

Report on the development of the Ann Arbor local

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This report will deal with what we have done in Ann Arbor at the University of Michigan, so that other locals can perhaps get ideas on building the YSA.

At the beginning of the fall, we did not have a local in Ann Arbor. There was one person who had just transferred in, one person who was recently recruited, and one who was going to transfer.

We decided to make a major intervention during registration. We had tables up early in the morning till registration closed, with red tablecloths on the tables, red flags on either side of the tables and a big banner advertising our revolutionary literature. What we hoped to accomplish was: (1) sell our literature, (2) make the YSA known on campus, (3) build a mailing list, (4) find a number of students interested in joining the YSA.

To follow up on the successful registration intervention, we arranged a meeting which we publicized by a leaflet at the literature table and a big board in the center of the campus. The meeting was on The Dynamics of World Revolution, explaining the relationship between Vietnam, France, and Czechoslovakia.

Seventy five people attended the meeting, one of the largest public talks we've had up there, even though it was on the same night as the Voice-SDS first meeting. SDS was founded in Michigan and their campus political group at the U.of.M., Voice, has always tended to dominate political action on campus.

We decided to try something new after the talk; that was, instead of doing "contact work" we decided that we would try and form a local. The chairman explained very briefly what the YSA is and after the question and answer period those who were interested in joining the YSA should stay and we will have a meeting. We had expected due to our softening up work and previous discussions at the literature tables that by doing this we might have as many as three or four stay and become members. Approximately fifteen people stayed and a few others left their names who couldn't stay for the meeting, since it was late.

At the meeting a more detailed question-and-answer period about the program, structure and strategy of the YSA was held, answering any questions that were asked. A meeting was set up for the next week.

Lessons from our experience: (1) we had a little nucleus of people in Ann Arbor to begin with, (2) we did a

lot of publicity through leafleting and literature tables for the public meeting. Also the Young Americans for Freedom put out a leaflet saying the main thrust of their activity this fall would be countering disruptive activities of SDS and the YSA. This gave us publicity and a name on campus, (3) we carried out a softening-up process -- we talked to many people at the literature tables, who did not join then, but they did when they came to the meeting.

Since then we've had literature tables, public meetings and YSA meetings in Ann Arbor regularly. It's most effective to have a YSA meeting after the public meeting and people are encouraged to stay. We are in the process now of meeting, and finding out about those people who consider themselves members of the YSA, at the same time we are reaching out to recruit new members.