

young socialist the organizer

Special Supplement

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AUSTIN WOMEN'S LIBERATION

The original intervention of the Austin local into Austin women's liberation took place in the summer of 1969. At that time we attended meetings of the Women's Liberation Front, a group which concentrated mainly on the personal aspects of women's liberation. There was little opportunity for us to do anything but attend these meetings, which were essentially T-groups, and the probe into the group was abandoned.

After the YSA convention, we at first oriented toward a new group that had been formed for action on issues of women's liberation. This group, called Women United, consisted entirely of women from organized political tendencies--the Communist Party, the Spartacist League, Progressive Labor, RYM II, and us. We were hampered in this intervention by a couple of factors, lack of experience and insufficient forces. Only one comrade was assigned to this work, and she had no previous experience in the women's liberation movement. We were outnumbered by groups like PL, which, in essence, do not really support women's liberation. We were not able to devote the necessary time to build the group to include independent women who could have acted as a counterweight to the sectarians. As a result, the group rapidly degenerated from its original position of activism to a small circle whose main activity was factional debate, red-baiting of the YSA, and opposition to participation in the mass antiwar movement. The group further and further isolated itself and we began to look for other ways to be active in the women's liberation movement.

The comrade active in women's liberation again began attending meetings of the Women's Liberation Front, which had begun to reorganize itself from being a discussion group into being a combined discussion and "project group." Under this plan, the large meeting of discussion sessions would meet every other week, and those who wanted to act on one or another aspect of women's liberation could form project groups that would meet during the intervening week. This looked promising, and we began to concentrate on the Women's Liberation Front.

Women's Liberation Front had been formed by a group of women around The Rag, an Austin underground newspaper. While the main group itself carried out no activity, no votes were taken, and there was no formal leadership, under the new plan we were perfectly free to try to set up a project group that could carry out activities. After we had been attending meetings for some time, we discovered that a lawsuit had been filed in Dallas, challenging the constitutionality of the

Texas abortion laws. With the help of an independent woman in WLF, we decided to set up a project group that would work to build support for the repeal of the abortion laws.

This project group was very successful in the late spring of 1970, getting out fact sheets on the abortion laws and starting a petitioning campaign in support of abortion law repeal. We obtained about 2,500 signatures, set up regional contacts to help in a fall campaign, and raised funds by putting on Myrna Lamb's play, But What Have You Done For Me Lately?

The abortion laws were declared unconstitutional in midsummer, and as the legislature must now draw up new laws, the fall of 1970 offers an even more promising opportunity to campaign for free, legal abortions on demand.

The YSA and SWP joint fraction has had a number of opportunities to speak on the topic of women's liberation in different parts of the region during the past period. Evelyn Sell spoke on a panel in Houston, spoke in El Paso, and spoke on a panel in Killeen during the Fort Hood "Nine Days in May" (nine days of activity organized by antiwar GIs). I spoke at an SMC Women's Day in Arlington. Recently, a new YSAer, a women's liberation activist, has been the women's liberation spokeswoman in the defense case against the University of Texas non-student rule (a rule restricting non-students from meetings on the campus).

Not only were regular reports of our work sent to the N.O., but we also exchanged reports with comrades in Arlington, Houston, and El Paso. Such an exchange proved helpful and informative in the early stage of our intervention, but as the abortion campaign gets underway in the fall, closer collaboration with other locals and the at-largers in the region will become even more important.

Women's liberation in Texas is no longer confined to Austin. It has become a widespread movement in the state with women's liberation groups organized in Fort Worth, Houston, Arlington, El Paso, San Antonio, and Dallas. Close collaboration among the YSAers in the entire region can help to coalesce these groups, which tend to be somewhat isolated, into a strong statewide movement, with the ability to effect changes in Texas to improve the status of women.

LAURA MAGGI
Austin YSA

CHICAGO STRIKE REPORT

The strong and powerful antiwar coalitions which existed in the fall of 1969 were running into trouble in the spring of 1970. The April 15 demonstrations were not as large as the previous actions due largely to the problems, under the pressure of the upcoming elections, in maintaining viable coalitions with a clear perspective for mass actions. The Moratorium announced its demise with projections for support to "peace" candidates. Newspaper reports and news commentators spoke of the "lull in the student movement," predicting a quiet acceptance of Nixon's Vietnamization program. Of course the underlying driving forces of the radicalization still existed and Marxists had an extremely optimistic attitude.

Immediately after the Cambodia invasion the Chicago Peace Council and the SMC planned a demonstration for May 9. Our projections changed drastically on May 4, the day of the Kent State murders. Our task changed from building support for a demonstration on May 9 to immediately organizing and giving direction to the anticipated spontaneous campus explosions.

An SMC-sponsored mass citywide meeting on May 6 drew over 1,500 youth from over 30 different schools. This first meeting, called at the initiative of SMC, was crucial in that it:

- 1) established SMC leadership as the most politically advanced;
- 2) gave us an opportunity to present a clear perspective of struggle to the hundreds of inexperienced youth representing over 30 schools;
- 3) gave us the authority of the first citywide strike gathering to do more productive "outreach" work;
- 4) showed us the breadth of the movement and put us in a position to determine exactly what structure would best facilitate the integration of the new forces into the leadership.

The meeting set up a steering committee which was to consist of two representatives from each school, democratically elected at mass meetings, and in addition two representatives from each organization supporting the strike demands. A new organization was formed which we called the Citywide Strike Council. Just as the Soviets went beyond the traditional labor organizations and sought out the spontaneous factory committees so we intended to discard any fetish on organization which might interfere in drawing in the leadership which had only recently developed in schools we previously had no contact with.

Our proposals on outreach and structure were received with overwhelming approval. We had become the political

leadership and spokesmen for the Chicago strike movement, partially overcoming the SMC's weak campus base by acting rapidly and with bold and realistic programs for consolidating the student gains in order to reach out to the working class, Third World, religious, GI, and community organizations. Without the centralized representative Citywide Strike Council providing the student movement with a focus and concrete reasons for continuing the strike, our outreach campaign would not have been nearly as successful. The strength and momentum of the students' struggle was the key to our campaign to broaden the antiwar movement.

The move of the Strike Council headquarters onto a campus was the second key step taken in building our authority. To make clear what we meant by the antiwar university, we moved right into the middle of the political center of the upsurge--the campus. We weren't only projecting, we were doing. The Strike Council was a valuable example for the Chicago-area student movement.

The first week's activity culminated in a Citywide Strike Council-sponsored demonstration of over 60,000.

Organization of the Strike Council for Outreach Work

Our first task was to publicize our objectives in striking and to demonstrate our seriousness and high organizational level.

Only one issue of a strike newspaper, costing \$500, was ever printed. Despite our failure in this area the concept remains extremely important. The daily strike newspaper would be distributed by youth on the campuses, at plant gates, shopping centers, army bases, high schools, etc. Community, religious, Third World, and labor leaders would be encouraged to write for the paper. Donations for publishing costs would be solicited from unions, student governments, churches, etc. An underground newspaper might be persuaded to donate its facilities. This would have been our most powerful weapon in popularizing the concept behind the strike--political mass action struggles against the war involving every layer in society and specifically joining in the May 30 demonstrations.

The Citywide Strike Council established various departments responsible for carrying out activities:

- 1) International work--utilized university phone service to contact organizations across the world in order to spread the strike;
- 2) Marshalls--took responsibility

for training and dispatch of monitors for demonstrations;

3) Press--maintained daily contact with radio, television, and press;

4) Information center--collected and dispatched national and international strike information;

5) Campus and high school coordination--maintained contact with local leadership, attempting to give citywide focus to their activities;

6) Fundraising--(This was one of our major weaknesses. We learned that the best time to do fundraising is immediately at the beginning of an upsurge. Leading comrades must be assigned to this crucial task. One of the ways we demonstrate to the various schools the advantages of a citywide apparatus is by actually performing this task with the utmost seriousness.)

7) Community work--tried to draw in the Black and Latin youth, campus and community groups;

8) Labor--sought to involve trade union leaders and rank and file.

The efficiency in functioning of the central staff was an absolute necessity if the Citywide Strike Council was to continue to win support. Through our work, representatives from over 35 schools and organizations attended meetings with varying degrees of regularity. Latin youth groups utilized liberated university facilities to implement their programs. The Black Coalition, comprising over 63 community organizations, placed a person on our staff. Statements of support to the Strike Council objectives were received from over a dozen trade union figures, some of whom attended our meetings and functioned as members of the Strike Council.

Our work through the Strike Council was an attempt to organize the student movement to accomplish the most effective outreach programs. It was the broadest coalition of youth, student, labor, and Third World groups that has ever been seen in Chicago.

Role of the Red University

Our national strategy was to develop the antiwar university. YSAers had been prepared for this advanced concept through our Program for Campus Revolt and our understanding of the transitional strategy of the red university. However, in many cases activists spontaneously took over the universities without any previous theoretical background or conscious leadership. No longer content with sitting-in or picketing, activists stopped the normal functioning of their schools and readjusted the curriculum and facilities to help the antiwar effort. It was the size and breadth of the movement combined with lessons learned from previous campus actions which paved the way for the historic advance in strategy. Lulls in

campus action will occur in the future, but hundreds of thousands of students will not forget the May events and the victories won through mass action.

In Chicago the antiwar university went much further because of our leadership in the Strike Council. We organized the School of the Arts Institute to roll out political posters for citywide use. Organizations like the Young Lords used these facilities for their community projects. We were opening up the university to the community. Paper, mimeo, phones, and office space can be of real material advantage to community organizations representing oppressed minorities. However, this is only one side of the antiwar university. More important was the establishment of the campus as a political center where forces new to the antiwar movement could come together and form a coalition powerful enough to begin moving the campaign of mass actions against the war into the mainstream of American life. Valuable contacts were made in this direction but it was still premature to expect the coalitions to appear without maintaining the example and dynamism of the student movement. Throughout the May events the orientation of the Strike Council was to give major attention to the student movement so that effective gains could be made in drawing in other layers of society.

Problems of Our Weak Campus Base

The Chicago SMC had a very weak base at the two major university centers in Chicago, Northwestern and the University of Chicago. Hostile leaderships of a reformist and ultraleft character respectively took control at these important centers. With these two campuses carrying out independent activity, uncoordinated and not directed toward giving the whole explosion a boost it was only a matter of time before the Strike Council's authority would weaken.

After the excitement of the first week's activity began to wear off it became imperative for us to organize the thousands of students into outreach campaigns. We did not have sufficient number of cadre trained to move into campus situations in areas where hostile leadership existed and as a result our problems at U. of C. and Northwestern began occurring on other campuses where the leadership did not have a perspective for going beyond the initial spontaneous actions.

The Strike Council sent activists to union meetings to win support and tried to organize community, factory, and GI leafletting but without the day-to-day leadership present at the campus level it became clear we had to face the

harsh reality of not having built a campus base. Our authority and level of activity declined steadily after the first week.

Organization of the YSA

The Chicago YSA was in the process of reorganization intended to correct some failings in our internal organization when the strike wave hit. Fractions were not meeting, little consultation was conducted between fraction leaders and the Executive Committee and there was an uneven division of labor within our movement, all of which led to a general decline in our efficiency.

Organizational norms receive a severe test in a crisis. The first tendency is usually to involve ourselves deeply in the immediate external tasks and become lax in internal organization. Throughout the first two weeks of the strike the YSA did not have a full membership meeting. Fractions did not meet to discuss how to orient to the mass movement. The intense external work during May meant that the Chicago YSA's problems in efficient functioning grew worse.

When events are moving rapidly it is very easy to postpone fractions or EC meetings. Yet it is just when situations are changing rapidly and new factors have to be considered that internal meetings become absolutely imperative and are a number one priority. We did hold some YSA meetings on the University of Illinois campus to make it easier for comrades to attend.

Our movement has to learn from the mistakes made in the May events and prepare the YSA for the next upsurge. Emphasis on internal organization of our movement today will mean even more effective work in the mass movements tomorrow. Fractions should meet regularly and punctuality must be observed. The Executive Committee must keep abreast of every fraction and committee.

Certainly in any big upsurge our functioning must be flexible and will probably take on new forms--joint fractions, open EC meetings, meetings held on campuses, for example--but all this will be easier if we establish regular and efficient norms now. Comrades cannot be expected to engage in mass work without the political discussion, orientation, and motivation provided by regularized organizational norms.

The intervention of the YSA and SWP may mean the difference between success and failure during a mass upsurge, and we must be prepared to function as a Leninist combat organization.

Conclusion

Many questions still remain to be answered from our experiences during the May upsurge. Comrades should contribute to the discussion on the strike and comment on matters such as:

- 1) How to deal with the "lock-out" tactics many universities chose when they closed the schools down;
- 2) The role of the SWP campaigns, our press, Third World fractions, etc., in the strike;
- 3) Problems of functioning for our movement during the strike;
- 4) How to improve our campus base;
- 5) Possibilities for recruitment on campus in the fall.

The YSA and SWP can be proud of the role we played in the May events. We were the only tendency to understand the tremendous possibilities of the movement. The concept of the antiwar university and of orienting the student movement to the working class were projections the student movement will not soon forget. Gains made in May were extended by our movement and have become concretized in the National Peace Action Coalition representing forces brought closer to the antiwar movement because of the May upsurge.

CARL FINAMORE
Chicago YSA

BOSTON STRIKE REPORT

Immediately following Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and the murder of the Kent State students, Boston area students began to talk about a citywide protest strike.

On Monday, May 4, over 15,000 students in mass meetings across the city, most of which were called by a coalition of radical and antiwar groups (November Action Coalition, SMC, YSA, SDS) and student governments, voted overwhelmingly to strike and support the mass rally at the statehouse called by the SMC to protest the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State Massacre and to demand a statewide vote on the war. The surge of protest over Cambodia and Kent resulted in the largest strike meetings ever-- 5,000 at Harvard; 2,000 at Boston University; 1,000 at Tufts; 1,800 at Northeastern; 2,000 at Brandeis; and 2,500 at MIT. These large universities were soon joined by scores of colleges all over Boston such as Boston College,

Simmons, Newton College of the Sacred Heart, Wellesly, University of Massachusetts at Boston, Emerson, and many others. Strike councils were very quickly established at most colleges on strike. At the larger schools such as Harvard and Boston University they tended to be ultra-left and sometimes isolated from the masses of striking students but at Tufts, Northeastern and many small colleges the strike committees reflected the mass democratic character of the student strike and were made up of students largely uninvolved in previous antiwar or radical activity.

On Tuesday, May 5, between 25,000 and 50,000 students marched on the statehouse from campuses all over the city. The demands included an immediate withdrawal of all American troops from Vietnam, an end to the Cambodian intervention, protest of the Kent State murders, and the right of the citizens of Massachusetts to vote on war. The speakers represented a broad coalition of the radical and antiwar movement including the late representative James Shea, sponsor of the bill exempting Massachusetts residents from serving in the Vietnam war, Senator Maurice Donahue, who sponsored a bill providing for an antiwar referendum, John McCann, the coordinator of the SMC's Referendum 70 campaign, and Peter Camejo of the Socialist Workers Party. During the height of the rally John McCann, who is a comrade and was acting as moderator of the rally, demanded that the governor, watching the rally from his statehouse office, lower the flag as a memorial to the murdered Kent State students. Amidst a crescendo of chants "Lower the flag!" the governor promptly complied with the demand of the crowd. As the flag was lowered students stood in silence with raised fists.

Peter Camejo drew the connection between the student strike and the necessity of using the resources of the antiwar university to go to the people and win them over to the SMC's referendum on the war. Our speaker was the best-received at the rally and it intensified student support for the referendum. Clearly, students on strike were looking for a way to reach out to the community, to involve it in the antiwar movement, and to construct an alliance with working people and the Third World community. The SMC's statewide referendum provided striking students with a vehicle to reach out to the community, to talk to people about the war, and involve them in the movement to end it.

The SMC office in Cambridge became a beehive of activity and served in fact as an action center of the strike for the Boston area. Brandeis University was supposedly the "national strike center" but the real action of sending students

out to leaflet and work on the referendum was done from campus centers and coordinated through the SMC central office. The SMC projected two major actions for the week:

- 1) We cooperated with the November Action Coalition in building a massive demonstration to protest the Kent killings (a memorial march) at Harvard Stadium on Friday, May 8. The SMC would put out the leaflets and publicize the march and organize the contingents from campuses in Boston. In exchange we were given a speaker; Peter Camejo was chosen to represent out position at the rally.
- 2) We projected Saturday, May 9, as "go to the people" day--the idea was to get thousands of students on strike to go into the communities door-to-door with referendum petitions. Continual mass meetings at schools around the city voted to support the Kent memorial march and to work on the referendum outreach.

The rally May drew about 100,000 to Harvard stadium but was dominated by ultraleft speakers lined up by NAC. The crowd soon grew tired of the super-revolutionary rhetoric and circus approach to serious politics and began to drift away. Camejo attempted to counter this mood with a spirited speech driving home the need of students to be serious and to make an alliance with other sections of society. Although he was very well-received much of the crowd had left and he was unable to turn around the general mood of disgust with the ultraleftist barrage of empty rhetoric. While the SMC rally on Tuesday at the statehouse was spirited and advanced the strike, the NAC-dominated rally May turned that spirit around and confused the strike.

However, the failure of the rally to advance the strike did not hinder the enthusiasm behind our referendum. On Saturday, May 9, thousands of students and community people poured forth from over 20 referendum centers in the Boston area armed with petitions and educational leaflets on what the referendum was and hoped to accomplish. At Tufts University, which had been turned into an antiwar center early in the strike and where our comrades were involved in the strike leadership, up to 500 students worked Saturday and for two weeks afterwards gathering signatures in Medford and Somerville. Their efforts resulted in over 5,000 signatures (only 1,200 valid names are needed in each of the 40 senatorial districts). At Newton College of the Sacred Heart nearly the entire student body of 700 worked on the referendum and quickly finished the city of Newton. At Brookline High School where students had worked through the year with SMC, hundreds went out into their community. This example was repeated at many other campuses around Boston; particularly successful

were the efforts of students at Simmons, Wellesly, and Northeastern. Within a week over 30,000 signatures were collected for the referendum.

As the strike waned on the campuses the referendum was the only activity which provided students with a continuing perspective for action. It kept up involvement with the community far into May when students left for the summer. Above all it showed the tremendous support the antiwar movement has and certainly pressured the legislature into passing almost unanimously a bill to place a referendum on the ballot in November.

Role of the YSA

Many of the problems of organizing our intervention in the strike in Boston are quite different from the experiences of the Seattle local. Although we are a very large local our campus cadre is small. Consequently, during the strike we intervened best in the strike leadership at schools like Tufts and Northeastern where we are well-known and have some periphery. At schools like Harvard, Brandeis, and Boston University the ultralefts are quite strong in the radical milieu, although very isolated from the mass of students. They presented us with some problems inasmuch as they organized de facto strike leadership out of the New Haven Bobby Seale protest May 1-3. Thus, when they got back to campus they turned these into the leadership of the strike committees. For instance, at Harvard our comrades were never notified of the meeting to elect a strike leadership.

However, it became increasingly clear as the strike gained momentum that their perspective for ultraleft action had little support even at Harvard, and they were forced to adapt to the mass meetings whose line was consistent with ours. Thus, unlike Seattle where the comrades played a leadership role in the University of Washington Strike Committee, we were most influential in organizing the statehouse demonstration and using the referendum to counterpose our line to that of the ultralefts. In that we were very successful.

Role of the SMC

During the May upsurge the Boston SMC was not as strong as it had been previously during the year. The April 15 rally, while very large in Boston, had seen an SDS attack on the platform. Later, about 5,000 people under NAC leadership trashed Harvard Square and fought a pitched battle with police for hours. These events had demoralized the Boston student movement. It was the events in Cambodia and at Kent State which roused

a feeling of unity and against factionalism and ultraleftism.

In our referendum project we involved thousands of students who had never been in SMC before but agreed with its perspective for building the antiwar movement. It is also true that as in the case of Seattle there was a need for quick decision-making which only an organization like the YSA can provide. The referendum project was recognized as the idea of the SMC. Therefore the students at the statehouse demonstration and those working on the referendum identified with the SMC. It was not possible, however, to use the SMC as an organizational vehicle for actually planning events or holding meetings. The base has been laid for a strong SMC in the fall.

Our Opponents

We came out of the May events stronger than before while both of our main opponents were considerably weakened in relationship to the mass upsurge. The November Action Coalition, while it did not directly attack the mass democratic nature of the student strike meetings and adapted somewhat to the sense of unity felt by the Boston student movement, attempted to work around the mass meetings by controlling the strike leaderships at several schools. This was true at Harvard where NAC kept everything concerning the strike leadership vague and actions on campus decentralized (everyone free to "do his own thing") so that there was a multiplicity of things going on at the same time from picketing the administration building to factory leafletting to seminars, etc. They were somewhat discredited when a mass meeting of over 1,000 voted against preventing administration officers from entering the building--then the strike committee endorsed NAC and SDS disruption. The strike committee voted 17-11 to uphold the decision against the wishes of the mass meeting and had little effect on any actions at Harvard after that. The NAC-influenced May 8 rally badly isolated them from the thousands at Harvard stadium.

Also, NAC was unable to reach out beyond the radical student milieu. Isolated on campus and having no perspective for involving the community they faded during the strike and have taken a vacation for the summer!

If NAC was isolated during the strike, PL-SDS was in a deep-freeze. Their perspective during the whole of the upsurge and at every campus where they had any strength was to "burn ROTC." They badly miscalculated the temper of the strike against ultraleftism. At Harvard, SDS led a march on the Business

Administration building after the May 8 rally--it eventually turned into a small and isolated trashing spree in Harvard Square. A few nights later they organized a march on the ROTC building (ROTC has been abolished and is being phased out at Harvard) vowing to burn it down. Their march, about 350 strong, was met by nearly 1,000 Harvard students including many Harvard SMCers who wanted to save the strike. SDS backed down. At Northeastern they called for the same tactic, but Northeastern SMC turned it around into a mass anti-ROTC rally of 1,500. The other side of the SDS line was their opposition to using the university as an antiwar center. They advocated treating the campus as a factory and the students as workers on strike--thus anyone using the campus is a scab. This perspective did not carry anywhere and discredited them at Boston State. There, they called for shutting down the university completely; while they were outside the administration staged a lockout--and SDS supported it! What support they had at State quickly evaporated. They gained little in the upsurge and overall became more isolated than ever before from the masses of students.

The May events have shown that most students in Boston identify with our line for building the antiwar movement. NAC and SDS isolate themselves in relationships with newly radicalizing antiwar students. They will still exert influence in the movement here but have declined relative to the strength and growth in influence of the YSA.

GEORGE KONTANIS
Boston YSA

ON RECRUITMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF YSA CADRE

The growth of the Boston local since the last YSA convention has been rapid and solid. Since January 1, 1970, 44 new members have joined our ranks. We say that our growth has been solid because only two of these new comrades have subsequently been dropped from membership. (We dropped nine other members during the last seven months; these nine had been inactive for a long time.) The 42 new YSAers have all become active in the local and are making very important contributions to our work.

It is very difficult to generalize the reasons for this success, and there are certainly no magical formulas which

can guarantee universal success. The main reason for the progress we've made has been the coincidence of our political line with the explosion in the antiwar and student movements. The semester began with the now-famous New England Antiwar Conference where we had to battle PL-SDS and other ultralefts over the issue of non-exclusion. In spite of the fact we had to leave the PL-SDS-dominated group, we were able to go ahead and build a large coalition and an April 15 action of close to 100,000 while the other group did nothing. This was an impressive demonstration of the correctness of our line. The massive student strikes coincided with the launching of our statewide antiwar referendum campaign, and we were able to use the referendum effectively to turn students toward the rest of the population. We also helped build two more mass actions (of 25,000 and 75,000) during May. At all of the actions, SWP and YSA speakers were the most enthusiastically received. I spend time reviewing these events because I think they indicate that when masses begin to move, they move toward us as the revolutionary tendency, rejecting the ultraleft tactics which have plagued the student movement during the past few years. It is precisely because of this fact that we were able to recruit so many comrades and integrate them so rapidly. They saw our strategy confirmed by events.

In spite of the fact that our growth has been so rapid (and our relative influence in the mass movement has increased even faster), we still have not recruited large numbers of students and we still lack a real base on any campus in the area. Our 25 student comrades are scattered on 10 college campuses and in 5 high schools.

Contact Classes

From April to June we held weekly Sunday night contact classes, given by our Senatorial candidate, Peter Camejo, which we advertised widely. These drew 30-50 contacts and new YSAers and were very important vehicles for education and recruitment. The events of the day were presented in the context of our socialist program. The classes included: What is Socialism?; Permanent Revolution and Struggles of Oppressed Minorities; Marxist Economics; The May Student Strikes; The Russian Revolution and Why It Degenerated; How to Make a Revolution in the U.S.A.; Discussion of the PL attack on the SMC.

We have a contact committee which diligently follows up on new contacts, inviting them to other activities through weekly phone calls and mailings. Members of this committee also make appointments to discuss the YSA further with interested people.

New Members Classes

In another article we discussed our new members orientation classes (see The Young Socialist Organizer, July 8). In these classes we discuss extensively the basic concepts of our program, integrated with a full discussion of our organizational concepts. This has been very important in helping new comrades to feel immediately a real part of the YSA. One thing we especially stress is the importance of weekly business meetings. We hold our meetings on Sunday mornings during the school year so there will be absolutely no conflicts with other political work. We understand that every comrade should participate in making all decisions since he or she will be expected to carry them out. Our attendance at meetings is regularly between 65 and 75 out of a total membership of about 85. During the forum season, we held new members classes before forums which improved attendance at both.

City Letter

Recently, the weekly city letter has become a very useful tool not only for informing comrades of activities, but also for giving political motivation and explanation for the local's actions. It seems to be worth the effort to spend a lot of time putting out a very political city letter.

Now that some locals, like Boston, are becoming very large, we have to have a whole new way of functioning. When locals are small, mainly campus units, it is much easier to develop comrades quickly because the necessity is so obvious. In small locals new comrades are much more likely to begin speaking and intervening, giving classes and taking organizational responsibility. As the local grows, there is a tendency to get less out of each comrade and to rely more and more on the existing leadership instead of developing new leadership. It is crucial to get new comrades immediately involved in our work. The organizer and Executive Committee cannot bear total responsibility for integrating the new comrades. This must be done through the various fractions and committees. As we grow, these units play an increasingly larger role in discussing, planning and carrying out our work; they become the essential vehicles for training comrades.

We are presently discussing ways of resolving problems of the large local--how to use the greater size without sacrificing the obvious advantages of rapid development available in smaller locals. We will be experimenting with these problems and writing further on this later. All locals

must recognize that, as they grow, they will have to modify their organizational functioning. More discussion should take place on this subject at the Oberlin conference and after.

STU SINGER
Boston YSA

BUILDING THE CAMPUS FRACTION

The University of Illinois, Chicago Circle Campus, is a commuter school of about 16,000 students in the middle of Chicago's inner city. At the time it was built the justification used for displacing the Black and Italian residents was that it would serve the inner city and make education available to its residents. In reality, the student population comes disproportionately from suburban Chicago, with only five per cent Black and less than one hundred Latin students. These factors have given it a "hard-to-organize-in" reputation among its radical students.

In the spring of 1969 our fraction at U. of I. was small and had had few successes in really making the YSA known to much of the student body. Because of the location and composition of Circle, and because we saw the necessity for building a campus base on U. of I., we began fall quarter, 1969 with a fraction of ten, including some of our top leadership in the YSA local and SWP branch. That our political opponents also saw the importance of the U. of I. is apparent from the following breakdown: PL colonized most of their Chicago people on Circle for the fall quarter (about 20); IS appeared for the first time with one person (their fraction remained at that number during the entire year); RYM II had about four activists with a sporadic periphery of a few more; and Weathermen appeared on the scene during actions and some meetings, although they were never consistently on campus.

We began having fraction meetings and discussing the political perspective we would follow more than a month before school opened. When school opened we were prepared to take maximum advantage of the possibilities for action on the campus.

Our work during the fall quarter revolved around three axes:

- 1) Building support for the Coalition for United Community Action, a Black organization waging a struggle for 10,000

- Black construction jobs;
- 2) Constructing the Committee to End the War in Vietnam into a viable ongoing organization;
 - 3) Recruiting to the YSA.

In our support for the Black Coalition we were able to construct the Ad Hoc Committee to Support the Coalition--the Ad Hoc Committee was a broad coalition of groups, including RYM II, student government, the Black Student Organization, University Christian Movement, and the YSA. We carried out several actions, the most significant being a demonstration of over 500 students at the Faculty Senate meeting, which forced them to support the Coalition's demands. The YSA initiated the Ad Hoc Committee and remained in the leadership because our projections of mass actions, combined with democratic decision-making, corresponded to the needs of the support campaign. Regular meetings of the Committee were held to discuss out strategy and tactics. Out of this campaign we were able to establish the YSA as a respected and action-oriented organization on campus and to recruit four people to the YSA.

Our antiwar work was our most consistent activity throughout the year. The Committee to End the War in Vietnam organized a successful action on October 15 of over 2,000 and sent three busloads of people to Washington for November 15. After the SMC conference in the spring, the CEWV changed its name to the University of Illinois SMC, and began work on April 15. The April 15 action at the U. of I. was one of the high points of the entire year, prior to the May strike. The SMC organized and called in its own name a rally of over 4,000 followed by a march of 2,500 to join the citywide action in the Civic Center. This action established the SMC as the mass action organization on campus, and, in the eyes of radical students at Circle, the YSA was the only organization able to organize and lead successful actions.

Right before April 15 the governor announced a proposed tuition hike of over 70 per cent for all state colleges and universities. Our fraction intervened with a mass action orientation and was able to issue, out of the campus apparatus established to fight the tuition hike, a call for local actions around the state on May 6 and a statewide demonstration at the state capitol on May 13. Also established was the United Community Against the Tuition Hike, which was the statewide organization to coordinate the actions. Although the May upsurge disrupted these plans, the fight against tuition hikes will undoubtedly revive in the fall.

Near the end of the winter quarter we initiated a meeting with a few of the

prominent radical women on campus to discuss starting a women's liberation group. As a result we held a panel on women's liberation, consisting of a variety of women's liberation figures throughout the city, including one of our comrades. At the panel we signed up 70 women interested in forming a group on campus. Immediately following the beginning of the spring quarter we called a meeting which drew over 50 women. Initially there was resistance to structure and, to some degree, disagreement over whether it should be action oriented or just a rap group. We were sensitive to the latter feeling and stresses that it had to be a combination of both. We divided the issues facing campus women into three categories and formed committees to work on them. They were 1) Women's Study program; 2) Day-care center to serve student, staff, and faculty; and 3) Health Service--demanding birth control, a gynecologist, abortion referral, etc. We were able to bring many healthy independent women around the YSA and, until the strike, had a functioning group of at least 20 activists. The strike disrupted our regular meetings and activities, but we were able to reconvene the group before school closed. What we proposed was that the group continue to meet during the summer to carry out what activity it could and to plan for the fall. To encourage attendance at these meetings we set up discussions of women's liberation topics with assigned readings, to take place after each business meeting. Once the fall quarter begins, there will already be a functioning nucleus of the women's liberation group which will be able to attract a large number of women.

May Events

When the May events exploded onto the U. of I., our entire fraction was thrown into building the strike and carrying out the antiwar university perspective. Our comrades were looked to by large numbers of independent activists as the only people on the left capable of providing responsible leadership. All of our political projections were accepted by the overwhelming majority of students, and up until May 9 and the closing of the university, the U. of I. was an antiwar university. We were also successful in preventing any ultra-left adventures that could have lost some of the strike's mass support. The only ultraleft action of any significance was an aborted sit-in (supposedly against ROTC) in the third floor of the Physical Education Building which led to the arrest of 41 people.

However, we were unable to continue the antiwar university after the administration shut down the school. Although

our political projections won the agreement of a majority of the students supporting the strike, we were unable to continue on a mass scale the projections for reaching out into the community, the unions, etc. The best illustration of this is that there was no authoritative steering committee set up throughout the strike. Because mass meetings often ended with split-off marches, no representative body with the authority of the strike existed. There were a number of self-appointed steering committees that existed for short periods of time. Our intervention was greatly helped by the Citywide Strike Council being on campus, but we found that with all the members of the fraction being heavily involved in different aspects of the strike, it became difficult to hold fraction meetings. Later on, we recognized this and had daily fraction meetings early in the morning. All in all, although no one group constituted the central political leadership of the strike, it was the YSA's projections of mass actions and democratic decision-making that marked the character of the strike, not the ROTC adventures.

Campus Election Campaign

Because of our success in SMC, women's liberation and other areas of work, we decided we could benefit significantly and consolidate the people we had brought around us by running in the student government elections. We began by calling an informal meeting of people we felt would be interested in working on a socialist campaign. The slate we decided on included the chairman of SMC on campus (a YSAer), a women's liberation activist (also a YSAer) and a Chicano student active in the Latin American Student Union (who had once been in the YSA and has subsequently rejoined). We also ran another YSAer for one of the independent offices. Our platform consisted of four basic planks: the antiwar university, including abolition of ROTC and all war research, contracts, and recruiters; women's liberation; open admissions for Third World students; and no tuition hike. All our candidates were leading activists in each of these struggles--an advantage none of our opponents had. Our only serious opponents were three liberals, who ran on the basis of having previous student government experience, and had the advantage of controlling the student newspaper. The other slate opposing us called themselves the Mad Dogs and were made up of former RYM IIers, Weathermen, and assorted ultralefts. They aimed their campaign at the "freak" element on campus, with their major slogans being "Free Drugs, Free Love, and Eldridge Cleaver for Chancellor." The strike interrupted our campaigning, but we

resumed as soon as the election had been rescheduled. Together with a fairly large periphery of supporters, we distributed over 10,000 pieces of campaign literature. We received over 260 votes, 18 per cent of the total. We consider it a success that we convinced 260 students to vote for the socialist alternative.

We were able in the course of the school year to build a very strong fraction that became the major radical political force on the campus. Because of the level and variety of activity of the U. of I. fraction, comrades developed quickly and moved into leadership roles. Twice, in the height of activity, our fraction heads were transferred to off-campus assignments. Both times, our fraction was able to replace the comrade and continue to act effectively. During the entire year ten new comrades were recruited to the YSA specifically from our U. of I. work. We intervened and played leadership roles in all the major activities that went on in the year. An important thing to note is that there are always issues and events coming up on a campus; what we must do is choose the most effective campaigns to initiate and become involved in. We found that an extremely valuable piece of literature in developing a strategy for building the YSA on campus is the YSA Program for the Campus Revolt.

Recruitment

In conclusion, what has to be a top priority in initiating and leading movements on the campus is recruitment. Sometimes when comrades become extremely busy in building the SMC, the women's liberation movement, etc., they neglect the importance of regular contact work. This work must receive increased attention as other activity increases. It must be approached in a conscious, organized fashion. Several of the best activists in the Chicago local were recruited by the Circle campus fraction. The campus will remain the primary source of recruitment to the YSA in the future.

NANCY COLE
FRED LOVGREN
Chicago YSA

BUILDING THE HIGH SCHOOL FRACTION

Throughout the building of the SMC in Chicago we have consistently worked with high school students. Because of our efforts, we have built one of the largest and strongest high school antiwar movements in the country. Initially, we had no high school comrades but through our antiwar work we were able to recruit some of the best activists and develop them into leading cadre. The reason we were successful in developing and integrating these comrades into the local is that we took a serious attitude toward high school work. As soon as we were able to recruit some high school students, we organized a high school fraction and assigned key people to work with the fraction. Although the fraction was small, it was able to carry out consistent work and education and recruited at a steady although a slow pace. We went through a stage of losing a number of high school people, but it was a process of sorting out the healthy elements from the unstable ones.

From all of this we were able to build a strong, experienced fraction although it was small. During the Tasks and Perspectives discussion last summer right before school started, we projected that high school work would become even more important and crucial and that out of it we could make tremendous gains. Since then, we have won over almost the entire leadership of the Chicago antiwar movement into our organization. In the past six months, our high school work in Chicago has met with considerable success. We grew from a fraction of eight at the beginning of the school year to a fraction of twenty-four by the end of school.

We recruited a fraction of ten people at Kenwood High School where we were able to carry out a very successful election campaign (which has already been reported on in The YS Organizer), as well as a number of other external activities.

At Marshall, an extremely important high school in the Black community, we recruited two people and have set up a Black Student Union which has given us a sizable periphery and some excellent prospects for recruitment.

Citywide, we initiated and built a significant high school rights movement which drew a large number of people around the YSA, some of whom we recruited.

Reasons for Growth

These successes can be traced to a couple of factors. One is that we have virtually no opponents within the high

school movement. The few times PL has shown up at meetings, they have been thoroughly defeated. Our other opponents either have no high school base or don't even bother to intervene in the mass movement. Partially as a result of this, kids who come around the high school movement quickly realize that if they want to join an organization, the YSA is the organization.

Another very important factor was the tremendous effort we put into building our forums. We saw this as a key part of our contact work and it led to a whole layer of high school contacts joining the YSA. It seemed that after every forum there were one or two high schoolers who had decided they wanted to join.

Fall Projections

In the fall we can see a number of things happening as a result of the work that we have done in the past period. One is the revitalizing of the High School Rights Coalition, which has been dormant over the summer. Another is the establishment of a strong BSU (which we are continuing to build at Marshall during the summer session) which can not only initiate struggles at Marshall itself but can possibly lead to the establishment of a citywide BSU. This is one prospect which we are still feeling out and which we will have to investigate when school starts in September. If we are successful, the YSA will be in the leadership of the high school antiwar movement and the Black high school movement in Chicago.

Another thing will be the consolidation of a women's liberation group at Kenwood which had one very successful meeting last year. This could serve to draw a large number of high school women into the fight against abortion laws which is beginning in Chicago, as well as to draw a whole layer of high school women around the YSA.

The key thing which we have been able to do in the high school movement is to project programs of action which can draw larger and larger numbers of high school students into the radical movement and, consequently, into the YSA.

GEOFF MIRELOWITZ
BARB HENNIGAN
Chicago YSA

REPORT FROM UTAH AT-LARGERS

When an at-large member of the YSA calls an antiwar meeting, participates in a panel discussion on student politics, or attends a conference on Black studies, he is not just another student activist; he carries with him the program of revolutionary socialism. At-largers can be extremely effective just because they are members of the YSA.

In Logan, we are all three the organizers and inspirers of the movement. When we call an antiwar meeting, people come; when we talk, people listen. Not because of personal charisma, but because of our reputation for serious activism and strategical clarity--both resulting from the democratic centralist organization and transitional program of the national YSA.

In Salt Lake City, where there are large mass movements and rival political factions, our effectiveness as at-largers is limited because there are only three of us; we cannot always carry our line in a room full of infantile leftists, CP reformists, and PL left-wing reformists. But like any revolutionary socialist cadre, we can reach the independents, as well as the serious activists in the reformists' own ranks with our perspective and attempt to recruit them.

A relatively large PL-oriented SDS is organized in Salt Lake. During the spring we sold nearly 100 copies of The Militant there every week. While doing so, we talked informally to various activists. This modest, but continual, intervention put a visible strain on an impressionistic movement held together by empty left-wing rhetoric. We raised questions which confrontationist talk could not answer.

Recently SDS in Salt Lake called a "statewide antiwar strategy conference." Reflecting a recent PL contortion, the "antiwar strategy conference" was a cover for a projected confrontation to "Fight Racism" ("The only way we can fight the war is to fight racism, and the only way we can fight racism is to confront the school board on August 1st.)

Despite the fact that PL dominated the conference, at-large YSAers were able to address the conference because we were known among the ranks from our spring intervention.

After a day of workshops the difference between YSA's approach and that of SDS was obvious to many. The next day, a "final-decision-making session," was little more than an SDS meeting, as two-thirds of those present the day before

had left in disgust. But those who left, left with the ideas of the YSA--we sold \$37 in literature. When a Black activist spoke to the last session, he, like several others, wore a red YSA button!

To sum up, we can see that at-largers can be effective because as YSAers, their isolation does not lead to impressionistic analysis and erratic action. But it is essential for them to read our movement's press, attend the national conferences, and write letters. The YSA National Office has been extremely responsive to our correspondence.

The single most important act the at-larger can do is sell Militants, and lots of them. The Militant is one of the best tools for building the YSA.

At-largers should always look to build the movement; they should view their at-large status as a temporary status which will end as soon as they have recruited enough members to establish a local.

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