

April 7, 1972

To the Political Committee

Dear Comrades,

The attached letter was written by a former member of the YSA who has now applied for readmission.

Comradely,

Betsey

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Tom Burghardt
3856 18 St.
Sf., Ca.

March 29, 1972

Dear Comrades of the N.E.C.:

The document "Towards a Mass Working Class Youth Movement: A Resolution on Perspectives" was drawn up and signed by members of the Worker's League in the YSA.

The signers of the document were: Tom Burghardt (Peterson) Lower Manhattan YSA, Dave Durstan, Upper West Side YSA, Dick Merrill, Boston YSA, Carol Merrill, Boston YSA, Larry Kerry, Brooklyn YSA, and John Zanneloti, Washington D.C. YSA.

I do not intend to speak for anyone but myself. I have not been in contact with these people since last November and I have absolutely no idea what they are now doing. They are not loyal members of the YSA and their sole purpose for remaining in the YSA is to wreck it. I broke with the Workers League when this became clear to me.

There were a number of circumstances that led me to join the Workers League. I had a number of disagreements with the YSA that I did not have when I first joined. The most serious disagreement concerned our policy towards the trade unions, and our work within them. Around the second week of October I joined the Workers League. It was my intention to leave the YSA.

Upon joining the Workers League I had a number of discussions with Tim Wohlforth, Lucy St. John, Juan Farinas, Dennis Cribben (O'Casey), and Pat Connolly. The conversations centered around my political views, why I joined, what I would do.

One day in the last week of October, I had a conversation with Wohlforth, and he informed me that it had been decided by the P.C. that I was to write a document for the next YSA convention along with others who were in the YSA and the League. He said that since the League had the correct analysis of the situation it would be necessary to "take the struggle for Marxism into the convention, and win a majority of YSA comrades to our perspective." That turned out to be a cynical lie! I worked on the document and two weeks later, the second week in Nov., a meeting organized by Wohlforth was held in the Workers League headquarters in NY. In attendance at the meeting besides the six members of the Tendency was Tim Wohlforth and Lucy St. John. Wohlforth had made all arrangements and contacted all members of the Tendency about the meeting.

I was chosen to be leader of the Tendency and to handle all correspondence with the YSA National Office. In reality the real leadership of the Tendency was Tim Wohlforth and the Political Committee of the Workers League.

The document was written and submitted to Tim Wohlforth. The final draft was given back to me by Wohlforth after it had been considerably altered. It was typed, corrected, and ready to be printed. There was a second meeting in N.Y. about a week later of Durstan, Kerry, myself, and Wohlforth. It was an organizational meeting at which we were told how we should conduct ourselves during pre-convention discussion, and to bring our arguments up on the floor as much as possible.

After the discussion on the Chicano resolution was over -- in Lower Manhattan -- to say the least I was demoralized. I was disgusted with myself and by this time with the Workers League. I went up to their headquarters around Nov. 27 and again talked to Wohlforth. I told him I was disgusted and did not feel we would get a majority of delegates. He cynically said something to this effect, "Majority? What majority? Your task is to smash these reformists and to smash the YSA." After the shock wore off, I got up and told him to go to hell and started to leave. His parting words to me were, this is a direct quote, "Leave, but remember this -- we're gonna fucking get you in one way or another, somewhere and sometime, we're gonna fucking get you." Naturally, I took this as a physical threat and quickly left, never returning. That and a series of personal problems led me away from politics. Three months later I left for California -- and again became involved in politics! Except for the people named, those are the only YSAers in the Workers League that I personally know of. Hints were made that there are people in the Midwest, but who and where was never made clear.

As far as the SWP is concerned I can say without a doubt, because I was told this directly by Wohlforth himself, that Tom Cagle of Oakland/Berkeley and Alfredo Peña are members of the Workers League. I would suggest this information be passed on.

Fraternally,
s/ Tom Burghardt

P.S. If you would like information about how the Workers League operates, where it is in N.Y. please feel free to write.

P.P.S. Concerning Cagle and Peña, I would testify to this at any time. If this document is for internal publishing please make the necessary corrections.

P.P.S.S. I would appreciate it if you informed me about my present status in relation to the YSA. I have re-applied for membership and have not received any word yet concerning my application. T.B.