

young socialist
the organizer

4-29-70



Ten Years of Struggle

(Part I)

10 Cents

On the Importance of Revolutionary Continuity

[The following is the text of a speech given in Los Angeles by Joseph Hansen, editor of *Intercontinental Press*, at the celebration of James P. Cannon's eightieth birthday. The meeting was held March 21, although Cannon's birthday is February 11. He and his companion, Rose Karsner Cannon, who died two years ago, celebrated their birthdays together; thus the meeting also paid tribute to Rose.

[Other speakers included Cannon's stepdaughter Walta Ross; his grandson Matthew Ross; the well-known California labor attorney and battler for civil liberties, A. L. Wirin; Patricia Iiyama, Socialist Workers party candidate for California treasurer; and Herman Fagg, SWP candidate for California governor.

[Oscar Coover, who chaired the meeting, read numerous greetings to Cannon, some of which came from his comrades and friends in other lands.

[Cannon responded by voicing his thanks to the participants and by quoting from a speech made by Rose Karsner in 1962. Her words were so appropriate to the occasion that it almost seemed as if, through Jim, she were participating, too.

[For a full report of the celebration see *The Militant* for April 3 and April 10.]

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Not long ago, while I was reading my favorite newspaper, *The Militant*—which I understand you can buy in the bookstore at the entrance to the hall [laughter]—I ran across an item that I would like to have clipped to read here tonight.

But many years ago, it became impossible for me to clip *The Militant*. I clip only ordinary newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times*. *The Militant* I save and have bound at the end of each year so as to be able to refer to it in the easiest way. So, instead of clipping this item from *The Militant*, I copied it.

The headline reads: "WHO ARE THE EXPELLED COMMUNISTS."

The article begins:

"JAMES P. CANNON—Member of the Central Executive Committee and Political Committee. Joined Socialist Party at Kansas City in 1908. Joined I.W.W. in 1911. Took part in the organization of Left Wing group in Kansas City in 1918. Editor of local Left Wing weekly paper, *The Workers' World*, in 1919. Delegate to National Left Wing Conference, New York City in June 1919 and was elected member of Labor Committee of National Left Wing. Foundation member of Communist Labor Party. First District Organizer St. Louis-Kansas City District, 1919-1920. Organized first underground Communist groups in mine field of Kansas and Southern Illinois. Elected to the Central Executive Committee at first underground convention at Bridgeman, Michigan, May 1920 and re-elected at every subsequent convention of the Party. Editor of Party legal paper, *The Toiler*, 1920. Delegate to Fourth and Sixth World Congresses of the Communist International and also to a number of the Sessions of the enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International. National Secretary of International Labor Defense from foundation, June 1925 to October 1928."

That's the first paragraph. [Laughter.] I ask you to be patient, as there

is more to come. *The Militant* continues with its biography of James P. Cannon:

"Organizer in Akron Rubber Strike in 1913, Peoria Metal Workers Strike, Duluth and Superior Ore Dock Strike, and many others. Indicted for conspiracy in the Peoria metal workers strike in 1913 and also indicted by Federal Government for activity in strike of the Kansas Coal miners in 1919. No conviction in either case. Numerous arrests and short jail terms."

The date of that brief sketch of the life of James P. Cannon is of some pertinence—*January 1, 1929*. That was forty-one years ago. Jim was then thirty-nine years old.

It would seem obvious that it is high time to bring this biographical note up-to-date. Here I find myself facing a difficulty. I really am not sure why I happened to be selected to do this.

Is it because I am among the younger members of the old guard [laughter] and can therefore be counted on to strike a certain youthful note? [Laughter.] Or is it because I am among the older members of the youth [laughter] and can therefore be trusted [laughter]—to a certain extent [laughter]—to give an impression of maturity? [Laughter.]

In any case I'll try to contribute a few more bits of information to help cover the period following 1929.

First of all, let's note the items known to most of those present here tonight; that's the books bearing the name of James P. Cannon as author. These include the following:

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party. This consists of documents contributed by James P. Cannon in a factional struggle in 1939-40, an important one led by Leon Trotsky.

Socialism on Trial. This is the official court record of James P. Cannon's testimony in the famous Minneapolis "sedition" trial at the beginning of World War II. This is probably the most widely circulated of Cannon's books and has been translated into several languages.

The History of American Trotskyism. This consists of lectures given in 1942 and published in 1944.

Notebook of an Agitator. This is a collection of articles mostly from *The Militant* that constitute models of revolutionary journalism in my opinion. This was published in 1958.

The First Ten Years of American Communism. This consists largely of letters to a historian, Theodore Draper, published in 1962.

Finally, *Letters from Prison*, published in 1968.

Besides this, Cannon has written any number of pamphlets, some of substantial size like *America's Road to Socialism*.

I think that these books, like *The Militant*, can be purchased at the rear of the hall, and perhaps at astonishingly low prices—while they last. [Laughter.]

The title of that last book *Letters from Prison* reminds me. The 1929 biographical sketch in *The Militant* ended with the following—what shall we call them?—exceptional accomplishments of James P. Cannon: "Indicted for conspiracy in the Peoria

metal workers strike in 1913 and also indicted by Federal Government for activity in strike of the Kansas Coal miners in 1919. No conviction in either case. Numerous arrests and short jail terms."

James P. Cannon managed to add to these accolades in a rather spectacular way. In 1941 he, together with seventeen other leaders and members of the Socialist Workers party, was indicted, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to nothing less than a federal penitentiary.

What they were really guilty of was offering political opposition to U.S. imperialism in World War II. They were the first victims of the Smith "Gag" Act, or "Thought Control" Act, the first victims of the repressive legislation that expanded into McCarthyism.

And James P. Cannon had the honor of being sentenced to sixteen months in a federal penitentiary as one of the first victims of this repressive period.

He got some time off, but he served more than a year, which under U.S. law made him a felon. And a felon he remains to this day. Thus he could not take office, if for example he should choose to run for president of the United States and happened to win the election.

Sandstone Penitentiary must not be very effective as a corrective institution. [Laughter.] I recall the very first speech Jim gave after getting out of stir. [Laughter.] It was on May Day 1945 at Webster Hall in New York and the place was packed, since James P. Cannon was a very well-known figure in the radical movement and everybody that was anybody in New York wanted to hear what he would say and whether any behavior for the better was to be noted [laughter] after the training he had received in the penitentiary.

Well, after the chairman finished the introduction, Jim came to the rostrum to give his speech. His first words were: "As I was saying . . . [laughter] . . . before I was so rudely interrupted . . ." [Prolonged laughter.]

In the biographical sketch printed in the January 1, 1929, *Militant*, Jim's achievements can be placed under two headings:

First, organizational activities. Quite clearly he was an activist involved in struggles of the working class; and these activities had a certain direction, participation as a leader in strike struggles to participation as a leader in politics, but politics of a specific kind—communism, or, as we would say today, revolutionary socialism.

Secondly, editorial activities—and again, an editor of a specific kind, an editor of revolutionary journals.

In my own opinion, these two occupations are not widely separated. A good editor is primarily an organizer, an organizer of a staff that may be spread on a national or even international scale, an organizer of material that has a very definite focus and aim, particularly when it is a revolutionary paper or magazine associated with a revolutionary organization.

I would say that in the years following 1929, Jim in his work combined both fields. He continued to organize for the party and he continued to edit and to write for its press.

His chief function, however, was that

of a political strategist, a political strategist within the framework of revolutionary socialism.

Viewed in this way, his achievements can be seen to have a certain logic.

The whole period up to 1928 was a preparatory period, in which he gained experience, gained knowledge, learned in the very hard school of the Wobblies and the early Communist movement. He learned in action the politics of the class struggle and the importance of principles, and the still more decisive importance of converting socialist principles into correct revolutionary practice.

It was this background that fitted him to become the founder of the American Trotskyist movement and to play a key role in close collaboration with Leon Trotsky in founding the Fourth International.

It was this background that enabled him to play the central role in guiding the American Trotskyist movement through some exceedingly difficult periods, when it was compelled to exist as a small persecuted group, vilely slandered and under constant attack by very powerful formations, ranging from the Stalinists to the fascists.

I should like to single out for special comment what I consider to be Jim's greatest single contribution. This was to maintain the continuity of the revolutionary-socialist movement in the United States.

Let me pause a moment here to indicate the importance of this question, which may not be fully appreciated by the new generation.

The rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union did not at first cause revolutionary-minded workers to turn away. Instead, they tended to accept the new heads of the country as the continuators of the Russian revolution. They listened to what Stalin said. They accepted his advice.

In this way a new set of concepts began to replace what had been taught and practiced by Lenin and Trotsky. This included ultraleftist adventurism, but, much more prominently than that, "peaceful coexistence," meaning giving up the class struggle.

Worst of all, revolutionary-minded workers, through their faith that Stalin represented the revolutionary continuity, were betrayed into giving up their natural inclination to think for themselves. They were converted into mere pawns in the diplomatic deals of the Kremlin.

At the same time, the Trotskyists were framed up in the most monstrous campaign of lies ever conducted by any regime, so as to reduce them to the status of pariahs whom everyone shunned.

As the Communist parties in country after country succumbed to Stalinism, the revolutionary continuity was broken. In those years it was difficult to find your way through the barriers of Stalinism and of the Social Democracy to revolutionary truth.

Still another important link in the continuity was broken. This was the continuity of living experience, the experience that is handed down from one revolutionary generation to another through daily practice in infinitely varied situations that nevertheless tend to repeat certain patterns. These patterns can be learned.

How to maintain the continuity and to broaden it in the face of these circumstances constituted the central problem facing the small nucleus that rallied to the banners of the Left Opposition headed by Leon Trotsky in the Soviet Union.

James P. Cannon was one of those who understood this problem and its

extraordinary importance in reviving revolutionary Marxism.

It takes little reading in Jim's contributions to the literature of the world Trotskyist movement to see that ever since the October 1917 revolution in Russia he has been highly conscious of the merging in our movement of two currents.

The first is native American rebellion. If we list as the first pioneers of the socialist movement in the U.S. such figures as the Haymarket martyrs, Albert Parsons in particular, then it can be said that our movement includes a direct line of personal continuity with those figures.

The generation of rebel youth who were inspired by the example set in the eighties became the teachers of the generation represented by Jim. This was the generation of Vincent St. John, who probably had the greatest personal influence on Jim at that period; of Bill Haywood, whom Jim came to know intimately during Bill Haywood's exile in Moscow; the generation of the Debsian socialists, who came to the forefront in the great labor upsurge of the period leading up to 1912 and the eve of World War I.

Rose Karsner, Jim's companion, who died only two years ago—and of whom Walta spoke movingly—became secretary of *The Masses* shortly after it was founded in 1911. Eugene Debs himself very much appreciated Rose Karsner.

The second component from the past in which a living personal continuity exists today in our movement stems from the Bolsheviks, who, of course, were trained by the generation that was directly tutored by Marx and Engels.

In the early twenties, Jim visited Russia four times and there he became personally acquainted with the top leaders of the Communist International. He already knew Trotsky before he decided in 1928 to take up the cause of the Left Opposition.

And up until Trotsky's death in 1940, Jim, like a few other leaders of the SWP, worked in close collaboration with Trotsky in forming and building the movement that became the Fourth International in 1938.

This living continuity of revolutionary experience from these two sources is one of the most valuable heritages of the Socialist Workers party. It is this living continuity that has given such stability to the American Trotskyist movement and that has enabled it to put up such strong resistance against repression, to stand up so well in adversity, and to take such quick advantage of the openings when they came.

It is a rather remarkable paradox, if you stop to think about it, that one of the strongest sectors of the world Trotskyist movement exists in the United States, the very heartland of world imperialism. This is ascribable primarily to the extraordinary combination of circumstances that enabled revolutionary Marxism to maintain a living continuity in the United States in contrast to the historic accidents that slashed across it or reduced it to the most fragile of threads in many other countries.

A consequence of this continuity is that the Socialist Workers party emerged from some exceedingly hard times with a relatively strong group of cadres. By the time the new wave of radicalization began in the United States a few years ago, first with the rise of the black liberation struggle, then the radicalization of the youth and the rise of the antiwar movement, the Socialist Workers party was in position to begin recruiting, and at a rather rapid rate.

What is to be especially noted about this recruiting is that the recruits find a cadre organization already at hand. Consequently, new recruits are converted into cadres themselves at a pace

which, in my opinion, is new in the United States.

Let us consider the scene a bit more closely.

Where are the rivals that stood with such imposing force in 1929?

The smaller contending groups disintegrated. Beyond the historians, their names are hardly remembered.

The Social Democracy? Where does that once powerful organization stand today?

It is down to a sect, composed in part of former Trotskyists, who are still practicing a kind of "entryism." [Laughter.] With them the left-centrist mask became the person, and once that happened, it was easy for some to develop into right centrists and then into just run-of-the-mill, ordinary, garden variety, tired liberals. A few are caught up in odd-ball theories like the Soviet Union allegedly having become an example of "state capitalism."

The Social Democracy in the United States thus no longer stands as a tremendous obstacle on the road to the socialist revolution.

What about Stalinism? It has its troubles. An uprising in East Germany in 1953. Uprisings in Poland and Hungary in 1956. A national rebellion in Czechoslovakia in 1968. A great rift between Moscow and Peking that seems unbridgeable, at least for the time being.

The Stalinist monolith has in fact been shattered. In its place now stand warring sects without a future.

In the United States, the Communist party has become reduced to a small, aging sect in irreversible decline.

In the Soviet Union there are more and more reports about a new opposition mood and even opposition formations.

In the November 25, 1968, *Intercontinental Press* we reported that 300 people had braved official disapproval in Moscow to pay a last tribute to the seventy-two-year-old Aleksei Kosterin, who had spent seventeen years in Stalin's concentration camps. The information at our disposal at the time was that the meeting was addressed by Major General Pyotr G. Grigorenko and that he made a stirring appeal over the body of his friend for a return to the democracy of Lenin's time.

More recent information puts the number in attendance at 700 to 800, and the number of speakers at five or six. Still more, these speakers voiced sentiments not heard openly in the Soviet Union since the days of the Trotskyist Left Opposition. The services for Kosterin became in fact a kind of political opposition meeting, the first public one since 1928.

On a world scale, a great revolutionary thrust forward has been occurring since the end of World War II. It has suffered defeats and setbacks, it is true—some of them of disastrous size and consequence as in Indonesia. But a great revolutionary thrust forward remains the principal feature of the past few decades, beginning in Indochina and China, extending to Cuba, and finally to France in 1968.

We are now witnessing an extraordinary radicalization of the youth on a world scale. In the smallest and most remote countries, students are in rebellion against the Establishment.

In our own country, everyone here is familiar with what is happening on the campus. Some of those present look suspiciously like participants. [Laughter.] New movements are erupting in our country, the struggle of the Blacks, of the Puerto Ricans, the Chicanos, and now Women's Liberation.

The difficulties faced by imperialism, including the most powerful of them all, are becoming more and more apparent. I will cite only a single example to illustrate the point.

Do you know that for the first time in the history of this country, right now you can't even mail a letter in

New York City? [Laughter.] Not even an airmail letter with a ten-cent stamp on it. [Laughter.] Not even if you take it to the post office personally.

Reba and I walked to the post office last Wednesday before we knew about the strike. One of the clerks met us at the door with a little hand-lettered picket sign that spoke in about the softest way I have ever seen in a strike. The picket sign read: "No service today." [Laughter, applause.]

To appreciate the depth of the crisis precipitated for U.S. capitalism by the postal workers' strike, let me quote the following item from the *New York Daily News* [March 20]:

"The New York Stock Exchange said brokers [laughter] would be hard hit if the strike continued into next week. [Laughter.] There would be no means of distributing stock certificates and statements." [Laughter and cries of commiseration.]

No doubt that explains the big headline in the same *Daily News*: "MAY ASK ARMY TO MOVE MAIL." [Laughter and cries of "Let them try!"]

A more appropriate headline would be: "MAY ASK ARMY TO GET THE HELL OUT OF VIETNAM." [Applause.]

When the patient, underpaid, overloaded, long-suffering U.S. mailman finally rebels against being an animal of burden for transporting junk mail, I say that in honor of the event the government ought to issue a special commemorative stamp [laughter] . . . for the philatelists to mount in their stamp collections.

And perhaps we could speed up the mail by dropping the famous zip code and substituting the date the strike began—3/18/70.

That might help jog Nixon's memory on his campaign promise to fix up the postal system and get packages delivered on time by next Christmas—last Christmas, that is.

lem [laughter]; and I daresay James P. Cannon has not found any bank messengers prowling around his door trying to foist any credit cards on him. No doubt if any of them tried it, he would give them a touch of his cane. [Laughter.]

But I do hope that on his eightieth birthday he will accept a bit of credit and recognition for the personal role he had played in maintaining the continuity of revolutionary Marxism, the continuity that has really made our movement possible.

So I'd like to say a few words on what I think makes a man like Jim the way he is.

I'll leave aside the individual quirks and eccentricities of which he has his share, as we all do [laughter], and merely note that his personality is a very complex one. What I want to call attention to is more important.

I think that if you had gone to Jim's hometown, Rosedale, Kansas, and asked about him when he was very young, people would have said he was as bright as they come. Who could tell what he might become? [Laughter.]

Whatever his own ambitions may have been, the circumstances of the times turned him into something rather unique—a political strategist, or, if you wish, a political organizer.

The bourgeoisie has not a few of these, or it used to have some. In the capitalist world, they are called statesmen, or sometimes gray eminences. They are the figures who see the interests of the capitalists as a class very clearly and who have learned how to defend and advance these interests with the greatest skill.

During the rise of capitalism, such figures found their place as revolutionary leaders in the struggle against feudalism, or in the struggle for national independence.



In the light of such developments both internationally and nationally, what bright prospects favor our movement! The movement founded in the United States by James P. Cannon and the small band of pioneers who joined him in carrying out this historic task.

The Socialist Workers party and the Young Socialist Alliance have openings now at hand that give every promise of making possible a qualitative breakthrough toward development of a mass party and a mass youth movement in this country.

In the United States today I hear repeated rumors about how easy it is to get credit cards from banks and similar institutions. I read the other day in the *New York Times* that special legislation is now being considered by Congress to put a stop to this easy flow of credit cards. Our lawmakers at least want to make it illegal to mail anyone a credit card unless he or she requests it.

I must admit that as yet I have not been faced by this particular prob-

But these types are quite rare among the workers, or in the radical movement. Up until recent times the reason for this was very simple; the capitalists were able to lure and corrupt them with careers and openings into their own class.

Let me narrow it down still more. To build a revolutionary combat party is an extremely complex and difficult undertaking.

It requires people of the most varied talents and skills: administrators, artists, public speakers, writers, conversationalists, people with a special ability to make friends and gain recruits, technicians, craftsmen—all are needed. Of outstanding importance, whatever their other skills and abilities may be, are two broad general types: theoreticians and organizers.

In the radical movement we can find theoreticians of often exceptional quality. Their role is indispensable in building a revolutionary party.

But often they originate from the petty bourgeoisie or the bourgeoisie and it is difficult for them to surmount

this background. They tend to become experts in the world of books and the world of ideas. This is excellent, but it takes more than that to make a revolution.

In the radical movement we also find excellent organizers, very often men and women of great experience in the field of trade unionism. They, too, are absolutely indispensable in the construction of a revolutionary party, particularly in the period of great battles in which the masses mobilize their strength and move toward power.

But there is still another type that should be noted. This is the revolutionary-socialist politician, who may indeed come from either a petty-bourgeois or a working-class background, but who has an exceptional talent — this is the ability to see almost directly the relationship between the development of political issues, the movement of the masses, and the crystallization of these forces in the form of a combat party. Lenin represents the greatest example yet seen by the working class.

I do not maintain that James P. Cannon is another Lenin—he would never accept such a designation and would, in fact, take a hard look at anyone who tried that kind of flattery on him.

But Jim is a *Leninist*. He does have the talent of seeing politically. And we can add that he is a conscious Leninist in that he tried to learn from Lenin, particularly concerning party-building methods; and, I think, not unsuccessfully.

Jim didn't begin as a Leninist. He began as a rebel. He had a strong feeling of what an unbearable contradiction exists between the world as it is, and the world as it should be or could be.

He began as a youthful rebel, completely unable to accept a world in which poverty, oppression, drudgery, and misery is the lot of the masses; while an arrogant ruling class — a small minority — enjoys wealth and special privileges that most of them reached solely by an accident of birth.

And this in a world where it is easily apparent that poverty could be completely eliminated within a short span of time, provided a rational order could be established in the economy.

The hypocrisy of the ruling class, its basic irrationality, its active sponsorship of the most reactionary and barbarous heritages of the past, sickened and revolted him.

This feeling of outrage, of fury, became coupled with the socialist vision of what is possible for mankind; and the combination of hate for what is and knowledge of what could be took the form of an overpowering urge to set things right.

What Jim went through, in short, was the rebellion of youth in the world of today.

In some people, Jim has seen this rebellion die out.

In some, he has seen the rebellion overwhelmed by personal difficulties or family responsibilities.

In some, he has seen the rebellion eroded as a consequence of errors,

which maturing youth sometimes prove unable to recover from or to surmount.

Some he has seen worn down.

Some he has seen grow tired.

But Jim belongs to those in whom rebellion has never died.

Perhaps after the first flame, it never came to burn hotter or brighter, but it certainly burned steadily, never to flicker or to fade away.

Jim today at eighty is still a rebel youth.

This is his real secret.

He still remains a rebel youth with his eyes on what is coming, still fighting and contributing.

That is why the new generation of youth find that he speaks their language—that he is one of them.

And it will be that way until all of us together, in invincible numbers, sweep aside the resistance of the entire dead past and win the final battle in the coming American revolution. [Prolonged applause.]

Intercontinental Press

The Column

Since the April 10 issue of *The Militant* announcing the recruitment of seven new locals in six weeks, we have welcomed four more new locals as of this writing (April 10). They are: Flint, Michigan; Long Island, New York; Denver, Colorado; and Pullman, Washington. The expansion of the YSA into several new key areas is an important factor in our overall development. There are thousands of young activists in the major industrial centers as well as smaller cities and campuses all across the country who consider themselves revolutionaries or are moving very quickly in that direction. Unless, however, they can be reached and organized, there's a good chance that we will not recruit a good many of these people. This is another reason why it is so important to get our ideas out to new areas through *The Militant*, our literature, speakers, etc.

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"Query: Is it appropriate for a state university to recognize an organization that is revolutionary in character and has identity and relationship with a subversive organization (Socialist Workers Party) with a history of communist activity?"

"I would answer this question by saying that an organization dedicated to the principle of revolution has no place on a college campus; and anyone who argues that the YSA is not a revolutionary organization does not know his facts."

The above quote is from the beginning of a letter from D. Burke Kibler, III, Chairman of the Florida Board of Regents, to the President of the University of Florida at Gainesville. The three-page letter directing the president of the U of F to deny the YSA campus recognition is an exercise in logic that would confound anyone but the hardened bureaucrats of the educational system.

Example: "... it is not my intention in any way to inhibit or impede free expression of ideas on your campus or any other university campus in the state..." However: "I understand that the fragmentation of SDS into many divisive factions has stimulated a national movement in YSA to fill this vacuum, and that a national network of action committees has been formed to organize on both high school and college campuses.

I do not think that we have yet come to the point in our society that under the specter of academic freedom we must let such radical activists have their way."

I assume that we will be hearing more about this situation as our comrades in Gainesville begin a struggle around this issue in the state school system of Florida.

* * *

The Georgia State 1970 SWP Campaign has released a position paper entitled, *The Status of Women: A Socialist Approach* (5 pages, 5c). It contains four demands central to the women's liberation struggle—equal pay for equal work, including full salary for housework; legalize abortion, safe and adequate birth control, no forced sterilization; free 24-hour child care centers; and, write women back into history—and explains each one in a very concise and brief way. Comrades involved in the women's liberation movement or running campus campaigns might be interested in obtaining a copy. P.O. Box 7817, Atlanta, Ga., 30309.

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We are trying to compile as large and complete a file as possible on the various documents, position papers, brochures, etc. that SDS put out during its existence. Old copies of the *New Left Notes* would be appreciated also. Please send this material to the National Office.

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On March 25, the Providence, Rhode Island, local celebrated the opening of its new hall. Jeff Powers, the organizer, briefly reminisced about the building of the Providence local and projected the perspective of the new hall becoming a real movement center for the Providence area. Larry Trainor, a long time militant and SWP member, discussed the past forty years of the socialist movement and the importance of today's antiwar movement. The new hall, bookstore,

and headquarters is dedicated to and named after Vincent Raymond Dunne.

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Comrades should send in suggestions that they have for articles they think should be in *The Young Socialist Organizer*. Comments on the general format and suggestions for the improvement of *The Young Socialist Organizer* would be appreciated also.

Comrades should be conscious of relating the experiences of the various activities that we are engaged in. Articles assessing work should include such areas as sales, literature tables, setting up and maintaining an educational series, and, particularly for at-large members, the process of building a local. Articles assessing work in the antiwar movement, the women's liberation struggle, strike support, the Black and Brown liberation movements, election campaigns, and campus struggles should be reported regularly. A discussion of the many areas of work (and the new areas such as the anti-pollution movement) that we are engaged in should be carried out in *The Young Socialist Organizer*. This sort of an exchange can provide many lessons and pointers to other comrades engaged in the same work or about to enter these relatively new areas, besides keeping comrades informed of how we are functioning nationally.

The reports should be triple-spaced and forty characters in width.

* * *

This column will become a regular feature of *The Young Socialist Organizer*. We have found that there are many events occurring which we feel comrades would be interested in knowing yet do not constitute the material for an article. Comrades should send contributions to the column in brief reports, news items, and comments.

— Editor

On the Sub Drive

"After our little paper was printed, then the editors, as well as the members had to go out to sell it. We would write the paper. We would next go to the print shop, hovering over the printer's forms until the last error was corrected, waiting anxiously to see the first copy come off the press. That was always a thrill—a new issue of *The Militant*, a new weapon. Then with bundles packed under our arms we would go out to sell them on street corners in Union Square. Of course it wasn't the most efficient thing in the world for three editors to transform themselves into three newsboys. But we were short of help and had to do it; not always, but sometimes. Nor was this all. In order to sell our papers on Union Square we had to defend ourselves against physical attacks." —*The History of American Trotskyism*.

Things have changed quite a bit since *The Militant* first came out in 1928. But one thing has not changed — *The Militant* is still our "weapon." Not only is *The Militant* one of the central ways in which our own com-

rades are informed and educated, but it also one of our best tools in getting out our ideas to those people involved in and being radicalized by the antiwar movement, the Black and Brown liberation struggles, the women's liberation movement, the campus and high school movements, and, increasingly, the struggles of the working class. *The Militant* is more than a revolutionary socialist newspaper—it is an organizer, a campaigner, an educator, and a recruiter. We constantly seek to get *The Militant* into the hands of more and more people in order to expand our influence within the radical movement, involve forces outside of ourselves in those movements which we support and build, explain to people what is really going on in the world, and recruit people to our movement so that they can do something about it. The subscription drive currently being conducted by *The Militant* presents us with a big opportunity to do all of those things, and for that reason it should be a central part of the activity of all YSAers.

The best way to sell subs is in the course of day-to-day work, to those people who work with us on campus, in the antiwar movement and so on. Buying a sub to *The Militant* will bring many of these people one step closer to joining the YSA. In addition, many locals carry out special sub-getting activities, such as going through dorms, selling on movie lines, and setting up special sub tables on and off campus. During the last two weeks in April, there are going to be environmental teach-ins all across the country which will also be good places to sell subs.

The scoreboard in the April 10th issue of *The Militant* shows that with a little more than three weeks left in the sub drive, there are 4223 subs left to get. This means that the entire YSA has to go on a campaign footing until May 1 if we are to make sure that the subscription drive succeeds. A good way to celebrate May Day will be with 7500 new readers for *The Militant!*

NELSON BLACKSTOCK
YSA National Organizational Secretary

The History of the YSA Ten Years of Struggle (Part 1)

(This is the first of a two part series commemorating the first ten years of the YSA. Peter Camejo, who presented this talk in Boston on March 22, was a founding member and long-time leader of the YSA. He is presently the SWP senatorial candidate in Massachusetts.)

What I'd like to do is outline the highlights of the first ten years of the Young Socialist Alliance. It's really impossible, in one talk, to do more than that. Let me explain the background of the YSA.

At the end of the second world war there was a deep radicalization in this country. All of the organizations on the left grew, including the Socialist Workers Party. In the '47-'48 period the radicalization began to decline and a period of reaction set in which lasted throughout the '50s. It is important to understand what that means. To a whole generation of people just being radicalized, it is very hard to understand what it means to say that there was a period of reaction. During a period of reaction people retreat from repression instead of reacting against that repression. A good sign of whether or not you're entering a period of reaction or radicalization is people's response to repression. When the government tries to crack down and the people get mad and demonstrations break out, it's a sign that you're in a period of radicalization. When the repression has the effect of quieting people down, however, you're usually moving into a period of reaction. In the late '40s and early '50s it reached the point where in the unions, for instance, they would pass rules that no communist could be a member. If you voted against that rule, you were thrown out of the union. If you even abstained on the motion you were in danger of being thrown out of the union. The *New York Times* would run lists of people that somebody had labelled a communist and those people would be fired from their jobs. People simply weren't political enough, so there was nothing that could be done. Consequently, there was a general decline in all the left-wing organizations in the United States.

The Communist Party declined the most. At the beginning of that period the CPUSA was a gigantic organization of the size and power none of us can comprehend because there is no radical organization in the United States today that comes anywhere near the power that the Communist Party had in this country, in terms of influence, numbers or monetary resources. Its base in the trade unions was gigantic. At one time the CP controlled one third of the CIO unions. It had people everywhere. In the 1945-46 radicalization period, for example, they had proportional representation in New York City, and in the '45 elections, the Communist Party candidate came first, beating the Democrats and Republicans. In Brooklyn, Manhattan and the Bronx, the Labor Party, which was really under CP control, carried the elections — the Republican Party received 2% of the vote. That was the situation in 1945.

The CP had a gigantic machine but they declined very rapidly. In 1956 came the crushing of the Hungarian revolution and the Khrushchev revelations which revealed that Stalin was not God. It's very similar to the Pope announcing that St. Christopher would no longer protect your car. This had a terrific shock effect on the Communist Party in this country. The entire left, by this time, was in a crisis.

The Socialist Workers Party declined like all the rest, but it did not decline as much. Proportionally, it held itself together better than any other organization.

There is another organization that played an important role in the founding of the YSA. It was the group that had split off from the Socialist Workers Party in 1940.

In 1940 there had been a major internal fight in the SWP called the Schactman fight. As the second world war approached there were certain members of the SWP who did not want to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack. They said that because the Soviet Union has a bureaucracy, it's no longer progressive in any way, it's just as bad as American imperialism, and that if there's a war between the two, we shouldn't support either side.

The decision of the Socialist Workers Party was that despite the fact that the Soviet Union has a bureaucracy, it does have a planned econ-

omy and is a workers state. The main danger to the world is the United States and the capitalists in this country, and if there is a war between the Soviet Union and the United States, we would side with the Soviet Union.

The Schactman split led to the formation of the people who today call themselves the International Socialists. They survived the 50s. They've changed their name many times trying to forget the past and the positions they took. In the late fifties they called themselves the Independent Socialist League, and they had a youth group called the Young Socialist League. In the middle 50s they had about 150 members and, except for the CP youth group called the Labor Youth League, they were the strongest group on the student left. Just at the time of the Hungarian Revolution and the Khrushchev revelations, the Independent Socialist League decided to join the Socialist Party. They wanted to get together and form one happy family. A handful of the people in the Independent Socialist League and the Young Socialist League refused to join the Socialist Party for one simple reason — the Socialist Party openly supported the Democratic Party. (The SP for decades has supported the liberal bourgeoisie in the United States. The Socialist Party permits you to support Democrats or Republicans but will not permit you at any time to support an SWP candidate. Let me read you their rule: "In no event may state or local organizations or individual members support or endorse nominees of the Communist, Trotskyite or other totalitarian parties." The Democratic and Republican parties, that's O.K. — they're not totalitarian parties. If you were to endorse one of the SWP candidates you could be automatically expelled.)

So there were 30 members of the Young Socialist League and the Independent Socialist League who refused to go into the Socialist Party. At the same time there were people around the periphery of the Communist Party who were searching for an explanation of what went wrong

one was arguing about all the time. Whenever you ran into a member of the Socialist Party or its youth group, the Young Peoples Socialist League, or a CPer, the big argument was the nature of the Soviet Union. There were three basic positions.

One was the Communist Party's position. The Soviet Union was great, they said — it had democracy, it was socialist and on its way to communism. In fact, right around this time, Khrushchev announced that the Soviet Union was going to communism. They had socialism for a long time, but were now going to go to communism. Some Communist Party members who still remembered a little about Marx said, "But under communism you have no state — that means there's no police, no army, nothing." I'll never forget going to a meeting in Brooklyn and hearing some old lady who just got back from the Soviet Union saying that they had some marvelous theoreticians in Russia who had just discovered a way to have communism where you could keep the state.

Then there was the Socialist Party's position. They said that the Soviet Union was imperialist — that it was out to conquer the world — and, even though the United States might be a little bit imperialist, just a little bit, it was very democratic. So that when you weigh the two, obviously the United States is a little bit better than the Soviet Union.

The third position was that of the Socialist Workers Party. The SWP said that the Soviet Union was a contradictory society. We said that the Russian revolution had been progressive, that we defended all the gains of the Russian revolution that continued to exist, that its economy was a planned economy — therefore, it was not an expansionist society.

We said that there was a bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, that there was a lack of democracy and civil liberties and that these things had to be fought against in the Soviet Union. We were for a political revolution and a re-establishment of real democracy in the Soviet Union, and we were not for the Soviet Union going back to capitalism. We definitely defended the fact that it had a socialized economy and that it was basically, in the historic development of the world, a step forward. Finally, the SWP defended the existence of the Soviet Union as opposed to any capitalist country.

The other point that divided people was the question of the Democratic Party. The lines were very clear. The Communist Party supported working within the Democratic Party and they supported Democrats, as did the Socialist Party. The SWP did not, on the basis of principle. The SWP said that the Democratic and Republican parties represented the capitalist ruling class and that the class struggle required the working class to build and support its own political organizations and that you should never, at any time, cross class lines and give the ruling class political support.

The *Young Socialist* newspaper began, more or less, along the political line of the Socialist Workers Party and in general support of it. The first conference that the *Young Socialist* newspaper held was in Chicago, February 1 and 2, 1958. About 150 people attended.

In that period, the main activity of the *Young Socialist* supporters was to try to sell the newspaper. It wasn't like today where you could just go on a campus and sell. At that time you would be arrested! You were selling a socialist paper! It said "socialist" on it, right? That was sufficient to convict you. And that was the general political situation in the United States at the time. So we had one battle after another just to get the right to sell, even on the campuses.

In the fall of 1958, supporters of the *Young Socialist* held their first fund drive. They set a goal of raising \$1,200. In the winter of 1959 they held their first subscription drive. Nationwide, they got 220 subscriptions. That was a big step forward.

The YSA came about after all these groups gathered around the *Young Socialist* had discussed and defined their politics. The founding convention was held April 15-17, 1960, in Philadelphia.

The leadership that the YSA had in those days — people who had come from the Independent Socialist League and the Young Socialist League — had certain weaknesses which it had picked

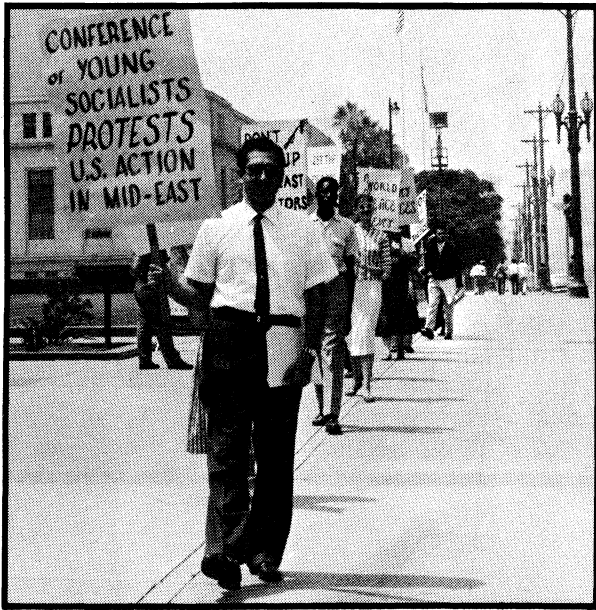


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with the Communist Party and how Stalin could have been what he was for all those years without anybody knowing it. Out of this, plus the young comrades of the Socialist Workers Party, came the small group that founded a newspaper called the *Young Socialist*.

Right from the start the key political element in this formation was the young comrades in the SWP. But there were also these thirty people from the YSL who played an important leadership role — they were people like Tim Wohlforth, the leader of the Workers League, and James Robertson, the leader of the Spartacist League, and others. Also, around that time, one of the editors of the Communist Party paper split from them over the question of the Hungarian Revolution. Some of the young CPers who followed him joined in the formation of the *Young Socialist* newspaper.

This may sound really funny to you now, today, but the main question that politically divided people on the left in 1957 and 1958, and especially the socialist currents, was the nature of the Soviet Union — that's what every-



up from its previous political experience. It was basically a weakness that characterized petty-bourgeois-type organizations. They had this big carry-over of rigidity and formality that they picked up in the in-fighting and maneuvering of the left-wing social democratic organizations to which they belonged prior to joining the YSA. Plus they had not totally dropped the political program of the Young Socialist League, in my opinion. It was soon revealed, as I will explain, that they did not really fully agree with the YSA.

The position of the Independent Socialist League and the Young Socialist League was that the Soviet Union was a totally new type of society. It wasn't capitalist and not exactly the same as American imperialism. It was a new thing called "bureaucratic collectivism," which is just as reactionary as capitalism, therefore, it could not be supported or defended in any way. There was Russian imperialism of this collectivist type, there was American imperialism, and then there was a mystical third force—them, I guess. They called their position the Third Camp. In their long search for the third force they discovered that the Buddhists of Vietnam were the third force. For a while, Sukarno in Indonesia was the third force—that was at the end of the second world war. These people, who today call themselves the International Socialists, are always looking for some group or leader to support that's independent of the class struggles that are going on. To give you an example: In Vietnam, the National Liberation Front and the masses of people are on one side and the United States is on the other. In their view, the National Liberation Front and the Americans are both evil—one represents the evils of the communist imperialists and the other represents the evils of the capitalist imperialists. Let me read you a couple of quotes about Vietnam from their paper, the *International Socialist*. This is on the danger of an NLF victory. "While the Stalinist leadership may continue to quibble over whether it will enter the Russian or Chinese sphere of influence, the fate of the Vietnamese people, if the NLF carries the victory, is Stalinist oppression. To defeat American imperialism, only to have the Stalinists enslave the Vietnamese people, is to have fought in vain." Here is a quote on the difference between North and South Vietnam. "The economic and social situation of the workers and peasants in the North is essentially no different from that of the South Vietnamese. Only the means and the form of the exploitation are different." It is also interesting to note their acceptance of the American propaganda about NLF terrorism. "Even the loyalty of the peasants in the present struggle can be questioned, as the use of terrorism by the NLF increases, to enforce the adherence of a growing number of villages, and as tens of thousands of peasants leave their land, their most valuable possession, to flee the areas of NLF control." In fact, their general line towards the Chinese revolution, the Vietnamese revolution, the Korean revolution, and the Cuban revolution, is to totally reject them all. They see them all as the same and use exactly the same type of arguments that the U.S. State Department uses—the only difference being that they think the United States is no good either. This was the political background of many of the comrades who were in the leadership of the YSA.

What happened at this founding convention was that for the first time in decades, and really for the first time in terms of a full programmatic development, a revolutionary Marxist youth group appeared in the United States.

The YSA differed from every other current that existed in that period precisely because we said that we were going to build a revolutionary socialist youth organization on a principled basis. The principles included never supporting the ruling class, being internationalist in our outlook and working with anyone else with whom we had agreement on the basis of those principles. We were out to build a revolutionary organization based on principles, which no one else was doing in the youth arena. We knew that if we took that position, no matter how small we were, in the long run people would be won to our program and our organization.

Since the founding convention we have added to the YSA's program. But we don't have to repudiate, in all ten years, one single resolution that the YSA has passed. There isn't one major political statement by the leadership of the YSA since its founding that we have had to repudiate. This is very much unlike all other political groups.

The first thing that we got involved in after the YSA was founded was the Woolworth sit-ins. In the south the wave of sit-ins to desegregate the Woolworth lunch counters had begun. In the north, where the YSA was located, we immediately tried to get everyone we could who supported the sit-ins to begin picketing and building a support movement in the north. The main problem was that we would build these support committees and then the committees would try to exclude us because we were communists. The Socialist Party and the Communist Party youth members were very strong, in a relative sense, at this time. The minute a committee would get together, some member of the CP would raise his hand and say, "I think we've got to, if we're really going to grow and reach out to the people, exclude the communists," and then they'd look at the YSA-ers because we were the only people open about our politics. The Socialist Party members would also get up and declare that these support committees had to exclude totalitarians—we were the "totalitarians." I remember in Boston there was a big fight on this question. It would be touch and go in these committees, and sometimes we lost, sometimes we won. When there was a split, however, most of the kids went into the non-exclusionary committees that allowed communists in.

Also in that period the YSA was involved in the defense of the Cuban revolution. We were instrumental, in fact, we played the leading role in establishing the Fair Play for Cuba Committees throughout the United States, which helped to propagandize about the reality of the Cuban revolution.



In 1961 the United States invaded Cuba. At that time, the largest organization on the left among the youth was the Young Peoples Socialist League, the people who are now the International Socialists—the Schachtmanites. When the Cuban invasion took place they put out a statement saying that they could understand why Cuban exiles were arming themselves and fighting for the overthrow of the Castro regime. They were sympathetic to that. They actually politically supported that invasion. Some of them didn't, but that was the official position of YPSL.

About this time the CP decided that it had to reorganize its forces, and so a new youth group was founded. They set up a youth group in New York called Advance. Even though they had been really declining in numbers there were still quite a few ex-CP and CP members who had children. That gave them a base. Basically they had no one outside of that milieu, yet they were

still quite large. They used the technique in organizing Advance that the CP had used when it was the dominant group on the left. They would set up a youth group and then they'd say that this youth group is very broad. They would say, "You like music? You can join. You like dances? You can join. Now, we do some political things, like we're for giving black people equal rights and we don't like wars or bomb testing, but you can join and work on any project you want." Well, that approach is all right when you're a gigantic, powerful organization and you are leading a massive social movement. But when you're small and isolated in a period of reaction, it doesn't work out too well.

At this same time, in the 1960-61 period, internal differences broke out inside the YSA which were to dominate the life of the YSA for the next two years. The question involved was the nature of the Cuban revolution. The evaluation of the majority of the members of the SWP and the YSA was that Cuba had had a socialist revolution. It did not have all the democratic forms that we would favor but it definitely had made that historic step forward. It now had a planned economy that produced for the interests of the people, it had expropriated the capitalists' property, it had established an armed militia, and it had armed the working class and the peasantry. The majority position in the YSA said that a socialist revolution had triumphed in Cuba. The minority position, however, was represented by the majority of the leadership in the YSA. Their position was that Cuba was still capitalist, which was interesting since the capitalists didn't think it was capitalist and there weren't any capitalists left in Cuba. Tim Wohlforth's theoretical explanation for this was that what existed in Cuba was a "phantom" capitalist state. You couldn't see it, you couldn't touch it, you couldn't feel it, but it was there. Castro was just a petty-bourgeois radical who was actually upholding the bourgeoisie indirectly. Well, that was just an absurdity. The minority refused to accept the fact that Cuba was a workers state.

We went to our second convention in the midst of this internal struggle. The minority had control of the two largest locals, New York and Berkeley. One third of the organization voted for the minority position, which represented about 50 people. Two thirds voted for the majority. By the time of the second convention it became clear that we really only had a hundred people who agreed with our program and who agreed that Cuba was a workers state.

It's very important to understand what went on at that convention because there are many lessons that are very important to understand and learn from that came out of that convention. What do you do when you have differences internally? What do you do when you have different evaluations? How do you function?

What happens is this: every individual or tendency that has a political position writes it up and presents it as a document. Those documents are then given to everybody in the organization. You would study both sides, all the arguments, then you would discuss them in the locals. One person would get up and defend one position, another would get up and present the other position. After the discussion was over you would vote on the resolutions. The delegates to the national convention would then be divided according to the percentage of the vote that the different positions received. Let's say that a local had 15 comrades. If five voted for the minority and ten for the majority resolution, then the ten would get two delegates and the minority would get one delegate, since there is one delegate allowed for every five members. The five people in the minority would get together and elect their delegate. The other ten members would then elect two delegates. This allows the minority to have their position heard at the convention. A full discussion of the resolutions would then take place at the convention with the minority and majority positions represented in the discussion, and then a vote is taken. That's our tradition. On the question of Cuba we carried the convention, receiving almost 80% of the vote for the majority. The National Committee was then made up of about 80% of comrades representing the majority position and about 20% representing the minority. The National Executive Committee, which is elected by the National Committee, was made up, more or less, in the same proportions. At that convention the people who had been in the leadership lost and a new leadership was elected, and the organization didn't split. In fact, the public never knew anything was hap-

pening.

What is the basic, fundamental concept behind why we function like this? It is the concept that the only way we can decide our policy is democratically. We believe that in the last analysis the membership that actually makes up the organization must make the political decisions. The minority has the right to present their ideas internally, to have documents and representation at the conventions, to convince the rest of the membership and to try to become the majority. The right of the majority is to carry out its position. That's where the centralism comes in. The democratic side is in the decision-making, while the centralist aspect is in carrying out those decisions. This

was Lenin's concept of democratic centralism. The Communist Parties have turned this concept into what we call "bureaucratic centralism." Centralism without democracy is the organizational norm of the Stalinist parties. We are opposed to monolithism, that is, to the concept that there can only be one point of view in the revolutionary organization. There can be many points of view but at the same time we also strive for political homogeneity. A revolutionary organization must be built on the basis of a general programmatic agreement, otherwise you simply can't function together. If half the YSA thought that we should support Democrats and the other half thought we shouldn't, we simply couldn't function in the same organi-

zation. There have to be common grounds for agreement.

Even though we had a very serious difference at the second convention over the class nature of the Cuban revolution, everyone stayed within the organization. We took the position that Cuba had had a socialist revolution and that was the line that we functioned on. The basic criterion which explains who we allow in the organization is the concept of loyalty, that is, those people who really want that organization to grow, who really want that organization to exist, and who respect majority decisions.

I say all of this because in a little while I'm going to tell you about when the Wohlforth-Robertson grouping was expelled.

The Fund Drive...

We've passed the half-way mark in the fund drive and the gap between where we are and where we should be has widened.

At this point we have reached 27.4% and this puts us \$6,296.81 behind schedule.

There are nearly two months left in which to correct this situation. Regular payments must be part of the normal functioning of every YSA local and at-large area. This important responsibility to the national organization is not secondary to any of the other activities which locals carry out.

Due to a serious financial situation Twin Cities has lowered its quota by \$300. Worcester and Atlanta have raised their quotas—Worcester went from \$100 to \$125 and Atlanta from \$500 to \$550. Other locals which are on time or ahead of schedule should seriously consider also raising their quotas.

The continued growth and expansion of the YSA in the coming months depends a great deal on the success of our spring fund drive—and its success is the responsibility of every local and at-larger.

FUND DRIVE SCOREBOARD

(as of April 10)

LOCAL	QUOTA	PAID	PERCENTAGE
PHOENIX	\$ 150	\$ 150	100%
WORCESTER	125	97.50	78
ANN ARBOR	100	62.45	62
PORTLAND	100	55	55
PHILADELPHIA	1600	875	54
CHICAGO	2100	1120	53
BERKELEY	1500	600	40
NEW YORK	3000	1150	38

DETROIT	1900	700
BOSTON	1700	607
CLEVELAND	1900	605
KANSAS CITY	100	30
PROVIDENCE	250	75
LOS ANGELES	1800	516
ATLANTA	550	150
HAYWARD	150	40
WASHINGTON DC	650	131
TWIN CITIES	1500	268
AUSTIN	500	75
SEATTLE	500	54.20
MADISON	800	70.60
RED HOOK	100	7
SAN FRANCISCO	1600	75

ALBANY	100	0
ANTIOCH	100	0
ATHENS	100	0
BINGHAMTON	100	0
BLOOMINGTON	100	0
BOULDER	100	0
CHAPEL HILL	100	0
COLUMBUS	100	0
DEKALB	140	0
EASTERN		
WASHINGTON	100	0
GAINESVILLE	100	0
HOBOKEN	100	0
HOUSTON	100	0
KENT	100	0
MANSFIELD	100	0
MILWAUKEE	100	0

37 NEWARK	250	0	0
35 OXFORD	100	0	0
32 PATERSON	100	0	0
30 SAN DIEGO	100	0	0
30 SAN JOAQUIN	100	0	0
28 ST. LOUIS	100	0	0
27 YPSILANTI	100	0	0
26 N.O.	2000	0	0
20 GENERAL	600	121.94	20.2
17 TOTAL	\$27,865	\$7,635.69	27.4
15 SHOULD BE	\$27,865	\$13,932.50	50%

Dear Comrades,

The at-large quota of \$600.00 is one of the largest quotas in the fund drive. So far, \$121.94 or 20.2% of the quota has been paid—\$178.06 short of where we should be.

Just as local members pledge a certain amount towards helping make their local's quota, at-large YSAers assume responsibility for meeting the \$600 at-large quota. There are now 130 YSA members at-large—if every comrade contributes between \$10 and \$15 to the fund drive, we will be able to go over the top of the at-large quota.

Financial contributions are a serious obligation which all YSAers share. At-large members who have not yet made payments to the fund drive should send part or all of their pledge as soon as possible.

HELEN MEYERS

Fund Drive Director

YSA National Office

...And How to Make It

Looking over the scoreboard in the April 15 *Young Socialist Organizer*, I get the feeling that there is a problem in most of the locals of getting payments in to the National Office on time or ahead of schedule. We're almost 15% behind where we should be.

We're not in very good shape at this point. But there are still seven weeks left for us to fill our quota and, with a little extra effort, most of the locals should be able to go over the top in time.

This spring's fund drive, as outlined at the YSA National Convention, is the largest and most ambitious one that the YSA has undertaken so far. And it's certainly no small part of our activity. The fund drive should be viewed as equally important to recruitment. I'm not just saying that to shock people—it's true. If we don't get the money necessary to carry out the perspectives we are now able to project, then we might as well not have a national organization at all.

As we've said many times before, we're a revolutionary organization, and because of that we have a hard time raising money from the people whom we're someday going to overthrow. We have to count on our own members and supporters to carry the organization through financially. The idea of viewing the fund drives as equal in importance to recruitment might be good to keep in mind in making plans to push the quota—nationally—over the top. I think that's the kind of campaign we have to begin—and NOW!

If you look at the scoreboard closely, you'll see that here in New York—which is the largest local in the country, and, therefore, has the largest quota—we're following a pattern of keeping up with the "should be" part of the chart. What I want to do here is give comrades an idea of how we laid the basis for the quota we accepted, and how we're managing, with all the expenses we have in addition to our fund drive, to keep the money coming in. Given the size of the local and the amount of money we have to collect, it's not an easy task.

The first thing we did in New York, even before "launching" the local fund drive, was to propose to the local that we establish a monthly sustainer to the N.O.—we began with \$250, and projected raising it to \$500 by this summer. Of course, the monthly sustainer is

credited to our fund drive quota. So we knocked out \$1250 right there. In order to do this we had to go on a campaign in the local to raise individual sustainers substantially. Political motivations were presented during business meetings so that the comrades would be clear on the necessity of a big financial drive. Figures on the income, expenses, and balance were made available to illustrate the situation. Each comrade was then approached and encouraged to raise his sustainer in accordance with his ability.

But we still had that other \$1750 staring us in the face, so we decided to go for broke and ask the members for a fund drive pledge—we established a per capita minimum of \$15—which would have taken us near the top. We took pledges from the floor of the meeting following the week that the \$3000 quota had been accepted. We wanted to give comrades a chance to think over the financial situation and come up with a big pledge. We not only reached the necessary quota, but we went over the top—in pledges.

The problem, once the verbal commitment had been made, became that of arranging a payment schedule so that each comrade would be able to pay his or her pledge without starving for the last two weeks before the end of the fund drive. That's where the financial director and the executive committee come in. We left it open to the comrades—they could integrate their pledge into their weekly sustainer or they could set up a separate schedule for their fund drive pledge, either on a weekly, monthly or even bi-monthly basis. Of course, they could also pay the whole pledge at one time.

So far most of the comrades have been paying on a weekly basis towards their fund drive pledge as well as their sustainer. Several have paid their entire pledge but more haven't paid anything. However, it evens out to just about what we should be getting on a weekly basis to fill the quota two weeks early. That gives us (and the National Office) some room to move, and also makes it much easier to go over the quota by a large margin.

There are certain common problems some of the locals might run up against during the course of the drive. Since there's seldom enough money to do every-

thing we project, there's a tendency to use whatever money we have for local expenses, and regard the national obligations as something that's somehow less important, or can be let slide until the last minute. Exactly the opposite is the case. On the one hand, the National Office has a tremendous amount of expenses. This is because of the many political and organizational functions that it carries out—from organizing national interventions to sponsoring tours, publishing *The Young Socialist Organizer*, continually expanding operations in the center, increasing staff and, consequently, being able to provide more services to the locals. That's one thing, among many others, that distinguishes the YSA from every other youth organization on the scene—we understand the importance of maintaining a strong national center.

On the other hand, the only "constituency" that the National Office has to draw from is the locals. If the locals don't help the N.O. then, just like a local whose members don't build the organization politically and with financial support, it would soon cease to function. So when a local doesn't make regular payments on their pledge, they're hurting themselves in a certain sense, by making it harder for the N.O. to function smoothly.

Another problem is that comrades sometimes don't understand the importance of contributing as much as they can to the local, always with an eye towards increasing their contributions, politically and financially. Each local should have a firm, diplomatic and politically conscious financial director, backed up by the executive committee, to make sure that the local is continually aware of its financial needs and how to meet them.

The April 15 scoreboard had us almost 15% behind where we should be on the fund drive. Let's see if, by the scoreboard in the May 15 *YS Organizer*, we can't be 15% ahead of schedule and proceed to go way over the top on the fund drive!

RICHIE LESNIK

Financial Director

New York City YSA

Tapes for Revolution: Farrell Dobbs

"We of the party, we revolutionaries in the United States, acting as best we can in solidarity with the revolutionary fighters across the world, must always keep in mind that in the last analysis the fate of humanity rests on the socialist revolution in the United States. And our task is to build a party capable of making that revolution, going up against, as we are, the most heinous of the reactionary, monstrous ruling regimes that exists on the face of this planet, the imperialist ruling class of the United States."

Revolutionary socialists see the process of radicalization that is going on today in the U.S. and all over the world as one that will continue and deepen, a process which in the 1970s will lead to increasing numbers of massive, militant struggles against the ruling class. Already we are in the middle of the biggest strike wave in 24 years. Already the majority of Americans are opposed to U.S. government's intervention in Vietnam—an intervention essential to the overall imperialist strategy. Already the Black and Chicano liberation movements, and the mushrooming women's liberation movement, are moving in an objectively anti-capitalist direction. And already the revolutionary socialist youth organization, the YSA, is recruiting at a rapid and accelerating pace and is clearly on the way toward becoming a mass organization.

In this context of the world-wide crisis of capitalism and the turn by large numbers of people to direct independent struggle against the capitalist class, the lessons of the last fifty years of building the revolutionary movement in the U.S. assume unprecedented importance.

The indifference of the capitalists to the possible elimination of all life on the planet, whether by nuclear holocaust or by the systematic destruction of the environment, makes it clear that in a very concrete sense the survival of the human race depends on the successful accomplishment of the socialist revolution. And if there is one lesson of the last fifty years that stands out above everything else, it is surely this: that without the conscious, planned, systematic intervention and leadership of a revolutionary combat party, the struggles that spring up will not result in the overthrow of capitalism.

The capitalists are tightly-organized and powerful. They control the mass communications media and the whole state apparatus. We can clearly see in Vietnam that the capitalists are brutal, callous, inhuman, ruthless, and that they will stop at nothing to preserve their rule. To expect this class to be displaced from power simply by the spontaneous action of the masses is utopian. Building the revolutionary combat party is the key to making the socialist revolution.

We in the YSA support and help to build the revolutionary party in this country, the Socialist Workers Party. Seeing that the socialist youth group must also be organized along Leninist lines as a combat organization, we seek to learn from the experiences of the SWP in building the revolutionary party.

Throughout the YSA, but particularly in the large number of newer locals, it is important to set up local educational or special classes on the organizational concepts of our movement. The taped presentations by Farrell Dobbs, recorded at the West Coast Vacation School in August 1966, on "Building the Revolutionary Party," constitute an invaluable resource for such classes.

There are two lectures, totalling 2 hours and 20 minutes. The first takes up the overall tasks and perspectives of the party—an assessment of the general political situation, how it is likely to develop in a revolutionary direction, and the ways in which the party will act to further this development. Dobbs discusses such crucial questions as the role of coalitions, the labor party, reformism, the Transitional Program, a transitional approach to the antiwar movement, the meaning of independent political action, and the projected tactics of the capitalists as the crisis deepens. In short, he delineates the political criteria that determine our approach to the organizational question.

New YSAers will find particularly striking the way in which Dobbs' projections on the future development of the trade union movement, the antiwar movement, the Black liberation movement, etc.—made at the height of the "New Left" hysteria, when SDS was seen by most radicals as the wave of the future, before the major growth of the antiwar movement—have proved to be completely accurate.

The second lecture deals with the internal structure of the organization. How can you achieve the correct balance between democracy in decision-making and unity in action? What do we mean by political homogeneity? Is the party supposed to be "monolithic?" What constitutes "loyalty" to the party? What is "party discipline?" In addition to analyzing and answering these questions, Dobbs takes up the all-important area of leadership. The YSA and SWP's concept of team leadership, of how leadership is selected, of how to maintain both stability and dynamism of leadership—these are unique in the radical movement.

Our organizational forms do not come naturally. They are based on the concrete political situation, determined by our political program and goals, and developed out of the living experience of the revolutionary movement. They should be carefully analyzed and studied by every YSAer.

As Dobbs points out, democratic centralism "is not just an abstract theory . . . it is a tested and tried conscious approach to the building of the revolutionary party that has been verified in the fact that through its application the Russian Revolution was won. . . ."

* * *

In setting up a class or set of classes using this tape, essential reading would include: *Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, by James P. Cannon; *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, by Leon Trotsky; and *Organizing the YSA*, by Mary-Alice Waters and Robin Maisel. Suggested further reading would include: *The History of American Trotskyism and Letters from Prison*, by James P. Cannon; *Problems of Leadership Selection and Leadership Structure* (SWP Information Bulletin); and *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, by V.I. Lenin.

The tape costs \$4.50 and may be ordered from the SWP National Tape Service, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. The order should specify 2-track or 4-track.

ANDY ROSE
YSA National Office

Pamphlet on Convention Proceedings

The latest in the series of large-format pamphlets published by the YSA is the *Proceedings of the Ninth National Convention*. This 56-page, 8 1/2 x 11 pamphlet contains the transcriptions of the organizational and *Young Socialist* report and Black struggle report approved by the convention. In addition, it contains a transcription of the women's liberation panel.

Also included is the speech given by Farrell Dobbs, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on "The 1934 Strikes and the New Radicalization." This speech, one of the high points of the convention, is available nowhere else in print. In it, Comrade Dobbs relates some of the concrete lessons and experiences of the Minneapolis teamsters' strikes, and discusses how the student movement can relate to labor struggles. His analysis is particularly valuable in light of the misconceptions common among some student radicals about the need to "go into the factories and organize" or to form a "worker-student alliance."

The panel on women's liberation describes the current stage of the movement in different parts of the country—the types of organizations that exist, their political level,

and the types of actions they engage in. The panelists also explore some of the basic questions facing revolutionary socialists who participate in and build this movement: how it relates to the on-going mass movements against the war and for Third World self-determination; what transitional demands to put forth that will further the anti-capitalist thrust of the movement; how to recruit newly-radicalizing women to a socialist perspective and to the YSA.

The Black liberation struggle report goes into a detailed analysis of the crisis of leadership in the Black movement and discusses the necessity for the YSA to continue and extend the process of recruiting and developing Black cadre.

The organizational and *Young Socialist* report deals with the new stage of development of the YSA. It shows how our analysis of the current political situation, as expressed in the political resolution and report, is reflected in the day to day organizational functioning of the YSA.

The report includes a brief history of the YSA and the initial projections for *The Young Socialist Organizer* and the new *International Socialist Review*, as well as im-

portant areas of work such as regional organizing, defense and finances.

Initial orders for *Proceedings of the Ninth National Convention* may be made by filling out the coupon below and returning it to the National Office. Locals and at-large areas should order enough so that every comrade can have one. The pamphlet will cost 60c.

ANDY ROSE
YSA National Office

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Tour by Belgian Student Leader

From April 13 through May 14, Eric Corijn, a leader of the Belgian Jeune Gardes Socialistes/Socialistische Jonge Wacht, will be on a speaking tour of the U.S. and Canada.

Eric is a graduate student at the University of Gent and a member of the Political Bureau of the JGS/SJW. He is a well-known leader of the student movement at Gent.

He will be speaking on the recent massive miners' strike in Belgium, and the role of the student movement, especially the JGS/SJW, in those strikes.

Because of the short time which he can spend on tour, he will not be able to visit every local of the YSA and the YS/LJS. We had to select those areas where the largest public meetings could be arranged and where the greatest possibilities of obtaining honorariums exist. It is extremely important that all locals involved make a serious effort to obtain honorariums for Eric to help cover both the tour quotas and the cost of the tour itself. The tour quotas and any hono-

raryums obtained should be sent directly to the National Office.

The tour has three important aspects. First, it will serve to inform the student movement in this country and Canada about the political situation in Belgium, and especially about the recent strikes. Second, it will further identify the YSA and the YS/LJS as internationalists and as part of an international movement. And third, it will help educate the student movement in North America on the correct way in which students can relate to and support workers' strikes and will graphically illustrate what is wrong with the "worker-student alliance" approach of the Maoists and other ultra-lefts.

For background on the miners' strikes and the role of the JGS/SJW, comrades are referred to the February 16—March 16, 1970, issues of *Intercontinental Press* (Volume 8, #6-10).

ERIC CORIJN TOUR SCHEDULE

Local	Dates	Tour Quota
BOSTON	APRIL 14-15	\$40

MONTREAL	16	20
NEW YORK	17-18	50
PHILADELPHIA	19-20	40
ATLANTA	21-22	40
AUSTIN	23-24	40
TRAVEL	25	
LOS ANGELES	26-27	40
BAY AREA	28-MAY 1	80
SEATTLE	2-3	40
VANCOUVER	4	20
WINNIPEG	5	20
TWIN CITIES	6-7	40
DETROIT	8-9	40
CHICAGO	10-11	40
CLEVELAND	12-13	40
TORONTO	14	20

SUSAN LAMONT
YSA National Secretary

young socialist the organizer

A BI-WEEKLY ACTION PUBLICATION OF THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE, A MULTINATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST YOUTH ORGANIZATION.

EDITOR: FRANK BOEHM

BUSINESS MANAGER: MARTY RUDENSTEIN

Address all correspondence to YSA, Box 471, Cooper Station, New York, New York 10003. *The Young Socialist Organizer*, formerly the *Young Socialist*, is published bi-weekly. Second class postage is paid at New York, New York. Vol. 13, No. 4 Subscription rates to all non-YSA members: \$2.50 per year.

APRIL 29, 1970

Without Revolutionary Theory...

Where they are not already underway plans should be made in all branches and central locals for the socialist summer schools. YSAers at-large and members of smaller YSA locals are also seriously urged to begin planning, in cooperation with the major centers, means of attending the socialist summer schools and functioning in those locals over the summer.

In contrast to forums or contact classes, the summer schools are primarily aimed at our own cadre. In contrast to educationals that are held after local or branch meetings, the summer schools allow for intensive study of fundamental Marxist works. In contrast to classes that may be held during other times on a voluntary basis, participation in the summer schools is considered a political assignment for all comrades in the YSA and the SWP. This flows from our concept that the responsibility for cadre education is as much a part of our political activity as are *Militant* sales, election campaigns, forums, finances, etc. and participation in the antiwar, Third World, trade union or women's liberation movements.

The summer schools take on an added and pressing importance because of the rapid recruitment of new forces to the YSA during a period of intense internal and external political activity. To build the kind of combat party and youth organization that we are doing requires a rounded political development of all our cadre: Should education suffer, all other work will suffer. For that reason, the summer schools will be geared to our own cadre. While we should also take advantage of the opportunity to bring close contacts to the summer schools, the classes themselves will be aimed primarily at our own needs.

A major effort will be made to bring at-large YSAers and YSA members from locals where no SWP branch exists into the major centers where the maximum facilities are available for summer school education. In some YSA locals a number of YSAers will be unable to move to the centers and should then hold their own summer

school programs. In these cases the National Summer School Committee will help in the form of printed matter and tapes. But other aids should be considered primarily a central regional responsibility since the branches can provide speakers, teachers and help in many other ways.

Planning for the summer schools should be well-thought out to maintain a balanced view of our political activity during the summer. The summer months will not be a time of greatly diminished opportunity for intervention in the mass movements. Some locals and branches will be engaged in petition work to get the 1970 campaigns on the ballots. While remaining alert to take advantage of such opportunities, we should ensure that cadre education in the summer schools is a priority item. In practice we have often found that the added summer reinforcements to the major centers and the added enthusiasm that results from an attractive educational program enables us to undertake expanded political activity in other arenas.

Last year summer schools were held in 23 areas. Eight of the summer schools were located in areas where no SWP branch existed. The figures this year should be much higher. The National Summer School Committee will help with speakers, tapes and the preparation of necessary educational bulletins. We will be able to help send only a limited number of speakers from the center, so branches and central locals should draw upon other branches for speakers. YSA locals in areas outside of party centers should make use of the tapes and syllabi that will be prepared. Information on this will be forthcoming soon.

Comrades should read the article in the April 17 issue of *The Militant* as a reference to the topics which will be the central focus of the studies. The subject matter may vary some among the different summer schools.

FRANK BOEHM **GUS HOROWITZ**
National Summer School Committee