for the active supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST; (2) determination of the most realistic policy of these cadres in relation to public activities and wider groupings in the period now before us. The steady objective remains, as before, construction of a revolutionary socialist youth movement. The immediate steps are viewed as a means to this end.

Finding the best organizational structure for the active supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST is not a big question of settling on norms. What is mainly involved is simply strengthening the supporting structure of the monthly newspaper, the ideological focus of the new movement. Regularized sources of income and avenues of distribution are pressing needs.

When the paper was first launched, it was necessary to undertake forced marches, including borrowing funds. Sufficient supporters have now been assembled to make it possible to pass beyond this primitive stage to a more formal organization. Formalization of the skeletal national organization would help considerably to stabilize the newspaper. This in turn would help assure the youth the real independence they require from all adult organizations.

The organizational step now contemplated is actually a modest one, fully in keeping with the real situation. It is proposed that cards be made available to supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST. A "supporter" in taking a card signifies agreement with the broad aims of the YOUNG SOCIALIST, undertakes a financial contribution of a minimum of, say, 50 cents a month to sustain the paper, and pledges to do what he can to widen the influence and circulation of the YOUNG SOCIALIST. The category of "supporters" of the YOUNG SOCIALIST, which now appears everywhere in discussions and communications involving the paper, would thus be lifted from organizational amorphousness and converted into something definite.

This step fits in so naturally with the problem of stabilizing the printing and distribution of the YOUNG SOCIALIST that it is felt that the Editorial Board could well undertake it on its own responsibility in view of the postponement of the proposed Labor Day Conference.

A further measure, which we feel should be taken, is the determination of a national leadership to which the Editorial Board in New York would be responsible. It is proposed that this question be settled at a national conference of supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST.

Considerable discussion has been devoted to a name for the proposed organization of the supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST. This question is regarded by us as of secondary importance. For the search for a name should not be permitted to obscure the modest character of the organizational proposals and make them appear more ambitious than they really are. None of us visualize the present corps of supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST as the full-fledged revolutionary socialist youth movement we wish to build no matter what name is given to the contemplated organizational structure. We consider it rather as a step, a small one to be sure, in the direction of building such an organization.

As for the editorial policy of the YOUNG SOCIALIST, it is felt that its definition must be along the lines of revolutionary socialism in its broadest conception. To prove most attractive to awakening youth, the paper has to have definite opinions and the right to take a definite stand on the big issues that affect America and the world. These issues sometimes find acute expression in the minds and feelings of both campus and factory youth, compelling any youth paper that hopes to achieve leadership to state its editorial views. Moreover, the paper must have a central guiding perspective in editorial policy -- the building of a revolutionary socialist youth movement.

At the same time, because it is a youth paper, appealing to a group in society whose political positions are not fully formed and often in considerable flux, it must offer its columns to the most diverse views, thus faithfully reflecting the broad grouping which has already formed around the YOUNG SOCIALIST and which it is hoped can be continually renewed and extended.

The YOUNG SOCIALIST thus constitutes the ideological means for bringing the program of revolutionary socialism to the youth; but this is to be understood not at all as a mechanical presentation but as its living expression, within a definite milieu, concerned about definite issues, at a definite time.

The crystallization of the supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST into more definite organizational form does not signify a change of attitude toward the independent, broad, militant (IBM) groups which have already been formed, are in process of formation, or which might be formed in the coming period. In fact, stabilization of the YOUNG SOCIALIST through such means makes it easier to follow an extremely flexible policy in this respect.

At this stage of the development of the revolutionary socialist youth movement in America, the various areas have no choice but to bend with local requirements. The norm on a nation-wide scale should not be to try to impose some general form that in different times and circumstances and with different forces would no doubt be preferable. The norm is to take what exists, including locally preferred forms, and try to link them to the YOUNG SOCIALIST, even though the link may be so tenuous as to involve nothing more than a discussion of articles appearing in the paper.

The key role is played here by the supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST. Their task at this stage, particularly in relation to youth connected in one way or another with the Communist Party, is to push the idea of regroupment and of common socialist activity. In wider groupings, different subjects often associated with actions suggested or initiated by the YOUNG SOCIALIST, can be handled in equivalent fashion.

In the final analysis, the IBM groupings, whatever their differences in form and content, are not "front" organizations, but transitional links to the unorganized youth. This is true whether they have been initiated by former adherents of the CP's Labor Youth League, by the YSL Left Wing, by unaffiliated youth, or by youth of the Socialist Workers Party. In view of this fundamental fact, it would be unrealistic to try to convert the IBM groups into the revolutionary socialist movement through some organizational short cut. On the other hand much is to be gained from recognizing that they have genuine reason for existence, that the supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST highly value them, believe they perform a necessary and even indispensable function in the development of the youth movement as a whole, including the eventual formation of a revolutionary socialist youth organization, and are doing everything possible to encourage them and to help them in the successful achievement of their projects. In fact, the YOUNG SOCIALIST should stress the activities of these groups, including their discussions, for a considerable time to come.

The development of the YOUNG SOCIALIST grouping has given additional complexity to the problem of the conferences it organizes. In expanding the movement, the conferences are most valuable if they can be made as broad as possible. On the other hand, because of the growth of the cadre forces, need is now felt more acutely for consultation about problems of narrower interest. The contradictory character of the problem was not visualized in all its sharpness when the Labor Day Conference was first projected. Then the conference, which had been presented publicly as a meeting to discuss the possibility of forming a national youth organization, was postponed in response to a request from the field to allow more time for discussion and consultation. It is now clear that the coming national gathering must be of the supporters of the YOUNG SOCIALIST.

The postponement of the conference to the Christmas vacation period allows some five months additional discussion of the questions touched on in this memorandum. It is hoped that this discussion will not be permitted to cut across the intensive activities that are demanded of the YOUNG SOCIALIST grouping in this same period. The objective opportunities are great and it would be regrettable to miss up on any of them because of undue heat over issues that should be settled without too great difficulty in the absence of political differences. The discussion should be kept leisurely and within reason.

--passed unanimously by Editorial board
August 3, 1958

Draft Motion on Editorial Policy for the "Young Socialist", and
Proposed Agenda for the Conference of Young Socialist Supporters

A letter motivating the proposals:

"Editorial Board
Young Socialist

San Francisco
Oct. 2, 1958

Dear Comrades,

"Enclosed is a draft resolution on editorial policy and a proposed agenda for our coming conference. These were arrived at after consultation and agreement of Carl Feingold, Peter Allan, and Jim Robertson and is submitted in their names as well as mine.

"We feel that with the Memorandum /in this bulletin, document of 8-3-58/ as our main document for discussion and vote at the conference, with a statement in effect reaffirming past editorial policy and giving a mandate to the edit board to continue along the same lines, and with a motion of organizational form (not included at this time) we will have all the important material which the conference should act on.

"The 'Where We Stand' statement /in this bulletin, document of 6-29-58/, we feel, is not really necessary at this time so long as we have an editorial policy motion. The Perspectives statement /in this bulletin, document of 7-16-58/ issued earlier is included in the present Memorandum. Any fuller discussion of program could not be effectively organized for the coming conference and therefore it is well to leave this to a fuller discussion after the conference.

"We also had a discussion on the organization question and have passed on our ideas to Jim Robertson who will formulate them and submit them to the editorial board shortly. In essence we feel that all we need at this time is a national board of YS supporters, elected by the supporters and to which the editorial board will be responsible. A fuller organizational structure can be set up at a later date according to the needs of the revolutionary socialist youth.

"We hope that you will be able to take action on these matters as soon as possible as such action will help to clear up any confusion that may exist as to exactly what we plan to discuss and act on at the conference. Also such action will allow time for the formulation of any minority resolutions or amendments should any comrade desire to do so.

"Fraternally,

Tim W , editor"

The Motion on Editorial Policy and Conference Agenda submitted by Tim et al follow in lower case; the Editorial Board amendments adopted Oct. 19, 1958 are given in CAPITALS. (The amended version is presented to all YS supporters for their consideration. Additional proposals or amendments should be sent to the Editorial Board.)

Draft Motion on Editorial Policy for the "Young Socialist"

This Conference of Young Socialist supporters approves the general line of the editorial policies of the Young Socialist as they have been expressed on specific issues in its editorials. The major points of policy can be summarized as follows:

1. For independent political action as promoted at present through united socialist electoral opposition to the two capitalist parties and advocacy of a labor party by the union movement.
 1. FOR A LABOR PARTY BY THE UNION MOVEMENT. AS AN IMMEDIATE GOAL, FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICAL ACTION THROUGH UNITED AND INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST ELECTORAL OPPOSITION TO THE TWO CAPITALIST PARTIES.
2. Unconditional backing of the Negro peoples fight for full equality.
 2. UNCONDITIONAL BACKING OF THE FIGHT FOR FULL EQUALITY BY THE NEGRO PEOPLE AND OTHER MINORITIES.
3. Militant opposition to the entire witchhunt with special focus on the witchhunt on the campus and the political screening of youth in military service.
 3. Add CONNECTION WITH before "military".
4. Support to the colonial peoples struggles for freedom and independence. Opposition to imperialist intervention such as the U.S. course in Lebanon, Quemoy and elsewhere, and the French war in North Africa.
 4. SUPPORT TO THE COLONIAL PEOPLES STRUGGLES FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE. FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL IMPERIALIST TROOPS FROM FOREIGN SOIL.
5. Advocacy of a workers and farmers government as the only progressive alternative to the capitalist drive toward military dictatorship and fascism, a drive most recently illustrated by General deGaulle's placement in power in France.
 5. ADVOCACY OF WORKERS POWER AS THE ONLY PROGRESSIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE CAPITALIST DRIVE TOWARD MILITARY DISCTATORSHIP AND FASCISM, A DRIVE RECENTLY ILLUSTRATED BY GENERAL DEGAULLE'S PLACEMENT IN POWER IN FRANCE.
6. Support to the struggle of workers democracy in the Soviet Union and Peoples Democracies as manifested in the Polish and Hungarian workers revolutions. Opposition to attempts of imperialism to reestablish hegemony over this section of the world.
 6. SUPPORT TO STRUGGLES FOR WORKERS DEMOCRACY IN THE SOVIET UNION AND PEOPLES REPUBLICS SUCH AS THE POLISH AND HUNGARIAN WORKERS REVOLUTIONS. OPPOSITION TO ATTEMPTS OF IMPERIALISM TO REESTABLISH DOMINATION OVER THIS SECTION OF THE WORLD.

Draft Motion on Editorial Policy, cont.

7. Against further nuclear tests and the build-up of the U.S. war machine. The struggle against the capitalist war danger and for world peace is identical with the struggle for international socialism.

7. AGAINST FURTHER NUCLEAR TESTS AND THE BUILD-UP OF THE U.S. WAR MACHINE. THE SUCCESS OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE CAPITALIST WAR DANGER AND FOR WORLD PEACE DEPENDS UPON THE SUCCESS OF THE STRUGGLE FOR INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM.

Add: 8. FOR THE REGROUPMENT OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST YOUTH INTO AN INDEPENDENT, BROAD AND MILITANT NATIONAL YOUTH ORGANIZATION BASED ON THE EDITORIAL POLICY OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST.

The policy formulated in these positions should serve as a guide to the editors of the Young Socialist in the next period. It is understood that the editorial board will initiate an extended discussion with free and full participation by all YS supporters to develop a more precise and rounded program for American socialist youth.

* * * * *

Proposed Agenda for Conference of Young Socialist Supporters

1. National report on progress and relationship of forces.
1. NATIONAL PROGRESS AND RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES.

2. Circulation and financial report.
2. CIRCULATION AND FINANCES.

3. Area reports.

4. Presentation of "Memorandum on the Building of a Revolutionary Youth Movement!"
4. TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES.

5. Editorial policy motion.
5. EDITORIAL POLICY.

6. Organization of YS Supporters Motion.
6. ORGANIZATION OF YS SUPPORTERS.

7. Election of national board.

* * * * *

ANSWER TO MARTHA WOHLFORTH

Tom Leonard (Minneapolis)

Martha Wohlforth's document "ON BUILDING A REVOLUTIONARY YOUTH MOVEMENT," starts out with the proposition that it is our intention to build a national "socialist youth movement, open to all socialist minded youth but with principled revolutionary socialist politics."

Certainly no one could oppose the above proposition. Neither could anyone question comrade M's sincere effort to reach clarity on how this perspective will be realized in life. The unfortunate thing about the document is that it is admittedly an attempt at analysis and poses from comrade M's point of view only "tentative answers."

From the point of view of other socialist youth grappling with the same problem these "tentative answers" could be and are a source of confusion. Certainly it is necessary to achieve clarity on that aspect of the document which attempts to determine the character and role of the youth movement in relation to the adult revolutionary party -- the SWP.

One of the first observations made by comrade M. is that despite the merger of the YSL left wing caucus and the SWP youth "... there is no revolutionary organization on the youth scene." (page 2) She then critically compares the role of the SWP which is "basically programmatic" to that of the (non-revolutionary (?)) youth group which "... has taken another tactic; the whole political content of its approach has been boiled down to the slogan 'IBM' -- Independent, Broad and Militant." According to comrade M., "This is a qualitative difference in approach." (page 3)

With this we must disagree. The approach of the SWP and the revolutionary youth is essentially the same in that both seek to advance the struggle for socialism. The difference lies in the fact that tactically (organizationally) it was easier for the youth of various political tendencies to get together (regroup).

What are some of the reasons for this. First of all we have to observe that the youth did not go through the bitter and often fratricidal struggles which have divided the radical left for so many years. This is a legacy left them by the adult radical parties, a legacy which the SWP is seriously trying to overcome through its regroupment program.

Secondly, if we turn to the arena of contemporary capitalist society and analyze the role of youth in this society (their experience and lack of experience in relationship to the class struggle) we will be provided with the key not only to the form that a socialist youth movement will take, but also, more important, the program that will give this form historical validity. This is something to ponder.

Isn't it precisely the difference in experience that justifies the existence of a socialist youth organization alongside of the adult revolutionary party! Comrade M's preoccupation with point one above, and her failure to appreciate the significance of point two lead her to an incorrect, if only "tentative" conclusion on the independent role of the youth movement.

In her summary remarks titled "Independence of Revolutionary Youth" we find her quoting Lenin as follows, "... the youth must come to socialism in a different way, by other paths, and other forms, under other circumstances than their fathers ... unless they have complete independence the youth will be unable to train good socialists from their midst or to prepare themselves to lead socialism forward." She concludes from this that young revolutionaries need independence not as "youth in general but as revolutionists."

What we conclude is that comrade M. is for the ideological as well as the organizational independence of the socialist youth movement of America. However, if she had continued her quote from Lenin's review of the Youth International (1916) we would see that this certainly wasn't his conclusion. The sentence following comrade M's quote finds Lenin saying, "Incidentally this is why we must be decidedly in favor of the organizational independence of the Youth League..." (Lenin's emphasis)

Comrade M's failure to appreciate the difference between organizational and ideological independence then leads her to say, "... neither the Party nor the IBM clubs can provide the revolutionary youth with an adequate means for their theoretical development." Why? Because the Party is so full of experienced people (New York is full of National Committee members) that the youth do not have the opportunity to develop their own ideas. On the other hand the IBM clubs which comrade M characterizes as being anti-capitalist and pro-socialist are too inexperienced ("... so much broader than the revolutionary youth"). Her solution then is to search for some ideal independent existence where the quest for programmatic clarity could be conducted without considering the day to day problems which reality compels us to consider.

Lenin too stressed the importance of youth studying the basic doctrines of socialism, however he added, "I have replied to the question of what we must learn from the old science. I will not try to answer the question of how we must learn this. The answer is: only by inseparably linking up every step in the activities of the school, every step in training, education and tuition, with the struggle of the toilers against the exploiters." (Speech -- "The Tasks of the Youth League" Oct. 2, 1920)

What we conclude from the above is that Lenin was for a youth movement ideologically independent of capitalism and in this sense identified with the adult revolutionary party. However due to the changing form of the class struggle and the relationship of youth to these changing forms their experiences are different than preceding generations. Therefore they need the widest possible latitude (independence) to go through these different experiences in the process of acquiring socialist consciousness. In this sense we can speak of youth as being the future cadre of the adult Party, the necessity for which will remain as long as capitalism.

Comrade M's failure to examine the prospects for a socialist youth movement and its relationship to the adult revolutionary party historically leads her to the false assumption on page three that since there is not a qualitative difference between younger and older revolutionaries, therefore there is no reason for a qualitative difference in the organizational form of the youth group. Actually she is confronted with the same proposition as other young revolutionaries across the country. They are ready to accept as a result of their experiences, the necessity for a disciplined revolutionary party and on the

other hand they are dismayed by the apparent lack of discipline in the budding socialist youth movement. In this sense we can say that young revolutionaries are compelled to play a dual role.

Certainly one of our main tasks is to help formulate a program for a socialist youth movement based on conditions as they are now. We still have a class struggle. We are living in a period of crisis for world capitalism. One of the products of this crisis is the tremendous if aborted rebellion of youth against the economic and social restrictions imposed by capitalism. Certainly there is a lot to learn and a lot to say about the socialist solutions to these problems.

July 10, 1958

#

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by George Payne,
member of the Young Socialist Alliance,
former member of the Labor Youth League,
"Young Socialist" staff cartoonist and
Editorial Board member.

In determining the form our national youth organization should take I think we should study the relationship of American radical youth to the "adult" radical parties. It seems to me that this will show the need for an organization that has a worked-out program and an established political line, but which retains an essential flexibility and is able to present the newcomer with the chance of helping to shape the program, to alter it.

If we don't have a program and have only an empty, abstract position, we can't give ourselves concrete direction, can't provide ourselves with a moving dynamism. We must have the stimulus of immediate goals to give us a driving momentum. This requires a definite program.

Therefore I say we should look to the practical political work we should be doing in bona fide election campaigns, which, today, provide the only avenue for reaching out to and radicalizing American workers. In the present period failure to enter genuine state and national politics means isolation and sterility.

This means we must act with the "adult" socialist parties. Can we shape our program by following the Communist Party or the SP-SDF-Shachtmanite group? Obviously not, since these two groups, being basically alike (undemocratic internal regimes and support to capitalist politicians) are in a state of decay and disintegration. Their differences are merely that they serve different masters. A socialist group cannot survive today unless it comes out and openly campaigns for socialism, for otherwise it cannot attract new elements to the cause of the revolution, working for less meaning to work for it's own eventual demise.

By burying itself in "respectable" bourgeois organizations, sneaking out a/ now and then, it only aids the bourgeoisie by putting the labor and talents of of it's adherents at their service for their own rotten ends, thereby out-weighing any feeble reforms it might help succeed. In the end the aging adherents of the group will be lost amid the vast sea of the political machines and their own organization will dry up from the lack of fresh blood. The new elements an open, independent socialist group could attract will either remain apathetic or become firmly bourgeois-minded and corrupted.

I am not against alliances with labor fakers provided that such are purely temporary and conditional. Such are tactics. But the CP and SP present us with the prospect of going to work for bourgeois politicians not temporarily, but with daylight ahead only in some vague undetermined future time at best.

What about the Socialist Labor Party, which is independent and stands four-square for the Socialist Revolution, dismissing even the most niggardly reforms? In a purely formalistic sense, the SLP has a certain attractiveness about it. It was America's original Marxist party, being formed out of separate socialist workingmen's parties in the post-Civil War period. It claims to be America's third oldest party, these two factors giving it an honorable historical niche in the great American third-party - Labor party tradition (the U.S. has a third-party tradition. It has a two-party system, the ruling system).

Thanks to the degeneration of the CP and the SP-SDF, the disappearance of the La Follette movement, the ALP, Muste's American Workers Party and the Wallace Progressive Party, and the labor bureaucracy's abandonment of any socialist cloak to openly embrace capitalist politics, a party in the SLP's position, with its record and well-established legality, has had the chance to become America's bona-fide third party, its mass anti-capitalist Labor party and its Marxist vanguard party at the same time, the vehicle of American socialism. It could do this by recruiting the discontented and critical elements who would have no other place to go if they wanted to avoid the clutches of the GOP and Democrats.

But thanks to the negative side of DeLeon's heritage the SLP is ossified and moribund, isolated from the American laboring class because it feels a few crumbs given to U.S. workers while they are on the road to the revolution will completely buy them off. It seems that the U.S. proletariat should deserve some relief in the shape of reforms if it is struggling for socialism, but the SLP can't see that. It brutally adheres to the idea that any reform is treachery. In reality a working class so ground down by unemployment and poverty, completely stripped of the protection of any reforms, is more likely to take to the bottle and the church before joining the Socialist Industrial Unions of DeLeon's cardboard graphs, as the all-powerful employers would simply fire and starve to death any worker who dared to join the socialist union, while the employer's politicians would outlaw the union itself. Though the SLP says its unions would concern themselves with day-to-day problems in the shops, it is plainly against political work outside the shops, since, to be elected, even the most revolutionary candidate must offer his constituents some measure of relief if he expects to be elected. Why should destitute workers vote for someone who will merely shoot off his mouth in Congress ("propagandize") and not vote for bills that would help them? What kind of person is this, to be trusted to be constructive after the socialist revolution if he isn't proving his sincerity by fighting misery in the here and now?

Such is the tragedy of the SLP. As a union organizer, I know how the meager paternalism of a sweatshope company towards a \$36-a-week widow with children to feed will keep her from joining the most respectable union and turn her into a fighting scab during a strike.

And we can't remedy this by entering the SLP and changing it, since the party's sectarian sickness includes an air-tight internal dictatorship, with no one allowed to deviate an inch from the rigid DeLeonist line. Perhaps someday a break will come though, and if it should we ought to seize the chance and fuse the SLP into the radical movement, making it the party of American socialism if that is what is needed.

That leaves us with the Independent-Socialist party and the Socialist Workers Party. Now at last we have come upon sensible Marxist politics and viable programs. I think the Independent-Socialist party, in general, not without good exceptions, lacks a deep enough understanding of the Soviet bloc and its relation to the world socialist movement. But this is a fluid, loose grouping, and so one cannot expect a great deal in the way of ideology. That is the Socialist Worker's Party's responsibility in this endeavor. My criticism of the SWP is that it should open its doors more widely in taking in leaders and rank-and-filers of the Independent-Socialist party and other Left Socialist groupings, so that future socialist electoral campaigning will not be encumbered by dual parties doing the same job. I hold that the SWP should take in independent-minded anti-Stalinist, anti-reformist revolutionary-socialists who have not

become full Trotskyists. In other words, the SWP should use the approach of energetically going out of it's way to attract such people, instead of saying, "O.K., you can join, but Trotsky said.!".

To me the SWP could really stand a chance of becoming a Socialist WORKERS Party if it's composition were that indicated by the following suggested national committee:

The present SWP National Committee plus Milton Zazlow, Bert Cochran, Paul Sweezy, Leo Huberman, Carl Braden, George Stryker, Richard DeHaan, Vincent Hallinan, Muriel McAvoy, James Aronson and so on, including, in essence, those who reject class collaboration and are willing to champion a Labor party now, today.

The important thing for an independent youth movement to establish today is the need for building a mass Labor party and a Marxist vanguard now, today, all else being a waste of time.

Especially important is the establishment of a bona fide Marxist-Leninist worker's International in order to fight Stalinist corruption as well as capitalism. A purely national movement cannot fight Stalinism effectively. There is already a Fourth International, the international association of the Trotskyists, but this must be expanded and vastly strengthened before it can call itself a genuine fourth worker's Communist International on a par with the early Third International, the Comintern, before it was destroyed by Stalin's machine.

The Fourth International that I envision would include such groups as the "l'Union de la Gauche Socialiste" in France, a new united socialist party, the leftists of the Independent Labor Party in England, and, were it legal, the P.O.U.M. in Spain (United Marxist Workers Party), and so forth around the world.

It would, as soon as it had the necessary strength, set up it's own radio station for regular propaganda-educational purposes. With the world having been made so radio-aware today, the value of Radio Moscow, Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America, Radio Cairo, etc. being well known, a "Radio Revolutionary Workers of the World" would have a tremendous effect, limited though it would be, and certainly no competitor, word for word, with the radios mentioned above. But I think, even if it could only broadcast a few hours every week, with the correct political line and approach, it would have a big impact among the leftist-minded peoples of Western Europe and the colonial world. Naturally it would have to play folk music and have some variety in order to have broad appeal, but, by truthful reporting, giving the real story through the smoke-screens of biased official news slanting, and giving genuinely helpful suggestions to the workers in their struggles and problems, it would soon gain a tremendous prestige and reputation far outweighing it's supporter's lack of funds. It's basic principles would be: Truth and Service to the Exploited of the World.

Of course, it is doubtful that any country in Western Europe would allow such a revolutionary broadcasting station on it's soil: the Stalinists, Social Democrats and bourgeoisie would quickly combine to stamp it out. I was hoping that (back in 1956) the disillusionment with Stalinism following the Hungarian uprising among the Reds of northern Italy would see the tiny "independent" republic of San Marino become the first truly democratic Red Republic in the world since the death of Lenin, as the Communists held a majority in the San Marino political division then, and such a radio could be set up there, the

surrounding Italian Communist strength protecting the tiny country's "sovereignty". But the weakening of Stalinism of that period saw the San Marino anti-Stalinist element among the Communists go over to the Christian Democrats instead of advancing on to Bolshevism, thereby strengthening capitalism and Stalinism both. Stalinism has been called the "Second mobilization of Menshevism", and it is very apt. To go in any other direction than Leninist-Bolshevism when breaking with Stalinism is to but strengthen all the systems of exploitation, capitalist, collectivist-bureaucratic, or what have you.

However, in the movement to create a real worker's Fourth International, to make the present Trotskyist framework of an international organization into a Left Socialist, or, if you will, into a revolutionary-democratic Communist organization, the consequences might see some country move further to the Left, and this could become the country that would tolerate such a radio. The combination of all of the Left voters of France into a democratic labor party might do this; a combination into one single democratic party of the Communists, the Nenni Socialists and the left-wing Catholics and Social Democrats in Italy might make this possible, or the democratization of Yugoslavia, etc.

Such are a few thoughts of mine that I thought I would throw out for purposes of stimulating our imaginations.

August 17, 1958

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THE NECROPHILIACS

By Richard DeHaan

The first question which an independent socialist should ask himself about the SWP-originated youth movement concerns his rôle vis-à-vis that party. It is unclear just what the purpose of the ideological confrontation currently being attempted is-- as it is unclear how the actual political development of the IBM movement should be related to that of the SWP, if any. The present discussion constitutes a mere extension of the internal party debate to a slightly larger arena, although there remain large segments of it open only to adepts of the faith. This being so, what are its objectives? Does the party wish tactical advice? In possession of the truth, it hardly requires it. Does it wish our opinion of itself? I should have thought that our opinion was already expressed in the fact that we are outside the party, viz., that it should drop dead. The first problem, then, is how independent socialists can intelligently engage in a dialogue, only half of which is visible to the naked eye.

The second problem has to do with the SWP's commission of the ancient dialectical fallacy of confusing genesis with evolution. It has succumbed to the charges of our enemies in believing, or pretending to believe, that, because the SWP was instrumental in initiating this movement, it is therefore similarly responsible for its development. I am told that there are areas of the country in which the IBM movement receives the unqualified backing of the SWP. Within my experience, however, the party's relation to the youth movement has ranged from toleration through rivalry to sabotage. In addition, the organizational incompetence of many of its self-styled "Bolsheviks" and leaders of the proletariat in our movement is so pathetic as to cause one to wonder whether they should be allowed to walk the streets unaccompanied.

The party has in general availed itself of one of two courses of action in its fractional work within the IBM movement. The first is a policy of picking off singly whatever individuals it can lay hands on, preferably rerouting their activities into party assignments, but if necessary allowing them to retain part-time commitments to the youth. During the early months of our movement, the party recruited, under this policy, a sizable number of our lukewarm youth contacts who to this day have difficulty in distinguishing between Trotskyism and a hole in the ground. Because there was a question as to whether this policy was doing more damage to the SWP than to the youth, it has recently turned to the second course. This policy is one of instructing such activists as it has allowed to remain in the youth movement to push the party line there for all it may be worth. It is expected that this policy will step by step move the youth movement en masse to the truth, there at last to find its home in the Una Sancta Ecclesia.

It is to this policy that I address myself in what follows. While party policy seems to be unified in this respect, the two areas of the periphery from which my information is drawn are those of the youth movement and the New York united ticket. It is especially in these two areas where a curious parallelism of party policy can be noted.

When faced with this line, as YSF readers have been unremittingly, one is first caused to wonder why a party of such theoretical poverty and galloping senescence makes bold to teach, rather than to learn. In YSF #3, for example, virtually every article is unstinting in the praise which the authors generously heap upon themselves as representatives of the true proletarian vanguard. Now, what is this policy of "revolutionary socialism" over which they are all so rapturous?

As expressed by one of its more moderate spokesmen, James P. Cannon, it is the regroupment of "the scattered socialist forces...together in one common party organization." But what was only implicit in Cannon's remarks, the notion that this

old ALP rank and file have shown themselves far advanced over their self-styled leaders in their disinclination to get involved in a repetition of the ALP. Comrade Stryker and I have had comments from literally dozens of these people endorsing our policies in attempting to preserve this as a truly united and democratic party.

The irony of these tactics is that, far from appeasing these people, they even tend to exclude them. Former top ALP leaders have stayed out of this ticket because of its close identification with those who did the hatchet job for the CP on the old ALP. In addition, many independents, such as Dr. Otto Nathan and Conrad Lynn, have steered clear because of the Stalinoid atmosphere. This is not to mention the many left-wing social democrats, third campers, pacifists and other independent socialists who are being frozen out by the SWP's conciliationist policies. Above all, however, the lack of a clear position on civil liberties, the Soviet Union, etc., renders it extremely difficult to appeal to innocents becoming interested in socialism for the first time. This absolutely fundamental task of the movement is being short-changed in favor of pacifying a pitifully few Stalinoids. The ticket has been subjected to attacks by both capitalist and socialist press for its silence on these crucial issues--for example, Hungary--, and has not had a word to say in its defense.

The SWP conceives its amours with the corpse of the CP to be still in the negotiation stage. It therefore refuses to let the "bloc" become a democratic organ, despite the demands of the rank and file. Consequently, when an independent majority could be got for decent actions, the SWP demurs for fear of driving out the Stalinoid minority. It systematically ignores the facts of recent political life: (1) that the CP can no longer control its periphery, as demonstrated in the Flynn-Cowley campaign and at the June conference, (2) that there is no real danger of a split anyway, since the minority swallowed a much more bitter pill at that conference, a repudiation by the vast majority, and still came back, (3) that there is not enough left to raid, and (4) that it is largely itself and the YSA which constitutes the backbone of the actual campaign work.

Because the SWP and the Stalinoids consider this party to be fundamentally a bloc between themselves rather than the establishment of a truly independent socialist party, they have restricted the policy machinery to themselves. Platform, candidacies, finances, etc., have all been decided by negotiation between the SWP and ALP tops, usually without the matter ever being submitted to the State Committee. Just this week, for example, the SWP united with the ALP to beat down a proposal to that committee by Comrade Stryker and myself that major policy statements and decisions be approved by it.

Now, this conciliationist line is being carried over fundamentally intact to the youth movement. All criticism of the line in the youth is countered by magisterial pronouncements that the ticket is of too great importance to be carping about. Here, too, a truly democratic structure has yet to be erected in place of the "bloc." Here, too, the conceit is harbored that a new movement can be built by reshuffling the remains of the SWP and CP--although in this case, they are the second-generation brats thereof in whom hope for the future of socialism is lodged. Here, too, a Stalinoid minority (but no other kind) can blackmail the majority. Here, too, the SWP majorityites line is negotiation with the corpse of the CP. That this line is being exported to the youth movement is evident from the policies which the SWP majorityites have been pushing for the forthcoming conference. Just as in the I-SP, while they do not particularly desire to exclude third camp and independent socialists, they are nevertheless ready to sacrifice them if that be required in order to get into bed with the LYLers. This is made clear above all by Comrade Lambrecht's line on the defense of the Soviet Union: an insistence that this one aspect of the total SWP position be singled out as a minimal condition of participation in the new national movement.

To exclude independent socialists from such a movement, to make the IBM movement an SWP tail, to follow the SWP in its disastrous course of organizational unity with the remains of the CP--this way lies madness and a repetition of the tragedies which have already reduced the movement to impotence. In a youth movement left free to criticize, in one dedicated wholeheartedly to the fight for socialism everywhere, in one uncompromised by suicidal liaisons with the discredited Fosterite hangers-on, in one oriented not towards negotiation but towards recruitment--here is the future of the socialist youth movement.

I have not meant to impugn, in what was said above, the sincerity and good will of the many individual SWP members who have supported the youth movement and the cause of independent socialism to the full extent of their abilities. Indeed, it is only the fact that so very many of them have forthrightly expressed themselves as opposed to the present policies of their leaders that gives me any hope for this alliance.

As SWP members, our SWP youth comrades are concerned with their party's fortunes. It so happens that the fortunes of the party at the present are tied, through the actions of its leaders, to the prospect of leading the Fosterite hangers-on into the paths of righteousness, i.e. of capturing them for the party. That is their business, and it may even be a legitimate project for them. But they can hardly expect others to share their pedagogical ambitions. What is illegitimate is the attempt to make the youth movement an offspring of this marriage of convenience. Independent socialists will fight that policy to its death.

New York City
6 August 1958

IBM AND THE UNITED SOCIALIST TICKET

by Bert Deck

Sept. 6, 1958

THE NECROPHILIACS, by Richard DeHaan, is a rejection of the current process of socialist regroupment. He describes it as a "marriage of convenience" between the SWP and the "stalinoids", which in effect freezes out "independent socialists." He asserts that this policy has been forced on the youth movement and this has brought the youth movement to the brink of disaster.

To understand properly the process of socialist regroupment now taking place among adult radicals is, I believe, of decisive importance for the formulation of a correct policy for the youth movement. We have all agreed that we are in favor of the organizational independence of the youth movement vis a vis the adult organizations. But that concept should not be translated into the mistaken idea that a socialist youth movement can grow in isolation from and unrelated to the developments in the adult arena. It merely means that we must independently relate ourselves to the general process of socialist development; but definitely relate ourselves we must. As long as the American radical movement remains in the state of primitive disorganization, lacking significant influence on the political scene, the possibilities for the growth of a socialist youth movement will remain painfully circumscribed. Therefore it behooves us to aid by whatever means available to us this promising new revival and regroupment "of the scattered socialist forces." As the adult movement becomes more attractive on the political scene, our movement will gain in its attractiveness to youth.

To regroup in a new movement those previously associated with mutually hostile organizations and independents who previously found it impossible to function for any period in any of the groups or tendencies is an extremely difficult undertaking. Apart from the very real political differences which exist there remains the dead weight obstacle of ancient suspicions and prejudices. Added to these problems are the attacks from the sectarian groups who justifiably fear the emergence of a new movement.

Former ALP'ers are being attacked for capitulating to "anti-Soviet Trotskyism." SWP'ers are being attacked for capitulating to "Stalinism" and independents are being attacked for capitulating to both.

All of these factors combine to exert the greatest pressure on and promote the maximum tension between the individuals now engaged in the momentous task of forging a new movement.

* * *

Comrade DeHaan seems to imply that every effort to seek the maximum unity among the various forces involved in the NY State Ticket constitutes conciliation to what he terms "a stalinoid minority." Apart from the fact that he hurls this epithet at what in reality is the majority opinion involved in this united electoral activity, he does not answer the really important question: should we endanger the unity of the bloc which has been assembled by making it a principle that an SWP candidate appears on the ballot?

While it certainly is not necessary for us to formulate an attitude toward every incidental inner development in the United Independent-Socialist Ticket, we should not have our official policy of support vitiated by misconceptions about the ticket.

For example I think it would be unfortunate if anyone accepted the charge that the ticket is an undemocratic bloc. This "bloc" is probably unprecedented for an American socialist movement in its broadness and non-exclusiveness. Rather than charge the ticket with excluding unnamed left-social democrats, third campers etc., it would be more fitting to criticize the latter for rejecting the numerous invitations by the ticket for them to participate in this new venture on all levels of policy making and action.

In this regard the problem facing the United Ticket is comparable to the one facing our IBM movement. Once having decided that an IBM movement or a United Ticket is a necessary step to further socialism in America; once having issued "calls" to all to participate in this necessary task; nothing remains but to go ahead with the projected jobs with all those who are now ready to undertake them. It is fruitless and even destructive to at length mope over the initial absence of this or that individual or group. It is necessary always to begin with what we have, with the conviction that the correctness of our policy will attract in the long run all who are capable of making a real contribution to the revival of American socialism. The absence of this or that tendency, rather than being a comment on the inadequacy of the ticket or the IBM movement, is in reality more a comment on the viability of these tendencies themselves.

Anything less than a firm determination to move with what we have already assembled, means to slip back into a non-productive complaint about the reality.

Comrade DeHaan remains a supporter of the United Independent-Socialist Ticket and that is all to the good. But misrepresentations of the real processes at work in the United Ticket can not serve the cause which he supports. For anyone forced to use THE NECROPHILIACS as the only source of information about the ticket the impression would be to misconstrue the ticket as being composed of invidious demagogues hell bent on destroying democracy and finding their main pleasure in selling out principles. The reality is that the leaders of the ticket have responsibly avoided the pitfalls of premature struggles over secondary issues, and have left for open discussion and later resolution all important political questions where a minimum of agreement cannot presently be reached. I think they have shown a fine example of how not to let personal impatience get in the way of a significant step forward for the whole movement.

It would seem that Comrade DeHaan feels that a policy which seeks to build movements which specifically include the former members of the American Labor Party, or Communist Party, or LYL, etc., constitutes conciliation to "Stalinoids." For the youth movement he colorfully refers to it as getting into bed with LYL'ers. I for one believe that some very fine human material was assembled in the CP, ALP, LYL etc., and it is only political wisdom to seek the fullest cooperation with all those ready to act now on necessary projects. By assembling the largest number possible of radicals in the IBM movement we can only increase our effectiveness in the recruitment of people new to socialism. Not only are the larger numbers more attractive but the

multitude of opinions in the socialist movement which previously confused a new person can now serve to convince him that the movement is democratic and vigorous. But whatever one thinks of this policy, I cannot understand why Comrade DeHaan must discuss it as a diabolic plot of the "SWP tops." Wasn't this the fully discussed and agreed upon policy decided by the youth themselves?

Wasn't this the basis for Comrade DeHaan's answer to the appeal appearing in Political Affairs from "12 unaffiliated youth?" Wasn't this agreed upon policy the basis for our endorsement of Comrade DeHaan's participation in the leading body of the United Independent-Socialist Ticket, whose composition was no secret? My point is that the policy can be discussed pro and con on its merits as it affects our movement. But certainly there is no profit discussing it in terms of the alleged machinations of other organizations. Comrade DeHaan, I hope, would not contend that some policy toward the LYL is secretly being foisted on the IBM movement from outside. Suffice it to say that the policy has been and will continue to be fully discussed in our movement and all views have been and will continue to be heard.

Comrade DeHaan sums up his proposed policy in the peculiar phrase: a movement "oriented not towards negotiation but towards recruitment."

I assume that by "negotiation" he refers to our various proposals (all of which he supported) to the YSL, Libertarians, YPSL, former LYL'ers, for common action or fusion. I think that by and large these steps were correct; but in any case they did not conflict with our street meetings, distributions at campuses, etc., all designed to bring us into contact with youth not previously associated with any political tendency. So it is not clear just what is new in his proposal, just what specific changes he wishes to make in our policy. He obviously would prefer that others than those now present would engage in the building of an independent youth movement or a united socialist ticket, but he does not seem to be able to propose a way of getting them to do it.

Meanwhile the job will be done by those prepared to do it. We will reserve our main criticism for those not prepared to do it. We will build a movement for others to join later on.

The undemocratic procedures of the committee which prompt this action would require pages to catalogue and volumes to analyze. The character of the party's internal life was perhaps best illustrated in the recent decision to entrust major policy determination to two or three self-appointed negotiators, and to refuse to require that such matters be approved by this committee, nominally the party's governing body. An equally clear example is that of the party platform which has just been finally adopted--and which is the immediate cause of the present action. At no time from its initial drafting several months ago, through the June conference, down to its adoption last week, was this platform ever subjected, or allowed to be subjected, to amendment by anyone other than its original authors. In solidarity with a pitifully few comrades, I have fought week after week in this committee against these practices and for basic socialist principles. We have been as regularly rebuffed, and I see no reason to prolong the mutual exasperation.

It has been regularly stated that the committee's policies are necessarily democratic, since they result from negotiation on the basis of minimal agreement. The concept of minimal agreement as practised by this committee is in fact a patently undemocratic ruse. It is so, in the first place, because the concept cannot apply to an action such as an election campaign which involves a necessary minimum of policy. Unlike such groups as the American Forum and the YSA, which can take action only on those issues on which there is agreement, an electoral party is obliged to act whether there is agreement or not--and in the case of the I-SP, there has most often not been.

Secondly, "minimal agreement" as practised by this committee is a ruse because it functions as a closed corporation. The committee conceives the I-SP as primarily a bloc of two constituents, viz. the SWP and the former ALP. The reality of the situation is very nearly the contrary. The political exigencies of this generally-held conception of the I-SP have driven the SWP to disastrous compromise of socialist principles. Seldom in recent years has the SWP enjoyed such a high degree of consensus as it does now in opposition to the policies of its present leadership. Having sold out his own membership, Comrade Weiss then proceeded to bargain away the rights of independent socialists. "Minimal agreement" has without exception meant the agreement of Comrades Weiss and Goldin. It is generally admitted that, while one ideological grouping has contributed something like 90% of the support to this campaign, it occupies fewer than 10% of the seats in this committee, and exercises far less than 10% of the influence. Meanwhile the ALP group exercises a good 90% of the policy power on the basis of its 10% participation. We thus have a situation in which the "minimal agreement" of the two committee members who probably represent between them the smallest number of adherents binds the whole party.

The Young Socialist Alliance, which is one of the major constituents of this campaign, recently memorialized this committee on the issue of candidacies. This resolution, endorsed unanimously by the YSA and the Young Socialist Editorial Board, barely received a polite reading from the committee. Where do independent socialists get into this "minimal agreement"? What good is a "minimal agreement" which excludes the only viable sections of the party? Why cannot democracy and majority rule replace negotiation and bloc politics, and the self-appointed negotiators be reduced to their proper rôle of a single vote? Our "minimal agreement" was expressed on this and many other issues; why was it ignored by a committee which avowedly has as its sole basis of policy the concept of "minimal agreement"?

Finally, an independent socialist cannot give his full support to a party which lacks an independent political character, and specifically one which does not take a clear stand on democracy everywhere. The SWP, which originally called for such a stand, has now collapsed, leaving the field to the discredited disciples of international "know-nothingism." The platform and ideological character of the I-SP

do not differ materially from those of the CP and ALP in years past. The platform carries not the least word suggesting anything but elation over the barbarous Stalinist policies of past and present. It cannot go even as far as the stand taken by the Daily Worker and the National Guardian on the Hungarian Revolution and its aftermath!

Socialists, who cherish democracy, are being asked to support a party which fosters democracy neither internally nor as policy. I have no choice but to withdraw from active participation in the I-SP, to vote for its candidates solely as a protest vote, and to advise other independent socialists to do likewise.

III

SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY RICHARD DeHAAN ON EDITORIAL BOARD ACTION OF 2 SEPTEMBER

The proper attitude of the Editorial Board towards my resignation from the I-SP Campaign Committee should have been either to take no action at all, or to have utilized the resignation to strengthen its rôle in the I-SP. This latter approach has been the one chosen by many sympathetic comrades in and around the I-SP; to take me at my word when I say that independent and democratic forces can have more influence out of the leadership than in it. My own movement, on the contrary, decides that it must go out of its way to repudiate the least breath of opposition to this unholy alliance. At the very least, the Board should have qualified its stand by reference to the admitted truth of my charges and by an expression of regret that its wishes have been ignored by the I-SP. Instead, it issues a blanket repudiation based on an ambiguous document "reserving the right of criticism." It is, indeed, being reserved; it should be exercised. The Board substituted its tactical judgment for mine, and refused to take seriously my judgment--based on six month's work with the committee--that it could have no voice so long as it remains a part of the suicidal Weiss-Goldin bloc. It ignored the fact that one of my major reasons for walking out was the repudiation by the committee of a policy (dealing with candidacies) which the Board itself voted unanimously and expected me to implement. As such, the Board's action surreptitiously reverses that unanimous declaration--a stand which certain comrades have never been overjoyed about anyway, despite their having voted for it. From its own point of view, then, the Board has not the slightest reason to repudiate my action and every reason to exploit the healthy differences which were its cause. This being so, I can only conclude once again that this combination of tactical suicide and principled miasma does not arise out of our movement and its needs, but rather has about it the unmistakable odor of party line.

IV

As an example of the type of policy for which I have been fighting in the I-SP, I reproduce here a memorandum sent by me to the Platform Committee on 19 August. As stated above, these suggestions were completely ignored in the platform.

It seems desirable at this time to sum up discussion which has been proceeding in our movement for the past several months concerning our program on civil liberties and democracy throughout the world. Reference should first be made to the excellent statements on civil liberties in the Soviet bloc made by our senatorial candidate and others associated with the I-SP. They are these statements, together with the promptness and persistency with which these questions are being raised by others, which indicate the necessity of our taking a clear stand on them in our platform.

As long ago as early April, I suggested in a letter--written in response to solicitation by the then-Organizing Committee--certain planks designed both for the Conference Call and for the platform. The necessity of such planks was reaffirmed at the Conference by numerous suggestions to the Platform Committee from those attending, both in the Committee's hearings and in the floor discussion of the draft platform.

The formulation which I have suggested on these issues is as follows:

"We support the struggles of the working people of all races and nations against their oppressors. We stand in unalterable opposition to imperialist policies on the part of any nation on earth and uphold the right of all people to self-determination.

"We reject the notion that socialism can be imposed against the will of the people. We assert that there is a necessary and intimate relation between socialism and democracy. Real freedom can come only with socialism; but socialism can never come without real freedom. Socialism does not transcend or outmode the liberal freedoms; on the contrary, it realizes and completes them. It is therefore necessary to insist on the unqualified defense of these rights at all times and in all places."

The thought expressed in the last two sentences I consider especially necessary for any American socialist platform. Another adequate formulation of this idea, somewhat more brief, was contained in the SWP's Guardian ad of 3 February, viz.:

"Socialism stands for the deepening and extension of democracy...For political freedom throughout the Soviet bloc."

Whatever the particular formulation may be, the taking of a strong stand on this question is absolutely necessary. It is so, in the first place, because the issue cannot be dodged. Already both socialist and capitalist press have attacked our lack of any stand on democracy in the Soviet bloc, and we have had literally not a word to answer in our defense. Far from being an issue extraneous to this campaign, it is in fact the first question raised by the electorate wherever we have encountered it. Secondly, a stand is required in order to make this a truly united party which can include independent socialists such as myself. Thirdly, and most important, it is required in order to wage an effective campaign among the people of this state. If our task is to carry the message of socialism to the masses of workers, Negroes and oppressed, rather than to appeal exclusively to those already connected in some way with the socialist movement, then it can be done only if we go to them with clean hands. The people will not listen to an appeal for intensified democracy in this country from those who do not support democracy elsewhere. We must be able to prove our fervent adherence to democratic principles by reference to concrete planks in our platform. If we cannot do so, our whole program is doomed to be discredited by an electorate which has not yet learned the sophistic lesson of international "know-nothingism." Support of democracy universally is, and must be, the most basic of socialist policies.

I take this opportunity to remind you of the many suggestions along these lines which have been made to you in the past several months, and particularly at the June Conference. I trust that, as a democratic body, you will not ignore them.

Fraternally,

/s/ Richard DeHaan

On 12 August, I proposed to the YSA membership that a general discussion of these questions--specifically, one "of the SWP's rôle in our movement"--be held immediately. When this proposal was ignored, I suggested a debate between myself and Bert Deck on my charge that the SWP had sabotaged the YSA. The history of this and similar challenges is recounted in the following document. It is especially significant, I think, that the SWP has never publicly defended its present policies, and has systematically side-stepped all invitations for it to do so. What it has done is to invoke discipline on those of its members in the YSA who might otherwise step out of line in questioning the party's tactics. This is not the behavior of a party confident of the correctness of its line.

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12 September 1958

Mr. Tom Kerry
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place
New York City, New York

Dear Comrade:

It has been called to my attention that you have expressed yourself as being anxious for an opportunity to answer the "slander" which I and others have allegedly been directing at the SWP.

As long ago as 15 June 1958, I challenged Murry Weiss to debate the SWP's tactics in the I-SP--an offer which he declined. I subsequently challenged Bert Deck to debate this question as part of my general analysis of the rôle of the SWP in the YSA. This proposal was defeated by the votes of SWP members on the YSA Executive Committee. George Stryker has also challenged Murry Weiss to debate this issue, and has offered him a platform before the Long Island I-SP Committee in exchange for a chance to address the New York SWP membership. None of these challenges have been accepted, and I am therefore understandably skeptical about the intention with which you raise the question now.

However, I am still ready to debate any or all of these issues at any time. Now, as for some months past, it would give me the greatest pleasure to meet you or any other SWP spokesman in debate on your party's disgraceful abandonment of principle in the I-SP, the YSA and elsewhere.

I therefore trust that any wishes you may have in this regard will in the future be transmitted to me directly.

With fraternal greetings,

/s/ Richard DeHaan

Finally, something should be said of Bert Deck's document, "IBM and the United Socialist Ticket," which is directed nominally against my "Necrophiliacs." I do not see that Comrade Deck anywhere meets my arguments. There is no mention of the charges (raised by others in addition to me) of SWP sabotage, no mention of SWP members operating in the youth movement as disciplined agents without the freedom

to engage openly in our movement's politics, no mention of the charges of undemocratic procedures in the I-SP. The charge of capitulation is mentioned (with some distortion of fact), but only to be evaded. Bert pictures the SWP's various regroupment gambits as Frankenstein monsters which, having once been created, can no longer be affected by deliberate political intervention. The fact that the original policy was freely determined in the YSA does not legitimately exclude, as Bert suggests it should, all future criticism of the SWP or anyone else for its distortion of the original intention. One of our most important functions as an independent youth movement is to criticize the adult movement when it errs.

Furthermore, it is not the absence of independent and democratic socialist tendencies in the I-SP which I am lamenting; it is the fact that those which are there are being accorded no voice in the party.

I also find it a source of some amazement to read that Bert considers internal democracy and the defense of democracy throughout the world to be "secondary issues."

The futility of importing these particular united front tactics into the youth movement should now be especially evident when, as of this writing, the YSA has just lost its last captive Stalinoid. I doubt that this comrade would ever have departed had she known the extent to which her presence determined the policy of the entire IBM movement.

13 September 1958
New York City

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST
114 Second Avenue
New York City 3, New York
GRamercy 5-7920

NEW YORK CITY, June 20 -- The Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation last night cooperated with the ultra-rightist National Review against other socialists to keep a spokesman for the anti-labor extremist magazine off a socialist platform. The Young Socialist, a monthly published at 114 Second Avenue, Manhattan, had scheduled a debate between its editor, Tim Wohlforth, and William Rusher, publisher of the National Review, on the subject: "Which Road for France: Gaullism or Socialism?" Rusher backed out of the debate at the last minute with the endorsement of the SP-SDF's state chairman and the editor of the Socialist Call.

Rusher sent a telegram to the meeting at the Great Northern Hotel reading: "I accepted the invitation of the Young Socialist to debate this evening under the impression that it was an organization approved by the Socialist Party, with which I violently disagree but whose good faith I have never questioned. I have now been advised, however, by Samuel Friedman, the state chairman of the Socialist Party, and Herman Singer, the editor of the Socialist Call, that the Young Socialist is not approved by the Socialist Party and in fact has no greater claim to the name 'socialist' than the Communist Party or the National Socialists of Germany. Accordingly, rather than participate in a debate that cannot be depended upon to meet the ordinary tests of intellectual candor, I regretfully decline to debate at all. William Rusher."

Mr. Friedman verified by telephone that Mr. Rusher had quoted him correctly, and that he believed the Young Socialist misused the term in the same way as have the Communists and Nazis.

The debate was noethless held, with a chair on the platform left open for any who cared to defend the Gaullist point of view.

The meeting's chairman, Richard DeHaan, member of the Young Socialist Editorial Board and chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance, read a statement including the following: "On May 28, more than three weeks ago, James Robertson, Business Manager of the Young Socialist, and myself, met with Mr. Rusher in his office, subsequent to a telephomed proposal from us for this debate. Virtually the first question Rusher asked of us - before he was willing to discuss anything connected with the proposed debate - had to do with the political character of the Young Socialist and the Young Socialist Alliance. We replied with a brief description, stating specifically that neither the paper nor the organization had any connection with any political party or adult group. Rusher asked specifically whether we had any connection with the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. I specifically replied that we did not. Indeed, so emphatic was my reply, that Rusher felt obliged to comment on it. When I spoke to Rusher on the phone a little while ago, he could not manage to recall this incident."

Prof. Saul K. Padover, scheduled moderator of the debate, also absented himself after consultation with Mr. Rusher.

Preceding Mr. Wohlforth's lecture, George Stryker, a recently-resigned leader of the SP-SDF, addressed the audience of approximately 150 on what he termed the corruption and lack of democracy in the party, and itsties with the Gaullist elements of the French Socialist Party.

Mr. Norman Thomas
c/o Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation
303 Fourth Avenue
New York City, New York

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST
114 Second Avenue
New York City, 3, New York
GRamercy 5-7920

23 June 1958

Dear Comrade Thomas:

This is an official protest to your party concerning certain actions of two of its leaders. We request an official reply and explanation of these actions.

The Young Socialist is the only nationwide socialist youth newspaper and the expression of some fifteen socialist clubs throughout this country and Canada which are independent of any adult group and admit all socialists (including SP-SDF members) to their ranks without qualification. The Young Socialist recently organized a debate between its editor, Tim Wohlforth, and William Rusher, publisher of the ultra-rightist National Review, on the subject: "What Road Out for France: Gaullism or Socialism?" The enclosed leaflet will explain the details of this meeting.

At the last minute, we received a telegram from Rusher reading as follows: "I accepted the invitation of the Young Socialist to debate this evening under the impression that it was an organization approved by the Socialist Party, with which I violently disagree, but whose good faith I have never questioned. I have now been advised, however, by Samuel Friedman, the state chairman of the Socialist Party, and Herman Singer, the editor of the Socialist Call, that the Young Socialist is not approved by the Socialist Party and in fact has no greater claim to the name 'socialist' than the Communist Party or the National Socialists of Germany. Accordingly, rather than participate in a debate that cannot be depended upon to meet the ordinary tests of intellectual candor, I regretfully decline to debate at all. William Rusher."

Friedman verified to a reporter by telephone that Rusher had quoted him correctly, and that he believed the Young Socialist misused the term in the same way as have the Communists and Nazis. He further stated that the Young Socialist is "a Trotskyite front," and that such groups can legitimately be compared to fascists.

Our first objection is that Friedman's statements were made in complete ignorance of the facts. There is the obvious smear of "Trotskyite front," for which neither he nor anyone else can provide a shred of evidence. Furthermore, Friedman and Singer apparently did not take the trouble to check the correctness of Rusher's statements. The meeting chairman, Richard DeHaan, who is a member of the Young Socialist Editorial Board and Chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance, read a statement from the platform including the following:

"On May 28, more than three weeks ago, James Robertson, Business Manager of the Young Socialist, and I, met with Mr. Rusher in his office, subsequent to a telephoned proposal from us for this debate. Virtually the first question Rusher asked of us--before he was willing to discuss anything connected with the debate--had to do with the political character of the Young Socialist and the Young Socialist Alliance. We replied with a brief description, stating specifically that neither the paper nor the organization had any connection with any political party or adult socialist group. Rusher asked specifically whether we had any connection with the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation. I specifically replied that we did not. Indeed, so emphatic was my reply, that Rusher felt obliged to comment on it. When I spoke to him on the phone a little while ago, he could not manage to recall this incident."

Second, and most important, we protest the absolute disintegration of socialist morality from which these actions stem. We have been subjected to similar McCarthyite attack from SP-SDF leaders in the past, and have come to expect it. We would never expect, however, any socialist to unite with virtual fascists in protecting the latter against debating on a socialist platform. Friedman and Singer's actions in cooperating with Rusher to "finger" fellow socialists is the very nadir of socialist morality. The justification which Friedman gives seems to be a revival of the justly-discredited Communist theory of "social fascism," whereby everyone who disagrees with one is promptly labelled an objective ally of fascism. And, also precisely like the Communists, it does not bother Friedman and Singer one whit to unite with the class enemy in fingering their fellow socialists.

Finally, the whole incident takes on added relevance in the light of the subject of the debate itself. Just as deGaulle turns to his Mollet and Lacoste for advice and aid in combatting socialism, so the American Gaullists turn to their Mollet and Lacoste for the same purposes.

Friedman and Singer's actions would seem to indicate that they are no longer fit to bear the name "socialist," and, in view of their desire to frustrate the fundamental democratic principles of the free exchange of ideas and confrontation of opinion, one is compelled in addition to wonder even about their liberalism.

We ask an explanation of these actions because we can hardly believe that the great traditions of your party have degenerated to this level.

Fraternally,
Tim Wohlforth, Managing Editor
For the Editorial Board.

Dear Mr. Wohlforth:

If you want an official reply and explanation of the actions of Messrs. Friedman and Singer, you must address your request to the proper authorities, not to myself. I am not even a member of the executive committee and if I were I would not be a pope or try to emulate Lenin or Trotsky or any other communist in control of the Party.

Sincerely yours,
Norman Thomas

Dear Tim Wohlforth:

Acknowledgement is made of the receipt of your letter of June 29, 1958.

Thank you for communicating with us.

Irwin Suall
National Secretary, Socialist
Party-Social Democratic Federation

August 3, 1958

National Chairman, Young Peoples' Socialist League
303 Fourth Avenue
New York City

National Chairman, Young Socialist League
114 W. 14th Street
New York City

Dear Comrades:

This is an official letter to both the YPSL and YSL and we request that the national bodies of both organizations take up the points in this letter and send us an official reply.

In view of the pending dissolution of the YSL to be followed by the individual joining of the YPSL by most of the YSL members, we wish to clarify certain points as to the relation of the "merged" organization with the rest of the socialist youth movement in this country.

The YOUNG SOCIALIST, America's only nationwide socialist youth newspaper, its supporters, and some 15 youth clubs throughout the country to which it gives expression, have from their very birth sought to unify all socialist youth into a common organization. We stand at this moment, as we have from our very inception, for the unity of the Young Socialist League, Young Peoples Socialist League, the supporters of the Young Socialist, independents and former members of the Labor Youth League into one organization.

We stand ready at this time to enter into immediate negotiations with the YSL and YPSL as a move toward this end. We specifically ask the YSL and YPSL to enter into negotiations with us prior to taking any final steps on their own merger. We, on our part, desire such negotiations in order to clarify the situation in the youth field prior to the holding of our National Conference in December.

Should it be impossible at this time to bring about the organic unity of all socialist youth, it still may be possible for the different youth organizations, publications and local youth groups to work together on those issues where there is agreement. We favor a united front of all socialist and working-class youth, including young members of the Communist Party as well as any other party, in order to advance the struggle for peace, for integration, for civil liberties and for socialism in our own country. We seek a formal statement from the YSL and the YPSL as to their willingness to so cooperate with other young socialists and workers.

The desire of the YPSL, which is affiliated with the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation, or the YSL which supports politically the SP-SDF, for united action is put somewhat in doubt by the actions of the SP-SDF recently against the YOUNG SOCIALIST. The SP-SDF leaders have characterized the YS as having "no greater claim to the name 'socialist' than the Communist Party or the National Socialists of Germany." Since there is the clear implication that we are in effect "fascists" and since socialists are

opposed to united fronts with fascists, it seems clear that the SP-SDF for one is opposed to united action with us. It is hoped that young people sympathetic or affiliated with this organization do not hold a similar view. We therefore seek a formal statement as to the views of the YSL and YPSL on this question.

One of the issues most frequently discussed among socialists these days is electoral action. There is a growing awareness among radicals of all shades of opinion of the need for united electoral activity in opposition to the two major capitalist parties. The YOUNG SOCIALIST strongly favors such electoral action and its supporting club in New York City, the Young Socialist Alliance, is one of the main supporters of the United Socialist Ticket movement in New York State.

We note with sadness that at its last convention the SP-SDF came out against united electoral action with those who it considers to be "Trotskyists or Communists" and opened the door for support of the capitalist parties by members and locals of the SP-SDF. We hope that the YPSL does not agree with this position and therefore seek clarification on this point from the YPSL.

The YSL held a referendum at the time of the 1956 elections in which it voted in favor of support to all socialist parties running in the election by a large majority. Since, to our knowledge, no national convention has since overruled this membership decision, we therefore assume the YSL still holds this view. If such is the case, we hope that the YSL will enter into discussions with us at the earliest possible moment on ways and means of furthering united electoral action to oppose the two capitalist parties.

We hope to hear from you on the above questions as soon as possible. We promise to consider with utmost carefulness and seriousness your answers to these questions. The possibility of a united socialist youth movement hangs in the balance.

Fraternally,

Tim Wohlforth, for the editorial board
of the YOUNG SOCIALIST

August 22, 1958

Tim Wohlforth, Editorial Board
Young Socialist
144 2nd Ave., New York 3

Dear Comrade Wohlforth:

We have received your letter with regard to your proposal of discussions between the supporters of the Young Socialist, the Young Socialist League, and the Young People's Socialist League. The YPSL and YSL are answering this letter jointly in view of our common position on the question and our impending merger into a single organization.

We must first state that we regard your procedures as unusual, since you are, of course, quite aware of our attitude on the subject. The YSL policy was determined by the YSL Convention of 1957 in which you were a participant. The suggestion you now make is a repetition of the one which was overwhelmingly rejected by the YSL membership after a prolonged, democratic discussion. For these reasons, it appears to us that your letter, at least as far as you are personally concerned, is in the nature of a propagandistic maneuver rather than a serious proposal. However, we will re-state one of our main considerations on this subject since we are quite sure that others among you, who had not previously been in the YSL are sincere in their desire to direct such a letter to us.

For the general statement of the YSL position, we are enclosing a copy of the YSL 1957 convention resolution on socialist regroupment. The YPSL, in its 1957 Convention, adopted a resolution on socialist unification, a copy of which is enclosed. We trust that you will circulate these among your members and friends who wish to know our full policy. Needless to say, we stand by these documents, and currently look forward to our imminent merger.

On one point, however, we would like to restate our attitude in this letter. It concerns your conception of an "independent" youth organization. In recent times we have become more convinced than ever of the rightness of linking the perspectives for youth unity with those for adult regroupment. Thus, we are preparing to hold a convention for the purpose of forming the largest organization of democratic socialist youth seen in this country for a decade, one which will be affiliated to the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation.

First of all, we believe that our relation with adult regroupment is crucial to the fate of the socialist movement as a whole. We see the SP-SDF as the focus for a revival of American socialism in general, we feel that it can reach out to trade unionists, Negro militants, intellectuals and youth, and unite them in a single party of democratic socialism. We have been more and more convinced during the past year that the response to this development among unaffiliated socialists and among those now coming to socialism for the first time will mean a major breakthrough for the movement.

Consequently, we are going to build a youth organization which will be a loyal, affiliated section of the SP-SDF.

Secondly, we believe that there are political and practical problems which make youth "independence" unworkable. Politically, we're committed to an organization which is broad within the context of dedication to the principles of democratic socialism. We feel that your venture has demonstrated the non-viability of a group which attempts to temporize with basic political questions.

As we have watched your development, we have noted that various concessions, designed to smooth over fundamental antagonisms, have not been satisfactory to anyone - not to those who make the concessions, not to those for whom they are made.

On practical grounds, too, we reject the notion of youth independence. We know full well how difficult it is to maintain a youth organization. The YSL has said before and repeats now, that the YSL's very existence has been made possible only because of the fraternal aid of the ISL; the YPSL is, of course, affiliated to the SP-SDF. We believe that your experience demonstrates that an attempt at youth "independence" means actual domination of the group by an adult tendency, or else continuous and paralyzing internal squabbles.

Our common perspective, we feel, is now being vindicated. We will soon go forward as an integral part of a nationwide growth of democratic socialism under the banner of the SP-SDF. So far, every indication which you have given is in opposition to these basic notions. For this reason, we see no possibility of fruitful discussions at this time.

In closing, let us say that if your group is sincerely and honestly concerned with the problems raised in the letter, then you must take blame for frustrating their wishes. You, certainly, were aware of our attitude when you drafted the communication. We therefore must say that we feel that these old-fashioned maneuvers hardly serve the cause of socialist unity - and that they are an affront to those of your members who were not as well informed as you. If we are to remain in separate organization, and that certainly appears to be the case, the cooperation which you profess to seek will not be furthered by such tactics.

Fraternally,

/s/ Eldon Clingan
National Secretary
Young People's Socialist League

/s/ Michael Harrington
National Chairman,
Young Socialist League

REPORT TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST

ON THE LABOR DAY YSL AND YSL-YPSL CONVENTIONS

by Tim Wohlforth

The following is a report based on attending the most important sessions of the recent YSL convention held on Friday, Aug. 29, and the joint YSL-YPSL convention held on Saturday the 30 and Sunday the 31. The YSL-YPSL represents our only major competitor on the college campus for new youth. The Stalinists have as yet made no bid for these youth, conducting whatever youth activity they have on an underground basis. The Stalinists still are a threat to us in relation to the ex-LYers, but they do not as yet represent a significant counter-pull to the new young people who are now becoming radical.

It is therefore extremely important for all the comrades to read this report carefully. We must follow the developments in this field very closely as we will be meeting these people again and again in the next period. In a way the political strength of the Young Socialist tendency will be tested in its ability to win more youth to it than the social-democratic youth can.

This report is not a chronological one and therefore events that occurred on different days or at different conventions may be lumped together under general subject matters.

I. The Strength of the YSL-YPSL:

The YSL convention was attended by delegates representing the following areas: Seattle, Berkeley, Denver (by proxy), Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York City, New Haven, Buffalo, and Philly. Membership of approximately 100 was represented though they claim a total membership of 140-50. They report greatest strength in NYC, Berkeley, Chicago, Seattle. Following the loss of the left wing of the YSL the organization reportedly stagnated for two-three months. Then growth began due to extensive tours throughout the country. They report a weakness in publications. However, one pamphlet, "What is the YSL," was reprinted 3 times.

Berkeley: This area reports 18 members, 2/3 of which are on campus. They are primarily graduate students. They credit their growth to sending in some good people who then rooted themselves in the campus. They are now thinking of getting an office. They sold 200 of the last issue of Anvil. They report need for tours and a newspaper.

Buffalo: Members are not on campus and have not done much. This fall two will be on campus and they are planning some sort of campus club. They plan a debate between Harrington and Aptheker. Average attendance at meetings is 14-18.

Chicago: Until this summer they didn't recruit much. Recruited five new members over summer period. They are planning a YPSL chapter and a Politics Club at UC this fall. The united YPSL-YSL will have 25 members here to begin with.

Los Angeles: Unit has no contacts, morale, formal organization. Can't collect dues. Two semi-active members. YPSL reported in just as bad shape. Arlon Tussing (Seattle) reported that the presence of the Conference of Young Socialists which has operated in a flexible way has made things very difficult for the YSL in the area.

New York: Claim about 50 members right now in YPSL and YSL. However they claim that counting those guaranteed to join the merged organization they will start with 60-65 members. They will have clubs this fall at Columbia, Brooklyn, and CCNY, with possibilities at NYU, Queens, and three high schools. Average meeting attendance is 34-40 and seven new members were recruited over the summer. They claim they felt YSA competition at the beginning but do not feel it now.

Denver, Albuquerque: Have four new young members in Denver and expect to have a club at Denver U. At Albuquerque members are active in a campus UN committee and have 12-15 members of a socialist discussion club.

Pittsburgh: Report no other socialist tendencies to compete with. The campus is opening up.

Philadelphia: Have eight members -- most of them recently recruited. Will have two YPSL's at Temple, and a Dissent forum at Penn. Report contact with Stalinists.

Seattle: Report intense activity at the U. of Washington. Average attendance is 50 at campus club meetings though some meetings are upwards of 250. Plan to set up a student liberal party like SLATE in the fall. However a number of members are leaving area so they will be down to five members this fall, three of whom are active.

New Haven: Have seven members, four of whom are leaving the area. Have run a George Orwell forum at Yale successfully.

Anvil: 2,750 copies sold and printed of last fall issue. Of the spring issue, 4,500 were printed of which about 2,000 have been paid for. Report good contact with "Universities and Left Review" in England. Costs have doubled recently and they need money.

Sane: The YSL and YPSL report very good headway in Sane and have been in on the launching of the student Sane groups. They have been recruiting out of this arena. Two YSL members are on the national committee of the student Sane group.

NSA: Harrington attended NSA national convention. He reported that YSL and YPSL had no delegates at all at the convention. He also reported that everybody there had heard of the YS and asked if he were connected with it. He also reported a healthy left wing present at the convention, including people from the South, and urged that the YSL-YPSL enter into the NSA in the coming year.

YPSL: It was obvious throughout the proceedings of both conventions that the YPSL was hardly in existence at all. They had few members, virtually all of which were delegates and most of these were probably funneled into the YPSL by the YSL, which in many areas was splitting its recruits 50-50 with the YPSL. The YPSL reported very few functioning "circles" but a number of members at large. The only areas represented by YPSL where the YSL is not were Rutgers, Cambridge and Ann Arbor. The joint organizations have set themselves a goal of 500 members by next year. They presently will start with about 200 members (50 YPSLs plus the claimed 150 YSLers).

II. Progress Towards "Unity":

The present state of unity between the ISL-YSL-SP-SDF-YPSL is rather confusing. However an understanding of it is very important to understanding the current situation within the social democracy. While the prospect of allowing the ISL to enter the SP-SDF passed in the SP-SDF by a slim majority (54% of the referendum vote, according to Harrington) it has not been implemented as yet. There seems to be a desire on the part of the SP-SDF leadership to put off the ISL entry for a while for fear that it will force out some of the right-wingers. In fact, the most optimistic date for consummation of this long-sought-after union is two or three months. There was even some gloomy mention of it never coming to pass. However the YSL and YPSL will go to bed, so to speak, prior to the official marriage. While the official unity of the two organizations will wait for unity in the adult field (in order to give Shachtman a little remaining bargaining power) the practical unity is already in effect. The joint convention has elected a joint National Committee to formally function after the unity is consummated. The YSL NAC has been empowered to dissolve the YSL when the ISL gets in. The two youth groups will in effect be one starting immediately, though they will be in a somewhat embarrassed position to explain the formal situation to anyone.

III. Shachtman Crawls: The convention was not without its revolting aspects, the most revolting being the conduct of brother Shachtman who just isn't physically built for the task of crawling and fawning which he was forced to perform before his young disciples. Shachtman gave two addresses: one to the YSL and the other to the combined convention. His first talk to the YSL was aimed at smashing some of the illusions he had fostered a year ago in order to counteract the left wing and corral the youth behind his rightward move. First he pointed out that "we" must accept the SP-SDF as it is, pointing out that we should not expect it to change appreciably for quite a while. It will stay a small propaganda group with right-wing politics and an inactive membership for the coming period. So gone were the illusions of the imminent magical transformation of the SP-SDF into a mass party. Secondly, he stressed strongly that "we" must be totally uninterested in fighting for "our" program within the SP-SDF or even debating it. He said "we" should "ignore the SP-SDF." "We" should not try to convince anyone of "our" views but leave things just as they are. That is the only way unity will be possible. In his talk before the combined organization, Shachtman emphasized that they had given up everything they possessed. They did not ask for a press, for a formal unity, for representation on any committees, etc. They had no more to give. The only thing left to give was themselves, which they would not do. Therefore under no conditions could the youth comrades unite with the YPSL prior to the entry of the adult comrades. The one thing we must retain is the idea that either we all go in or none of us go in. He combined this with the usual obsequious tributes to "Comrade Thomas" who was also there. Various people before and after made pledges to get "Comrade Thomas" the largest student audiences they could, etc. etc.

IV. "Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism." The bitterest pill for the young social-democrats to swallow was the program of the social democracy itself. The joint YSL-YPSL negotiating committee presented to the conference the document "Aims and Tasks of Democratic Socialism," the most recent policy statement of the Second International, as the political basis for unity. However, a rank-and-file leftist opposition made up of both YSLers and YPSLs just couldn't stomach such a clear statement of the politics to which they were subordinating themselves. So a discussion ensued, first at the YSL convention and then again at the joint con-

vention. The most outspoken critics were two former Libertarian Leaguers who are presently in the YPSL. They attacked the "Collective security" section, pointing out that this was the watchword of the Lebanon intervention. They attacked another section which read, "but democracy has the right and duty to protect itself against those who exploit its opportunities only in order to destroy it." This they said should be read: SMITH ACT. They attacked the document's support of the UN. Others complained that the document wasn't broad but narrow. It would alienate pacifists and others who opposed collective security. The Denitch supporters in the YSL also spoke out against it. In fact, it soon looked as if a YSL-YPSL left bloc would be able to table action on the document. Therefore Harrington offered a compromise which consisted of an additional statement by the YPSL disclaiming full agreement with the document. This swung all the YSLers. However seven YPSLs still held out and voted to table the document. So the document was finally passed with a disclaimer.

V. Conclusions:

It is clear from the above report that the YSL-YPSL enters the coming period with considerable strength. They have gained over the last year, largely from new students on the campuses. It is largely their campus orientation plus their already existing apparatus and cadre that allowed them to recruit in this period. Many of the people who joined either organization in this period could just as well have joined us if they had come into contact with us first. Many at the actual convention saw the YS for the first time when we distributed it there. We should not underestimate the strength of the social-democratic youth. They enter the coming school year with stronger forces on campus than we have. However the power of our ideas and our paper outbalance this. There were frequent mentions during the conventions of the desirability of setting up a monthly paper -- a sign of the impression we have made.

It is clear that in the coming year the group which orients itself the best for work among American students will advance the most. We will be competing primarily with the YSL-YPSL for the allegiance of the newly radicalized college student.

We have three things in our favor that give us the possibility of winning out in this competition.

1. Our Politics: There is no doubt that the YSL-YPSL politics are so bad that most of the membership of these organizations are shamed of it. Our clear revolutionary socialist program is far more appealing to youth than rationalizing about "collective security." However the effect of our politics is somewhat offset in these circles by what these people call our "stalinoid" politics. While part of this attack is nothing but adaptation to bourgeois "anti-communism," some of it is a genuine feeling that we are conciliating to Stalinism just as the social democrats are conciliating to the State Department. The simplest solution to this is simply to present our principled opposition to Stalinism and support to the workers' struggle in the Soviet orbit for workers democracy.

In addition we should carry on a campaign of pointing out the real politics of the YSL-YPSL and demanding that they either support them or repudiate them. We have begun this already in our letter to the YSL-YPSL which referred to the Rusher affair -- something which they did not mention in their answer (appended). During the "Aims and Tasks" debate one YSLer came up to me and said: "It must be your birthday. They are giving you a present," referring to this document. And he was correct.

2. Our Independence: The YSL-YPSL answer to our letter indicates they are extremely weak on the question of independence of the youth. Their dogmatic insistence on the necessity of submitting to adult domination will not go over very well with new young people who are striving in their own way for independence, not dependence. This point should be continually stressed. However, it is not enough to stress it alone while ignoring the above-mentioned political points.

3. Our Militancy: There is no doubt that our militancy and vitality which is expressed through the fighting spirit of our paper and our supporters has been one of the most attractive features of our operation for the last year. It will become increasingly so in contrast to the super-intellectual petty bourgeois discussion-club approach of the social democrats. We must prove in action the difference between ourselves and the social democracy, as well as proving it in theory.

Finally I should mention that this growth on the part of our competition demands an all-around greater exertion of our own forces. The national tour increases in importance because of this. In addition the necessity of organizing our forces nationally also increases in importance. Only a national body of revolutionary youth can effectively intervene on the campuses and counteract social-democratic strength, can effectively enter into Sane on a nationwide scale, enter the WSA, and in other ways reach the new youth who are just now awakening to politics. Only such a body can act as a pole of attraction to the disillusioned left-wing youth in the YSL-YPSL.