

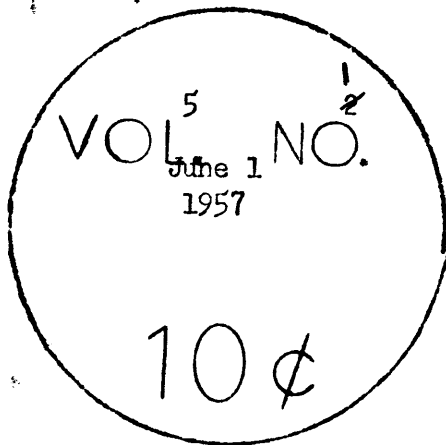
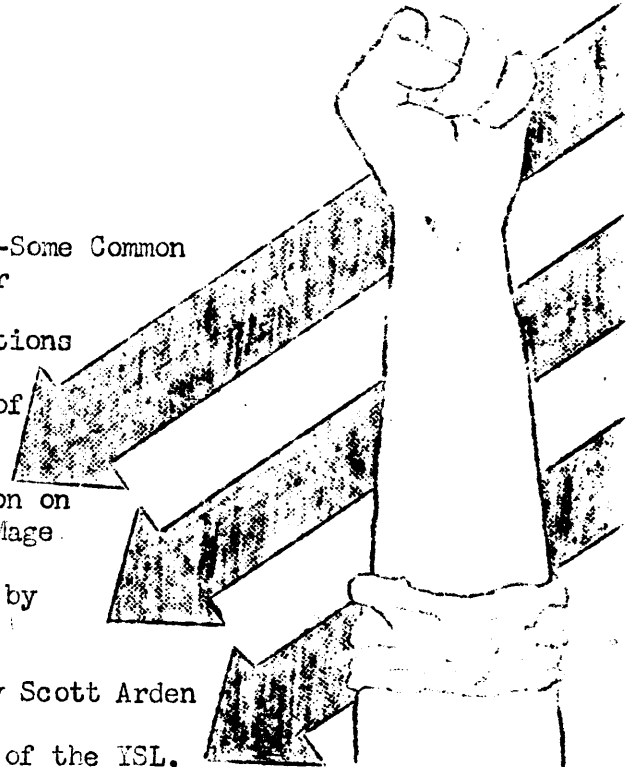
YOUNG SOCIALIST

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REVIEW

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Information And
Discussion Bulletin
of
The YOUNG SOCIALIST LEAGUE

1039

EDITORIAL NOTES

What the YSR is

The Young Socialist Review is the information and discussion bulletin of the Young Socialist League and is prepared by the Chicago unit of the YSL.

The aim of YSR is to constitute a forum for the expression of all points of view within the YSL and is open to all members. Contributions from non-members will be accepted if of sufficiently high interest.

Articles signed by individuals do not of course, necessarily represent the views of the YSL; "official" material will be clearly labelled such.

The YSL is published at least bi-monthly, or more often when there is sufficient copy. So SEND COPY AS SOON AS IT IS READY to 1343 W. 50th Street, Chicago 15. All copy must be typewritten, and should be stencilled if possible.

The circulation of YSR is not restricted to YSL members although it is issued primarily for members. For information write the editor in Chicago or the national office of the YSL, 114 W. 14th Street, New York City.

This issue

There will be two more pre-convention issues of YSR, thus making a total of 7 issues since the call for the convention and 9 since the winter Plenum. The deadline for the next issue will be June 10th. June 10th is also the deadline for all pre-convention material which is not stencilled. After that date we will only accept stencilled material. Such stencilled material should be sent to New York, 114 W. 14th, since the final issue of YSR will be put out on June 21st from New York. After that date the NO will only take responsibility for mimeographing stencilled convention resolutions and amendments. We remind all members that stencils are available at their nearest stationary store and that all and any typewriter can be used to type a readable stencil—just pound hard.

Members are urged to seriously examine the 3 major NAC resolutions and all resolutions which are counterposed to them and to send us any amendments or substitutions they wish to propose, so that the members will have had an opportunity to examine all amendments before the opening of the Convention. Since this issue will probably not arrive until too late for the next Chicago issue, send all stencilled copy to New York as soon as possible—it must arrive before June 20th!

This issue, as you can see, consists primarily of two long articles by Comr. de Mage, which were also privately circulated a short while ago. We were promised a long reply by Max Martin, but since it was and is going to be 30 pages in length we are happy to report that it didn't arrive in time for this issue. Now you have something to look forward to in a few weeks. Several other articles on aspects of the present faction fight are included.

Debbie Meier, editor
May 30, 1957

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M.S.

I. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND "STALINOIDS"
SOME COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE 3rd CAMP APPROACH -
II. SOME INCIDENTALS

BY Debbie meier

I. SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, ETC. AND SOME COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE 3rd CAMP

Comrade Arden's article in the last issue of YSR, aside from containing for the most part a series of personal complaints and organizational "exposes" attempts also to outline the type of unity Comrade Arden is interested in and his approach to the various socialist or so-called socialist groups in America. It is revealing not only of Comrade Arden's approach: for, however awkwardly this section may be worded, it also contains in it a number of very common "misapproaches" to the question of unity and the third camp.

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNITY - SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND STALINISM EQUATED AGAIN

To begin with what are Comrade Arden's requirements for socialist unity? He is very broad on this question--his criteria is merely that only socialists be invited to join and that the program be an absolutely minimal socialist program. However he is able to do this because he is simplifying the English language a bit by defining socialism so as to include only revolutionary socialists. Fortunately, however, his definition of the latter is broad and "unprecise" enough so that while Comrades Robertson, Wohlforth and Mage may want to take him to task for his lack of "scientific precisions" and his "sloppy social democratic formulation," this type of broad definition is, in our opinion, far more reasonable than is the approach of some other members of the LWC. Certainly it is preferable to the approach of someone like Comrade Wohlforth who frankly sees the SWP as the only revolutionary adult tendency, the LWC and AYS as the only such youth groups and to whom there is only one type of revolutionary socialism--Trotskyism (see latest Left Wing Bulletin--"Unity and Revolutionary Socialism," by Tim, p. 9-)

A quick preview of Comrade Arden's "who's who" in revolutionary socialism is however revealing of another aspect of his approach to politics--and one more common in the YSL than the sectarianism and "orthodox Trotskyism" of Tim. For Comrade Arden includes in this category third camp socialists, critical supporters of Stalinism and even hints at including some rather out-right Stalinist types (i.e. those around the Monthly Review). He plans to exclude only Stalinists and Reformists (aside from capitalists, I assume). We have come back again to this interesting approach which counterposes not stalinism and capitalism and not "stalinoid" politics and reformism, but stalinism and reformism. Comrade Arden specifically excludes those who support the "West" or the "free world" "however critically" either internationally or domestically (aside from the SE-SDF, the readers of the CALL, etc., we assume this probably also covers Dissent and those around Irving Howe, Lewis Coser, et al.) However, what about those who support the "East" or "the Socialist countries...however critically" either internationally or domestically? Oh, let's not be Stalinophobic about them, we are told again and again by supporters of the LWC. In other words the proposed criteria includes Third Camp socialists and those who deviate from this in the direction of Stalinism but never, no never any of those critturs who have what we consider illusions about capitalism or "support of the 'west'" (capitalistphobia, one might say!)

I realize Comrade Arden disagrees with us about bureaucratic collectivism; but even in terms of a state capitalist theory (which I understand he holds) this equation of reformism and stalinism makes no sense. For supporters of a state

capitalist society are not reformers, they are in fact arch pro-capitalists. Thus Comrade Arden should be opposed only to the entrance of pro-capitalists, no matter under what name they travel. But those with reformist views toward Russia and/or the U.S. cannot be classified as the exact same type as these proponents of capitalism, state or private. Are there really no fundamental differences for example between a Cochran and a Foster? But to those who cannot see the fundamental and sharp distinction between the SP and Dulles, it is possible that the differences between Cochran and Foster (which are of the same order) are not clear either.

SWP AND SP - TWO SIMILAR FORMS OF "CAPITULATIONISM"

The SWP and SP are both examples of a similar (not identical) ideological phenomenon—a type of adaptation to the imperialist camps and to class collaboration. Both make use of a type of "revisionist" or reformist thinking which is well described by Comrade Harrington in an excellent article on "Cannonite" revisionism in vol. 4, no. 1. of YSR (note to Scott: comrade Harrington as well as writing several organizational attacks on the LWC has, incidentally, also written the unity resolution and three strictly "theoretical" type pieces in the last few months.) In simplified form one might sum up the two forms of "pro-imperialism" thusly:

The SP says--well, it's true, we are anti-capitalist and anti-stalinist and oppose both as exploitative systems. However we are not third campers because in the struggle between the two, we feel one cannot take a third or a neutral position but must defend the "west." We are not, mind you, defending capitalism or imperialism, but rather Western Democracy and the independence of the trade union movement, et. c, both of which would be wiped out in case of the victory of Stalinism. We are implementing rather than breaking with our anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist traditions. Surely bourgeois democracy--for all its inadequacies--is better than Stalinist totalitarianism. The working class played an instrumental role in winning even such democratic rights, shall we give them up without a fight? Surely, whatever may be its faults, the existence of a free trade union movement is important to socialists, and there can be no doubt that it would be the first victim of Stalinism. As a result of this line of reasoning, the SP supports the "west" in Korea, supports the Marshall Plan, supports NATO as against the Warsaw Pact, etc. They also differentiate themselves from the more crudely reactionary aspects of the U.S.'s cold war policy and thus plead for all-out economic rather than military aid, support to colonial revolutions, no support to Chiang and Franco, denunciation of U.S. imperialism in Guatemala and a call for an end to H-bomb tests, etc.

Now what about the SWP? The SWP says--it's true, we are anti-capitalist and anti-stalinist. However, we cannot be called third campers, because we do not view the two systems as equal dangers to the cause of socialism, and, in fact, one is not an exploitative or imperialist system at all. In a struggle between the two, we will defend the Soviet Union. In doing so we do not defend stalinism, nor the rule of the bureaucracy, but Soviet nationalization and the gains of the October Revolution (1917). In doing so we are implementing the traditions of Leninism and Trotskyism. The result of this line of reasoning is that the SWP hailed the spread of Stalinism in Eastern Europe as progressive (a revolution and counterrevolution all rolled into one, ending up with a degenerate, but a workers state), supported the Stalinists in Korea and Indo-China, supports Russia vis a vis the capitalist world, hails the Chinese revolution identifies itself openly and proudly these days as an ally of the one-half the world which is in the camp of progress, socialism, et al. In doing so they differentiate themselves from the Stalinist leaders and from the more reactionary aspects of their policy,

Thus they denounced Russian intervention in Hungary (as did all but the crudest Stalinists), and stood solidly with the Hungarian and Polish people against their foreign oppressors (so long as they were convinced that these revolutions were socialist revolutions and that there was no danger of a "return" to capitalism.)

Both the SP and the SWP, for example, are also willing to defend an oppressed nation under the yoke of one or another of the two great imperialist powers, as long as said nation does not choose/adopt the social system of the other. That is the SWP will not defend a satellite which in breaking from Stalinism "reverts" to national capitalism. The SP is equally queasy about giving support to those nations who in their fight against western imperialism put forth the ideology of national stalinism or fight under the leadership of stalinists. A third camp socialist says that insofar as such struggles can be or are isolated from an all-out imperialist struggle or in so far as the oppressed nation is not directly under the control of the other imperialist power, we will defend their right to self-determination whether this be immediately to the benefit of the local stalinist or capitalist class or party.

However, just to add a little spice, I might say that I find it much easier to sympathize with those who waver and give critical support to the "est" than those who give such support to Russia--because I find that the argument with regard to defending the independent trade unions and bourgeois democracy has far greater appeal and is based on a far greater respect for basic socialist ideals than the argument that it is necessary to defend the Soviet Union because of abstract nationalized property which in actual fact is a basic tool in the totalitarian and exploitative nature of that society. When I equate Stalinism and Capitalism it is not because in balancing virtues against vices, I would give Russia and the U.S. an equal score, anymore than in defending the third camp position during World War II one would argue that Germany and the U.S. were equally reactionary. The basis for a third camp position rather is the understanding that both blocs represent social systems which must and will exploit, suppress and expand, and that only by destroying these social systems, and not by a defense of one of the other, can man be freed from exploitation and the fear of war and can he make full use of democracy, independent trade unions and nationalized property.

Incidentally, this comparison of the SP and SWP has another interesting sidelight. For two wings of the "orthodox Trotskyist" and "social democratic" ideologies--the ASU (a more stalinist split-off from the SWP) and certain elements in the SDF (the more right wing socialists in the SP)--also have certain similarities. These two groups, who represent to a large extent the logical conclusions (which, Scott, I agree the SWO does not carry its position to) of their respective ideologies and backgrounds, also represent as a result the reality of these positions --i.e. the position minus its sectarian rigidity and conservativeness. As a result both the Cochranite and the nonsectarian right wing social democrat is often far more subject to change, more interested in the real politics of the U.S., more amenable to responding to reality (and thus it is true also more amenable to opportunism--but then that's a risk of political life), and thus, in the long run, better potential for the socialist movement often.

The SWP is, in our opinion, about as "objectively pro-Stalinist" as the SP is "objectively pro-Capitalist" (not "social fascist," comrade Arden, which is misleading.) And the LWC incidentally not only speaks of the SP as being "objectively" pro-capitalist, but they go further and see no essential (and to hear Comrade Tim talk you'd think there were literally no differences, essential or otherwise) differences between the present SP and the ideology and program of John Foster Dulles (who has turned into a social democrat). This would be like saying that the SWP and the ASU (not to mention the Gatesites, National

Guardian, crowd) have the same politics as the Politburo or Kruschew.

SWP AND OUR UNITY PROPOSAL

Contrary to Comrade Lyden's assumption, and as made explicitly clear by Comrade Benson in an article in Labor Action, the proposal for a united organization which the ISL and YSL have adopted does not exclude the politics of the SWP. At present of course, the SWP excludes itself, not merely because at present they are not interested, but because they are not interested in any proposal for genuine unity with other socialist viewpoints. Since they still consider themselves the only genuine socialist viewpoint and since they still consider that it is essential to maintain a disciplined cadre of pure and scientific revolutionaries trained in the latest (i.e. as of Trotsky's death) interpretation of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism, it is understandable that they scorn any open and aboveboard unity between themselves and less scientific tendencies. (Except in the youth field where they can unify with all those betrayers of socialism whom they cannot and will not touch in the adult arena--i.e. right wing YSLers, Cochranites, etc.) However, as far as we are concerned their political and theoretical approach to Stalinism does not by any means exclude them, nor the American Socialist group either, who fortunately hold no such sectarian organizational ideas.

In other words we do not exclude any of those socialist tendencies who "deviate" from our third camp approach either in terms of its analysis of capitalism or stalinism. However, tactical considerations, relating to our understanding of the American scene, the requirements for a viable socialist movement in this country and its necessary composition, determine for us the question of the framework for this type of all-inclusive regroupment. Obviously, if such a regroupment is successful, we will in the beginning AT LEAST constitute a minority tendency within it. We are willing to make this sacrifice (since a minority is always of course at considerable disadvantage) only if the advantages are worth it--that is if we see a possible advantage to be gained for socialism as a whole and therefore also for our tendency. Thus of the two types of regroupment, which are being discussed today--a regroupment based initially on a social democratic framework and with a preponderance of social democratic members or a regroupment based initially on a stalinoid framework and a conglomeration of "stalinoid" tendencies--we choose the socialist democratic type without hesitation or shame. We do this for many reasons, all of which confirm and reaffirm each other.

WHY WE CHOOSE A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK FOR REGROUPMENT

To begin with, as we have said earlier, in the U.S. a socialist organization based on any type of identification with the Stalinist movement, and with a fuzzy approach to Russia vis a vis its socialist character, has no future as a working class tendency. Since in the minds of most Americans, workers especially, socialism equals Russia, totalitarianism and loss of individuality, a prime task of the socialist movement is to regain its reputation as a democratic, liberty-loving, equalitarian ideology which stands for the greatest individual freedom and for the end to man's domination over man! These are essential aspects of a healthy socialist movement and a socialist movement which cannot begin or which is seriously handicapped in the task of destroying this fallacious identification between socialism and Stalinism is foredoomed.

A second reason, is that for obvious reasons a movement with a predominantly social democratic rather than stalinoid program is more meaningful in and of itself on the American scene, and corresponds better to the needs and views of the more advanced workers. In the absence of such a social democratic movement it is true that some of these advanced workers will nevertheless adapt themselves

to a pro-Stalinist approach, but it is not in most cases out of a preference for such an orientation but rather due to the absence of any other competitor to them in the arena of militance on the local scene. But given such militance chauvinist leanings are a natural hold-over rather than, as Comrade Arden or Wohlforth maintain, the first thing to go.

A third reason relates to the role of our own tendency. For in a stalinoid re-groupment, if we should enter it, we would be forced to spend most of our time trying to reorient the movement on its position with regard to democracy and stalinism. In a framework based solidly on an anti-stalinist orientation, our own tendency would undoubtedly form part of a left wing which would and could spend its energies trying to build the party on the most militant and consistent approach to current problems (and at this point I am not concerned with theories as to what role Shachtman would be playing). Surely the latter is a more attractive perspective for our members.

And finally a fourth reason relates to the reputation of the Socialist Party itself, with whom we propose to unite or affiliate. Whatever we sophisticated radicals may think, the SP does have a reputation as being simply a party which stands for American socialism without any special theories, special gripes or special axes to grind. To be a member of the SP means one does not immediately have to explained to a native, but politically interested American "where one comes from," "why so and so split off from so and so," etc., etc. In other words instead of emphasizing the sect-like, highly homogenous and ideological aspects of the socialist movement it would put these into the background.

Thus, in conclusion, while the united movement would welcome into it tendencies such as the SWP, ASU, etc., we insist, because of our analysis of the dynamics of organizations, that for a healthy growth such a nascent movement must base itself and have its origins solidly in the ^{anti-stalinist} wing of the socialist movement.

II. INCIDENTALS REGARDING SOME INCIDENTAL COMMENTS OF COMRADE ARDEN

1. Comrade Arden and the SWP

It was with pleasure that we read for the first time an evaluation of the SWP by a member of the LWC which demonstrated the LWC's contention that they were not simply a Cannonite front. While as is clear from the above discussion I believe Comrade Arden in evaluating them makes some fallacious comparisons and assumptions, and while he ignores or misunderstands the significance of their approach to the post-war Eastern European developments, Titoism, Korea, China, etc., nevertheless certainly one will readily grant that Comrade Arden's approach is not that of the SWP—even to unity. (I wish, incidentally, that he was as charitable to the ISL's tactical approach to labor bureaucrats as he is to the SWP's approach to the Stalinists—which he calls "tactically...open to questions.")

We are nevertheless puzzled as to the rational explanation for certain other activities. For example, what is it that Comrade Arden felt it necessary to boycott (I use his own word here) the YSL's united May Day in Chicago and attend the SWP's just because the United May Day Committee didn't accept the YSL proposal to invite the SWP? Somehow or other I fail to follow the logic of why someone should boycott the May Day meeting of his own organization, attend that of another to which he does not sympathize, and all because said organization

with whom he does not sympathize was not invited (as far as I know they never expressed any interest in such an invitation either) to the United May Day which his organization had democratically decided to sponsor! However, it is not necessary to read too much into everything comrade Arden does because there is not always that logic behind it which one might read into it. Even on the unity question Comrade Arden's approach is far less dogmatic and sectarian, although far more confused, than that of Comrades Mage or Wohlforth. It is my opinion that Comrade Arden's contradictory approach can partly be explained by two things: first of all his unfortunate lack of understanding about what it is the S&P is doing or, for that matter, what Tim and Shane are up to; and secondly to the long history, which comrade Haskell referred to in his open letter, of failure to understand our orientation toward Stalinism and the 3rd camp.

2. On Personality-Mongering.

Comrade Arden's recent article deals extensively with a topic called "personality-mongering." Briefly I would like to examine some aspects of it.

THE MAJORITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE RECENT DISCUSSION--A BREAKDOWN

Just out of curiosity, I sat down the other night, after reading Comrade Arden's piece and after having heard similar charges time and again, and examined the last few YSRs to discover how correct he was that the majority had spent most of its time dealing with personalities. I discovered that of the 32 articles written in support of the NAC majority position, at the very outside 5 could possibly fall in any way under the heading which Comrade Arden is attacking--i.e. deal at all, either legitimately or illegitimately, with personal characteristics or activities. Thus we can dismiss off-hand these constant implications that the majority are avoiding the political issues by indulging in constant personality mongering. A brief glance at Comrade Arden's contributions make such an accusation (particularly the accusation that we have avoided the higher theoretical implications, etc.) particularly puzzling.

ON EXAMPLE NO. 1 OF THE PERSONALITY ATTACK

Apparently, according to Comrade Arden, there is a rumor circulating about Comrade Worth. You haven't heard it? Well, take my word for it, says he, someone is circulating it to someone. Comrade Arden does not bother to indicate to us the source of the rumor, the context in which the remark was supposedly made, by whom and to whom...or in fact any other means of verifying or understanding it.

ON THE TREATMENT OF COMRADE ARDEN

To begin with it is certainly understandable that Comrade Scott should feel sensitive about attacks on himself since he has certainly been attacked--in my own opinion on a legitimate and relevant level--with great severity in the YSL time and again. He is as a result very sensitive on this score and in a personal sense I sympathize with him, as I know that no one can possibly remain unmoved by such repeated blows--and the truth or untruth of such attacks do not necessarily appreciably alter the unpleasantness of it. Yet while I sympathize, that does not mean that I sympathize with either ... his confusion over the difference between legitimate attacks on his political role and illegitimate attacks on his irrelevant personal habits (such as bed-wetting to use his example) or that I sympathize with the bulk of his past contribution to the YSL.

A glance at his criticisms of Comrade Denitch's remarks shows that he does not realize the distinction between a statement that "Scott is not noted for his

attempts to build the YSL" and a charge of bedwetting. The other long, detailed charges against Comrades Harrington, Meier and Harris are all of an equal, although more amusing character and would only we fear bore our readers to reply to one by one, much as, frankly, we would relish indulging ourselves in a longer exposition on this question as nothing could be more "fun" than poking fun at Comrade Arden's examples of "personality-mongering."

3. On the Unrepresentativeness of the Present NEC and NAC

At present the LWC, which constitutes just exactly 1/6 of the membership, has exactly 1/6 of the NEC and NAC.

4. On the NAC and the Origins of the Unity Discussion

Speaking as a Chicagoan, like Comrade Arden, may I say that sloppy and disorganized as was the NAC's initiation of the unity discussion, it was not sprung unawares upon at least the Chicago YSL. Beginning last May, when the SP in Chicago raised the question, through the SP Convention in June, the original declaration by the ISL on the question and up until the September Plenum which initiated the discussion in a more formal sense, the general question of unity around the SP was "in the air" both concretely and in general. Comrade Shachtman, in a tour made a year ago, discussed it with all ISL branches at meetings to be which YSLers were generally present, for example. Thus when the September Plenum took a position in favor of exploring unity with the SP it was not a complete surprise to anyone. The discussion and the proposition itself was not clearly expressed at that time because as yet the leadership of the YSL had no clear position, ^{but} was itself still exploring the question. The events within the CP precipitated such clarification and gave a new aspect to our position and to the urgency and the potentialities of such an orientation, resulting therefore in the concretization of a position by Christmas time. This is the true picture of the origins of the discussion. For contrary to the impression given by some members of the LWC unity was 1) not sprung upon a completely unawares membership, 2) the Chicago comrades in particular were well aware of the question, 3) the September Plenum did not decide in favor of such a unity but expressed interest in exploring the idea and 4) the reason why the leadership did not immediately tell the members about its final position earlier was that it did not at first have such a clear and concrete proposal. None of this denies the undoubted failure of the national leadership to keep the members abreast of the organizational affairs through minutes, letters and communication, especially during the latter part of 1956, an obviously crucial period. But such a failure, while regrettable and serious, does not constitute a plot designed to connive to put over an otherwise unsaleable proposition. If anything this failure gave a tremendous advantage to the NAC's opponents, and made it far more difficult to conduct a campaign in its favor!

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NOTES ON
CONVENTION ORGANIZATION

Editorial note:

The following, taken from the NAC minutes of May 22nd, is reprinted here for the information of all members in order to have a better idea of the relationship between the pre-convention discussion and the convention. The following convention schedule was carried unanimously at the NAC meeting of May 22nd at which Harrington, Lowe, Martin and Taylor were present and is based on a motion by Harrington.

1st Day, morning	Organization of convention and presentations on "unity" question
afternoon	Discussion, summaries and voting on "unity" question
evening	Implementing and related motion on "unity"
2nd Day, morning	Tasks and Perspectives, National Report, Unit Reports
afternoon	Crisis of Stalinism
2rd Day, morning	Other resolutions
afternoon	Constitution, Election of NEC

Two other motions of interest passed were:

1. There be a pre-convention meeting of the NEC on the evening of June 30th
2. That all sessions of the convention on political questions be open to the general public

The YSL Right Wing and the Crisis of World Stalinism

by Shane Mage

"The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the question of the relation between the proletarian state and bourgeois rule, between proletarian democracy and bourgeois democracy...Kautsky has to gloss over and to confuse the question at issue, for he formulates it in the manner of the liberals, speaks about democracy IN GENERAL, and not of bourgeois democracy."

"If we are not to mock at common sense and history, it is obvious that we cannot speak of 'pure democracy' so long as different classes exist; we can only speak of class democracy."

VI Lenin: The Proletarian
Revolution and Renegade Kautsky

The NAC "Draft Resolution on the Crisis of World Stalinism" is, in its political essence, about as bad as can be expected. That is to say, it is a fitting theoretical expression for a political tendency which once based itself on Marxism but today wants nothing more than its own organizational liquidation into the social-democracy, and to that end is engaged in a "systematic political adaptation to social-democracy," a systematic ideological liquidation into social democracy!

It therefore comes as no surprise that this resolution would hardly require the revision of more than a couple of phrases to be acceptable to the SP-SDF. Nor, alas, is it a surprise that the intellectual level of the resolution is marked by a combination of pompous self-righteousness and complete ignorance or neglect of vital facts determining the reality and perspectives of the East European revolution. Whatever aspect of the resolution we attempt to criticize, we are faced with an embarras de riches.

The NAC majority proclaims that, on the Russian question above all others, it has been, and always will be, completely correct, and everyone else completely wrong. Now I don't deny the NAC majority the right to believe that the "theory of bureaucratic collectivism," whatever it is, has been borne out by the development of the past year. But before this can be claimed, it must be proven. That is, the "bureaucratic collectivists" must show what inherent and inevitable contradictions, different from those which mark the evolution of capitalism, on the one hand, and a degenerated workers state, on the other, are leading to the overthrow of this supposedly "new" social system. As we all know, this has never been done while Stalinism seemed to be in good health. It should be somewhat easier, as well as more important, now that the disappearance of Stalinism is so obviously on the historical agenda; and this makes the failure of the resolution even to attempt such a demonstration all the more glaring.

It is also interesting to note that the resolution, so bold in its reaffirmation of "bureaucratic collectivism," doesn't show the slightest awareness of the actual developments which are in at least seeming contradiction to this theory. For instance, if this "new social system" represents an "historical alternative to socialism," the "bureaucratic-collectivist future" which represents a "setback for an indefinite period to the working class, democracy, and socialism," isn't it strange that the development of socialist revolution should take place first under stalinism, before any of the capitalist states, where the conditions facing

the workers are so much "better," even approach a revolutionary situation? Aren't there any theoretical problems posed by the emergence of pro-working class and even revolutionary elements within the bureaucracy and its institutions? How explain the revolutionary role of the youth, despite "their privileged position in the society"? On what theoretical basis can the bureaucratic "self-reform" be related to the revolution whose flood gates it opened?

These and other questions represent a decisive test for all the theories of Stalinism. A serious analysis of "the Crisis of World Stalinism" would deal with them in thorough and painstaking fashion. Unfortunately, the conditions of the present dispute in the YSL are anything but propitious for such an objective and scientific examination. I fully intend to present a thoroughgoing analysis of the theoretical implications of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions after the convention. Meanwhile there remains the outstanding example of how not to deal with an important theoretical and political question, the NAC "Draft Resolution." Let us start with some of the more inan e constructions with which the NAC majority proclaims its eternal rightness.

Paragraph 3 of the Resolution sets a "theoretical framework" of sorts for the E. European revolutions. It states, "The fundamental structure of international power since the end of WW II has been a three-cornered struggle between the imperialism of bureaucratic-collectivist stalinism, the imperialism of the capitalist camp led by the United States, and the forces of all the oppressed, of the international workingclass and the colonial peoples." Leave aside for the nonce all the theoretical errors, and look at this statement as a picture of the reality of world politics since the war. "The forces of all the oppressed" opposes capitalism and stalinism, we are told. Don't the comrades of the NAC majority know that the "oppressed" of an insignificant country known as China, together with several other "colonial peoples," have carried through revolutions which have lined up with the stalinist camp? A minor fact to be sure, but nevertheless not exactly in accordance with this....theory.

Paragraph 15 is devoted to a condemnation of the theory of Stalinism associated with Isaac Deutscher. I have no quarrel with the Resolutions rejection of "deutscherism" (though someone sympathetic to Deutscher's views would have a right to object that his position has been crudely oversimplified, hence distorted, and that it is absolutely unjust to Deutscher as a historian and analyst to place his theories on the same plane with the ravings of a Hannah Arendt). But paragraph 16 goes on from that to smear everyone who disagrees with the "orthodox" position on Stalinism with the same "Deutscherite" brush, in the following remarkable fashion: "This theory...becomes then transmuted among all of those who hold one variety or another of illusion about Stalinism and who regard it as 'progressive' or a 'kind of socialism' into a program of reliance on the bureaucracy for the struggle against Stalinism. It urges the masses to be quiescent, lest the rulers be frightened into withdrawing their 'reforms,' and in this reveals its perniciousness."

Note well that elegant phrase "all of those who hold one variety or another of illusions about Stalinism." That obviously includes me, since as everyone knows, I hold to the "illusions" that the Chinese revolution represents a progressive historical event. It obviously includes the Socialist Workers Party, which agrees with me on the Chinese Revolution and further believes that all the Stalinist states are "degenerate" or "deformed" proletarian states. Above all, it obviously includes the "American Socialist" magazine, which refers to Russia as a "kind of socialism."

It is obviously difficult for the NAC majority comrades to conceive that those who hold what they regard as "illusions" about Stalinism are in favor of

the revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and oppose urging the masses to be "quiescent." But in the real world, as opposed to the fantasy world in which only the ISL, the YSL right wing, and the international Social-Democracy are reliable anti-Stalinists and everyone else is one variety or another of Deutscherite, this happens to be a fact, and everyone who has read the statements on the Hungarian and Polish revolutions in the "Militant" or even the "American Socialist" knows to be a fact!

The mental processes behind the NAC majority's delusion were explained very openly by comrade Oppenheimer in the last issue of YSR (p. 22): "The Cannonites objectively urge the subordination of working class interests to those of the degenerated workers state, so called, according to my understanding of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, to which I hold." The minds of the NAC majority have obviously worked in the same way: according to the "theory of bureaucratic collectivism," the "Cannonites" (remember that these comrades regard the YSL Left Wing as "Cannonites") "objectively urge the subordination of working class interests." So why not come right out and say so? Why bother to look through the Militant to find out what they actually propose, "objectively" as well as "subjectively"? Our theory tells us that they "urge the subordination of working-class interests" and that's quite enough. Anyone who thinks that theories have to be checked by constant reference to reality is obviously a vulgar empiricist, sectarian, and schematic to boot!

In paragraph 44, there is another reference to the world political situation of the past decade which is also indicative of the relation (or lack of same) between the NAC majority's theories and reality: "all indications show that the Russians were aiming at world domination primarily through spreading Stalinist influence on the basis of indigenous movement, rather than by military aggression." The notion that the Russians were "aiming at world domination" at all is simply laughable, in view of their obvious economic inability to achieve or maintain that domination (as I showed in the discussions at the time of the last convention). The notion that the Russians sought world domination "through spreading Stalinist influence on the basis of indigenous movement" would not be out of place in the disordered brain of a J. Edgar Hoover, but it has no place in the resolution of a socialist organization. Does the NAC majority deny that Russian policy has consistently sold out powerful Stalinist-led movements in the interests of a deal with Western imperialism, all throughout the history of the Stalinist bureaucracy? Is there anyone in the YSL who has not learned the lessons of Spain, Greece, France, Italy, Iran, Guatemala, and many other countries? Does anyone in the YSL claim that where there has been "spreading Stalinist influence on the basis of indigenous movements" as in China, this has been due in any significant measure to Russian policy, or has resulted in Russian domination of these areas? Will anyone be bold enough to explain how Russia could aim at "world domination" when it is unable even to dominate China?

Formulations like those discussed above give a clear picture of the intellectual and political level of the NAC "Draft Resolution", but they are not the main things wrong with it. Also in the category of secondary defects is the repetition ad nauseam of the shibboleth about American foreign policy being "bankrupt." This phrase is probably useful in talking to liberals who don't understand the first thing about capitalism and socialism. But it is radically false in a resolution which must aim at scientific precision. American foreign policy is reactionary, militarist, imperialist. It is not bankrupt - i.e. it has huge resources and excellent changes to carry out its reactionary political aims.

The trouble with American foreign policy, for a Marxist tendency, is not that it is bankrupt, but that it is the foreign policy of the greatest capitalist and imperialist power on earth. We would have a lot less to worry about if U.S. foreign policy was, in fact, "bankrupt," instead of being what it is: the most powerful and deadly enemy of socialism in the world. The deadly danger in using the term "bankrupt" in reference to U.S. foreign policy is not that it will be taken in its literal sense, as indicating that U.S. capitalism, and therefore its foreign policy, is on the verge of complete collapse, but that it will reinforce liberal and social-democratic illusions in the minds of our contacts and newer members to the effect that it is possible for U.S. foreign policy, short of a socialist revolution, to be something other than imperialist and reactionary.

I do not charge that the N.C. majority holds these illusions yet. But it is definitely and visibly adapting itself politically to these social-democratic ideas. That this is the political essence of the phrase "bankruptcy," and not just a matter of a typical sloppy formulation, is proven by the unanimous rejection by the N.C. of an amendment offered by comrade Tim which stated the elementary Marxist truth that "the U.S. cannot take any truly non-imperialist, progressive, actions...until such time as the workingclass comes to power in this country."

This process of systematic political adaptation to social-democracy is the root of all the fundamental errors in the resolution. It lies behind the abandonment of the Marxist class analysis of "democracy," the abandonment of the revolutionary socialist view of the workers councils in the socialist revolution, the abandonment of the Marxist position on the need for a revolutionary vanguard party in the transition to socialism, and in general a completely lopsided, distorted picture of the revolutions in Poland and Hungary.

It is no accident that the key phrase in the analysis of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions is "democracy" -- not "bourgeois democracy," not "workers democracy," not even "peasant democracy," but plain, unqualified, "democracy" in general. There may be some younger members of the YSU who see nothing wrong with this procedure. I advise all such comrades to study very carefully the writings of Lenin on this subject, notably "State and Revolution" and "Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky." The key thought, absolutely basic to Marxist theory of the state, is that any form of government in a class society, including democracy, essentially embodies the domination ("dictatorship") of one class over the others. This is especially true of workers democracy because the proletariat, inherently a propertyless class, cannot rule except directly and politically, i.e., through its own class organizations of the "soviet" type. Any form of "pure" "classless" democracy "in general" can only express the domination of the economically strongest class, i.e., is necessarily bourgeois democracy.

These basic considerations are well known to the members of the N.C. and presumably these comrades accept them, at least formally. What the resolution does is simply to declare them inapplicable to the revolution under Stalinism, in the following way (par. 26):

"What must be remembered is that under Stalinism, the fight for democracy has a different social meaning than it does under capitalism, so long as it is limited to general democratic aims and demands no other change. Under capitalism, such a struggle represents a struggle for capitalist democracy. Under Stalinism, where the means of production are statified, the fight for democracy which calls for no other change, and hence seeks the democratization of statified property, becomes the revolution for democratic socialism, even if it is not so consciously expressed."

What we have here is a schematic formula, rigidified into a fetish, used as a substitute for a concrete historical analysis. The leaders of the YSL have for a long time relied on the formula that Stalinism is not socialist because its nationalized property is not accompanied by political democracy. The obvious corollary to this is that nationalized property plus political democracy is socialism. And this is the theoretical essence of the quoted paragraph.

This is a good example of the dangers inherent in an agitational oversimplification. It's a lot easier and more effective for us to talk about "democracy" as a prerequisite for socialism than to use that nasty term "dictatorship of the proletariat." In the case of the YSL right wing this has gone past a mere tactical adaptation of language and has become an adaptation of thought. The struggle for socialism under Stalinism ceases to be a struggle for workers power, and becomes a struggle for "general democratic aims."

The false, abstract, undialectical character of the methodology of the NAC majority is exemplified by the proposition that the struggle against stalinism is the struggle for socialism "so long as it is limited to general democratic aims and demands no other changes." But of course the reality of the revolution in Eastern Europe is not that of pure democracy and "no other change." A huge number of economic and social changes which are not necessarily those flowing from "general democratic aims" are the inseparable accompaniment to the popular revolution against stalinism: to cite only the one change referred to by the resolution, the peasants have spontaneously eliminated collectivized agriculture, and restored private property on the land. It is exactly these changes that determine the actual character of the revolution against Stalinism, not an abstract formula about the relation of "democracy" to "socialism."

The formula nationalized property in industry plus political democracy equals socialism is not even true on an abstract level, no matter how useful agitational-ly. If it was true, Austria and Burma, both of whose industry is largely nationalized and both of whom have relatively democratic political structures, would be socialist states. The essential prerequisite for development toward socialism is the raising of the working class to the position of a ruling class, or, in precise scientific terms, the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship.

Would the struggle for "general democratic aims" under stalinism be sufficient to raise the working class to the level of a ruling class? The NAC resolutions answers in the affirmative, on the basis of its formula. This position has interesting theoretical consequences, which we will discuss later. A real answer, however, must rest on a concrete analysis of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions.

The key question is this: theoretically was it possible for the Polish and Hungarian revolutions to result in the restoration of capitalism? The NAC draft resolution precludes this, since it states that "democracy" is sufficient to define the "revolution for democratic socialism." This view, in my opinion, is possible only on the basis of a singular ignorance of the actual social and economic forces and determining the evolution of Poland and Hungary, and the world context in which these revolutions took place.

What would have been the development in Poland and Hungary if the revolution had in fact achieved the establishment of formal democracy, of the workers type, with "no other change"? We here must abstract from the actual level of socialist consciousness attained by the Polish and Hungarian workers, since this is not a determining factor in the argument of the NAC resolution. It should, however, be made clear that I believe this level of socialist consciousness was the decisive factor in the whole development, the key to the future of these countries.

The establishment of formal democracy, if it means anything at all, means free elections to a sovereign parliament. Free elections, in turn would mean the establishment of a government reflecting the numerically largest section of the population. In Poland and Hungary this majority is not working class. It is the petty-bourgeoisie of town and country, the peasants, the small shopkeepers, artisans, and the old middle classes.

Could free elections in Poland and Hungary result in fact in a government representing this petty-bourgeois majority? A majority cannot express its rule unless it is organized. Could this majority have been organized?

Here we come to one of the most shocking features of the NAC Draft Resolution. The authors of the draft have made the most stupid omission possible in a resolution on Poland and Hungary: there is no mention whatever of the Catholic Church, EITHER AS A religious institution or as a social force!

Yet, in both Poland and Hungary the Church is the one institution to emerge full blown from the Stalinist regime, with a highly organized and stable apparatus, a long tradition of continuity, and a high degree of popular prestige. The actual power of the Catholic Church is shown by the enormous extent to which religious education was reintroduced into the schools in Poland and Hungary (particularly in Poland, there have been frequent reports of the persecution of atheist and Jewish children by Catholic majorities). The power of the Church was shown most dramatically by Cardinal Wyszynski's intervention in behalf of Gomulka at the time of the recent Polish elections - an action which, according to all reports, played a major part in saving Gomulka regime from what seemed likely to be a drastic setback. Can there be any doubt that in really free elections the candidates endorsed by the Church would have a huge advantage among the Catholic majority?

What role does the Church desire to play in these revolutions? The Draft Resolution states that in Poland and Hungary "forces which advocate capitalist restoration...were extremely small and carried no weight." It is true that neither in Poland nor in Hungary did the Church present an openly capitalist program. But it is not necessary for it to do so. The Catholic Church, by its very nature as an international body controlled from the Vatican, plays a certain role in world politics—the role of an important ally of U.S. imperialism and of capitalist reaction in all countries. If it felt free to do so, what reason is there to think that the Church headed by a Mindzenty would act differently than does the Church in Italy, Spain, or Austria? and if free elections should return a parliament with a Catholic majority, reflecting the Catholic majority in the countryside, wouldn't the Church feel free?

There seems to me to be a high degree of probability that really free elections in both Poland and Hungary would return a petty-bourgeois, clerical majority. Free elections were never held in Poland after the war, but if they had been held few except the Stalinists have denied that they would have been won by the Peasant Party of Mikolyczuk. Free elections were held in Hungary, and they resulted in a substantial majority for the Smallholders party, led by the clerical reactionaries Ferenc Nagy and Msgr. (!) Bela Varga.

Would a government of Mindzenty-Ferenc Nagy or Mikolyczuk-Wyszynski have been able to restore capitalism*? It is here irrelevant to argue that no such govern-

* The term "capitalism" is used to refer to a petty-bourgeois type state capitalism, based (to start with) on small property on the land and in production and trade, as distinguished from Stalinist or socialist type economies, in which the major emphasis is placed on the growth of the state sector i.e., of industrial production.

ment could, in fact, have been formed - because they obviously could have been if the revolutions had remained within the bounds of formal parliamentary democracy with full democratic rights for all parties and individuals, including clerics and emigres. The question at issue is precisely the nature and role of such formal parliamentary democracy in E. Europe - remember that the draft resolutions consider this "democracy" equivalent to socialism.

I believe that a petty-bourgeois government in either Poland or Hungary, if allowed to stabilize itself and get a firm grip on the country, would be able to bring about a return to capitalism, and in very short order. The first step would be the absolutely necessary one, for any non-Stalinist government, of restoring capitalist relationships in agriculture and small production and retail trade. The NEP in Russia continually tended to develop restorationist tendencies, epitomized in the rise of the kulaks and nepman. Bukharin's policy of concessions to these capitalist elements would in fact have brought about this sort of capitalist restoration despite the subjective desire of the Bolshevik Right Wing to prevent it. NEP in a backward and exhausted country is a dangerous business at best - if placed in the hands of the political representatives of the kulaks and nepmen (and the peasant and petty-bourgeois parties could be nothing else) it would certainly lead straight to capitalism.

Another decisive aspect of the return to capitalism under petty-bourgeois democratic leadership would be the ties of Poland and Hungary with the capitalist world market, most important, of course, with the gigantic economic strength of U.S. imperialism. It is no secret that the main positive political program of U.S. imperialism toward E. Europe is based on massive economic aid, in the form of "loans" and outright gifts. This "aid" would have a dual effect: it would be a political Ace of trumps in the hands of the bourgeois politicians who alone would have access to the American largess, and it would very rapidly serve to reorient the economics of Poland and Hungary back to their traditional dependence on Western capitalism. Lenin once remarked that he was far less afraid of the White Guard armies than of the cheap western commodities they brought in their train. American commodities entering Eastern European countries under petty-bourgeois governments would not merely be cheap - they would be free!

What would become of the nationalized industries? Their fate would serve the interests of the peasants and petty-bourgeoisie and the needs for trade with the Western capitalists. Hungary and Poland can be capitalist states without denationalizing a single large industrial plant; all that is necessary is to convert the industry, democratically of course, into an appendage of the peasant economy and the world economy.

What does this mean? An orientation entirely to consumer good production, for the benefit of the peasants. A cessation of new investment and even repairs, since this would divert resources away from the petty-bourgeois sector. Abandonment of industries that could not compete on the world market - why should a Polish shopkeeper pay twice as much for a Zeran car as for a superior Volkswagan? Such investment and modernization as takes place to be financed by private Western capital, at no cost to the national economy.

And the consequences of this for the workers? Wages kept low, to keep down the cost of production. Workers councils would naturally not be allowed to interfere with the decisions of the democratic majority on questions concerning the management of the economy. The present grossly overexpanded work force would be sharply reduced as an obvious rationalization measure. And of course, the workers representatives would not hold power in the government and parliament, after all, in a democracy, doesn't the majority rule?

We should here reemphasize that the above is not a picture of what I believe to have been the real perspective before Hungary and Poland, the real class nature of these revolutions. It is a picture of a real possibility of the evolution of these countries, if the workers had restricted themselves to "general democratic aims". The essential thing that it shows is that it is completely false to argue that the establishment of parliamentary democracy is sufficient to convert a Stalinist state into a Socialist one. Under Stalinism as under Capitalism, there is no such thing as democracy in general; there is proletarian democracy, and there is bourgeois democracy. Nothing else. The "classless" parliamentary forms of democracy, in a country with a peasant and petty-bourgeois majority, represent bourgeois democracy.

If a formal and parliamentary democracy was likely to lead to a petty-bourgeois government and the restoration of capitalism in Poland and Hungary, what should have been the socialist alternative to these "general democratic aims"? The answer was given by the Russian Revolution, which also took place in a backward country in which free parliamentary elections would have necessarily resulted in a restoration of capitalism. That answer is the establishment of the state power of the working class.

In Hungary this solution was indicated perfectly by the course of the revolution itself, in which the decisive organs of revolutionary struggle were the workers councils. These councils were created in the course of the struggle by the spontaneous action of the workers themselves, and quickly proved themselves to be the political leadership of the entire nation.

The workers council or soviet represents the indicated form for the establishment of workers power in Hungary and, with slight differences of form, in every other country. In a country like Hungary, the creation of councils of working peasants, peasant soviets, would provide a means whereby the peasant majority could be represented in the government while preserving the state power of the proletariat through its class institutions. In scientific terminology, the state emerging from the revolution would be a workers state; the government would be a workers and farmers government.

Of course the mere establishment of a republic of workers councils in Poland or Hungary does not guarantee these countries against capitalist restoration. The proletarian regimes in E. Europe would immediately be faced by the same sort of problems which beset the first soviet republic under NEP, and, if the revolution should fail to extend itself to the advanced countries of western Europe, these states too would degenerate and eventually collapse. What the workers republic would guarantee is the opportunity of the working class at every point to impose its own conscious socialist direction of the nation.

It may be that some comrades who have never read Lenin or forgotten what they once learned will claim that is "undemocratic," because a soviet type of state would mean the rule of a minority, the working class, over the majority of the population, mainly peasants. In reply to this objection, we point out the following basic facts:

1.) The peasantry, even were it is in the majority, is incapable of ruling in its own name. As a stratum of small commodity producers, i.e., a petty-bourgeois class, it tends to follow behind its natural leaders, the petty bourgeois and "middle class" elements in the cities. In E. Europe, this has been and is concretely expressed in the allegiance of the peasantry to the old-bourgeois-dominated "peasant parties" and in the allegiance of the peasantry to the Catholic hierarchy. A government "representing" the E. European peasantry would be dominated by clerical and pro-capitalist forces, which not only are a much smaller minority than the

proletariat, but are of course a reactionary, inherently anti-democratic minority as well.

2.) The state of a soviet type is, in terms of the actual rights and powers enjoyed by the masses of the people, including the poor peasants, infinitely more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic, freely elected parliament and all.

3.) In the actual revolution, the workingclass was the undisputed leader of the entire nation, and was the sole social force capable of an all-out struggle to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy. This fact gives it the highest democratic right to establish its own state. Historical experience shows that the working class is able to win support from large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry only when it shows them that it is capable of acting to solve the problems of the entire society in a revolutionary fashion and on its own, trusting only to its own class forces.

The question naturally arises: if the Russian counter-revolutionary intervention had not taken place, would the Hungarian revolution have, in fact, resulted in a republic of workers councils? Of course, we cannot answer this question definitely. But certain clear facts about the objective and subjective aspects of the Hungarian revolution indicate that an affirmative answer was highly probable.

The first and decisive thing about the Hungarian revolution is that it was a workers revolution, and the leading role of the workers was institutionally formulated by the establishment of workers councils. Except for the Russian army, there was in Hungary not the shadow of a social force capable of preventing the assumption of state power by the workers councils. Thus the objective conditions for the formation of a soviet republic, in the event of revolutionary victory of course, were entirely favorable.

The actual level of consciousness of the Hungarian workers, however, was not at the level indicated by the objective possibilities of the revolution. In this the Hungarian revolutionary workers were like the Russian proletariat after the February revolution. The general demand was not for all power to the workers councils, but for "free election" to a sovereign parliament.

It would however, be a disastrous mistake to take the level of consciousness corresponding to the struggle against the stalinist bureaucracy as the permanent and ultimate political program of the Hungarian proletariat. The Hungarian workers wanted "free election," but they also wanted to preserve their own councils and extend their power. They wanted to move forward to socialism, not backward to capitalism.

If the revolution had been successful, the workers councils would have emerged with the decisive aspects of state power, de facto, in their hands. They would not be likely to surrender this power to the petty-bourgeois and clerical government resulting from "free elections." A state of dual power between parliament and soviets would tend to emerge. In this the Hungarian workers would, in their own way, be recapitulating the experience of the Russian working class. In Russia, as we all should know, the proletarian revolution was followed by free elections to a constituent assembly, the most democratic type of bourgeois parliament. Petty-bourgeois parties, of a far more "leftist" type than would be found in the Hungary of Lindenty, dominated this constituent assembly. In Russia, it took only a day

to make clear to the workers councils that they could not tolerate the existence of a bourgeois government by their side. The Russian workers acted in the right way: under the leadership of the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky they dispersed the parliament and made it clear to the entire world that the soviets were the only power in Russia. The Hungarian workers would eventually be faced with the same problem, and eventually would have to act in the same way, or see the conquests of their revolution seized from them by the restorationist elements.

The Russian workers were able to act as they did only because of the presence of a revolutionary Marxist party, capable of anticipating events, drawing the lessons of the proletarian struggles, and taking resolute revolutionary action. In Hungary too, the establishment of the power of the workers councils would require such a party. The absence of a Bolshevik party was one of the main causes for the strength of bourgeois-democratic and even pro-western illusions among the workers. These illusions were the inevitable product of the situation of the Hungarian workingclass, of its experiences under the Stalinist dictatorship. They could be overcome only in the course of open political struggle after the destruction of the Stalinist regime. To do this, to raise its consciousness to a higher level, the Hungarian workingclass would have had to absorb the experience of a century of revolutionary socialist struggles, and most of all the experience of the last half-century of Marxist political thought, the body of theory developed best of all by Lenin and Trotsky.

For the Hungarian working class to learn these lessons would have been, at the same time, for it to construct a revolutionary Marxist party capable of leading the proletariat to the consolidation of its own power. Failure to reach this new level of class consciousness, failure to create a Bolshevik party, would have meant that the working class would, sooner or later, let the state power slip out of its fingers and into the hands of the "democratic" majority representing the petty-bourgeoisie and the Church.

What is the position of the NAC Draft Resolution on these quintessential points: the establishment of workers power and the necessity for a revolutionary party? The authors of the NAC draft have completely abandoned these central points of Marxist theory and politics, under the cover of some very sleazy formulations.

This is all the resolution has to say about the type of socialist party needed by the Hungarian workers: "The need for a workingclass political party to best express the socialist aspirations of the masses, to safeguard the revolution, and to help lead the nation to democratic socialism would arise after the victory of the anti-Stalinist revolution." Note well what kind of party the NAC majority expects to do these things - not a "revolutionary" party, not a "Marxist" party, not, God forbid, a "Bolshevik" or "Leninist" party, but a "workingclass political party." And this party would not lead the nation to socialism by itself - it would merely "help" in this process, along with, presumably, some other party which is not "a working class party" (like, say, the Smallholders party or the Christian Peoples Party?)

But it is not merely an old "workingclass party" that the authors of the NAC draft expect "to best express the socialist aspirations of the masses." They have a specific candidate for this role: "there is a good possibility that the revived Social Democratic Party could have carried out these tasks." Some naive comrade might ask, "by why the Social-Democratic Party, and not some other?" The resolution of course cites no evidence that the Hungarian Social-Democracy was capable

of fulfilling the role assigned to it, and its perfectly plain that this is because the comrades of the NAC had no such evidence in their possession. If this hypothetical comrade, in addition to being naive, also knew something about the Hungarian Social-Democracy, he might wonder about certain facts which indicate the opposite conclusion as to the ability of this party to do what the NAC majority expects of it.

He might, for instance, recall that practically the first legal act of the revived Social-Democratic party was to participate in an international meeting of the Second International; not itself a criminal act, but the expression of solidarity with criminals like Mollet. He might recall Kethly's appeal for U.N. intervention in Hungary; perhaps only a reflection of the pro-western illusions in the minds of the Hungarian workers, but still not exactly what is to be expected of a socialist leadership. He might have read the statement by the Hungarian left-Social Democrat, Francois Fejto, that "the old non-communist parties were impotent. The Socialist leaders like Anna Kethly were worn out." (La Tragedie Hongroise, p. 309).

What is naive about these considerations is the assumption that the facts concerning Hungarian Social-Democracy had any influence whatever on the NAC majority. Out of all the working class parties in Hungary they chose the Social-Democrats for one and only one reason - the YSL Right wing has a general orientation toward the Social-Democracy in all countries, an orientation of cap...pardon me, an orientation of systematic political adaptation toward the international social-democracy. This shows itself in little things as well as big, in its identification with the Hungarian Social-Democrats as in its substitution of bourgeois democracy for workers power.

To cross all the Ts and dot all the Is, the NAC majority made its rejection of the need for a revolutionary Marxist party crystal clear by unanimously voting down an amendment in which Tim called for the formation of a "revolutionary party" "as the conscious arm of the revolutionary workers."

As I have shown above the theoretical orientation of the NAC majority is toward bourgeois democracy, not workers power. This is again made painfully evident by the unanimous (as always) rejection of a number of amendments by Tim calling for the establishment of workers power in the E. European revolutions. For instance, the NAC majority unanimously rejected the following statement: "We advance the slogan of 'All Power to the Workers Councils' as the key to the victory of the anti-stalinist workingclass revolution." (Incidentally, Tim's terminology here is not the best possible - I would say that "All Power to the Workers Councils" is not a "slogan" but a main strategic orientation. However, this sort of objection has nothing obviously in common with the approach of the NAC majority.)

The fact that the NAC majority is for "general democratic aims" (and refuses to call for 'All Power to the Workers Councils' is sufficient to expose the real content of the following "endorsement" of the Councils: "The Workers Councils/ could be the organs of future workingclass leadership in the democratic rule of the country. The workingclass made it abundantly evident that it desired to maintain these, its class organs, after the revolution, both as instruments of workers control in the factories and as organs of political leadership in the country as a whole. As against those who derogate the workers councils, or who call for their abolition, or restrict or limit them, we stand as their supporters."

This passage is itself sufficient evidence for the existence and historical roots of the "Independent Socialist Tendency." Its political essence is identical

to the position in the German Revolution of the "Independent Socialist" party of Kautsky and Hilferding. This centrist tendency was "for" the soviets. It "opposed" those who wanted to abolish or limit them. Thus Kautsky wrote, "The Soviet organization has already behind it a great and glorious history, and it has a still more mighty future before it... the Soviet organization is one of the most important phenomena of our time. It promises to acquire decisive importance in the great decisive battles between capital and labor toward which we are marching." (quoted in Lenin, op cit, p. 359)

The only trouble was that the Independent Socialists of 1919, like those of 1957, were not willing to call for "All Power to the Workers Councils." They were undyingly opposed to "restricting" or "limiting" them, of course, they merely wished to combine the soviets with the "general democratic aims" of a freely elected parliamentary government!

Under such conditions the soviets could only be, as Lenin pointed out, instruments for the subjugation of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie. A condition in which the soviets exist side by side with a parliamentary "democratic" government is a situation of dual power. It is the height of political imbecility to expect dual power to exist on a semi-permanent basis in any country whatsoever. In Russia the soviets were compelled to destroy the Constituent Assembly. In Germany, the Constituent Assembly of Weimar (democratically elected, of course) succeeded in destroying the soviets. In Hungary the situation would differ only slightly. Although the overtly capitalist forces were weak, a petty-bourgeois clerical government merging from free election could quickly make itself a strong center for restorationist elements. The clash between such a government and the Workers Councils would come quickly and inevitably. If the revolution had been successful to the extent of eliminating the Stalinist power, the workers would have been faced with the necessity for eliminating the bourgeois government before it became strong enough to eliminate the Workers Councils.

Unfortunately, the NAC Draft Resolution can do no harm - I say unfortunately because the Stalinist victory made the problem of what to do in the event of revolutionary victory a moot one. But the orientation and advice expressed in this resolution can do nothing but harm in the future in any more successful revolution in E. Europe. To urge the workers to accept "general democratic aims" and not to establish their own state power is to reape fatally the victory of bourgeois and clerical reaction. The workers revolution can never be successful short of the conquest of state power by the workers organized as a class in their own class institutions become state institutions. The NAC draft resolution "supports" the Hungarian soviets, but urges them to support democracy in general, ie., bourgeois democracy, and opposes the perspective of "All Power to the Workers Councils." As Lenin said, "This is where Kautsky's complete rupture with Marxism and with socialism becomes obvious. Practically, it is desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie which is prepared to concede to everything except the transformations of the organizations of the class which it oppresses into state organizations." (op cit., p. 41)

Thus we have laid bare the abandonment of Marxism involved in the position on the decisive questions of the Hungarian revolution taken by the NAC Draft Resolution. In theory, the NAC majority has given up the class analysis of democracy, it is for democracy in general, not workers democracy. The NAC majority then goes on to demonstrate the validity of the Leninist view that "democracy in general" can be nothing but a mask for bourgeois democracy. It does this by supporting the "general democratic aim" of free parliamentary elections including all parties, and by opposing any proposal for "All Power to the Workers Councils"; in the

actual situation of Hungary and E. Europe this could only have meant the overwhelming probability of the victory of the peasant and Catholic restorationist forces. And of course the N.C majority repudiates the need for a revolutionary Marxist party to lead the Hungarian workers to socialist victory -- they consider revolutionary workingclass political organization as unnecessary in Hungary where a socialist revolution is underway as in the United States of today, where only propaganda groups are possible, or, we may presume, in the U.S. of the future where a socialist revolution will be on the agenda.

What is involved here is part and parcel of a general political development on the part of the "Independent Socialist Tendency" -- part of a "systematic political adaptation to social democracy" which is expressed in virtually every position taken by the present leadership of the YSL. In the case of the Draft Resolution these comrades may have gone further along this path than they themselves realized. (It is a common characteristic of centrists that they are incapable of thinking their thoughts through to the end, and that they display a notable lack of gratitude when Marxists perform this service for them). I hope that this is the case as far as the members of the YSL at least are concerned. If so, it may be possible to patch up some of the worst parts of this resolution by suitable amendments. In any case, the N.C Draft Resolution stands as a fitting political, intellectual, and theoretical expression of the tendency which has produced it.

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Miscellaneous Comments Concerning the NaC "Draft Resolution
on the Crisis of World Stalinism"

by Shane Mage

There are several aspects of the NaC Draft Resolution so monstrous as to require some brief comment, but which could not be fitted into my main article which was largely devoted to the theoretical questions raised by the Draft Resolution.

I The Wrong Side of the Barricades

Paragraph 25 of the resolution states the following: "Even if, as concretely history has precluded, the democratic anti-Stalinist revolution were under bourgeois leadership, or under the leadership of forces aiming to restore capitalism, socialists would be duty-bound to give support to and participate in the revolution, so long as it was a genuinely democratic one."

I cannot take this seriously, because the YSL leadership continues to refer to itself as a "Third Camp Socialist" tendency. I always thought this meant to be against both capitalism and stalinism, and not to support either as a lesser evil to the other under any conditions. Yet what they seem to be saying is that if capitalism could be restored in Eastern Europe they would be in favor of the restoration of capitalism, as an alternative to Stalinist rule (of course provided that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie would be executed democratically, as in the U.S.). I assume that the comrades of the NaC majority simply didn't know what they were saying (hardly a unique event) and that they voted down Tim's amendment out of pure habit. Accordingly, I expect them to repudiate this idea of their own accord - the last thing I want to make them do is to retain and defend this pro-capitalist formulation. They are going too far to the right too fast as it is. I have no desire to push them any farther.

II Armchair Theoreticians and Hungarian Blood

Paragraph 18 of the resolution expressly attacks the idea "that revolutions leads as it did in Hungary, to the intervention of the Russian army, the defeat of the first wave of the revolutionary struggle, and the imposition or reimposition of a harsh, old-fashioned, Stalinist-type regime. Hence the masses are urged to restrain themselves, to limit themselves to a Gomułka-type development." Having thus repudiated the "Polish way," the authors of the resolution seem to have become aware that the Polish workers are not exactly eager to be slaughtered by the GPU and that mighty few of them would prefer what happened to Hungary to a "Gomułka-type development." They therefore concede to the Polish workers a certain voice in determining whether or not they are to be slaughtered: "we do not ...mean that the foregoing considerations are irrelevant to the situation. Indeed, they undoubtedly do play a significant role in the thinking of the Polish masses today, and are of tactical importance for the struggle against Stalinism." No sooner has this concession to the tactical intelligence of the Polish workers been made, however, but our theoreticians suddenly realize that they have neatly canceled out the basic grounds for their previous rejection of "a Gomułka-type development." And so the paragraph terminates with the resounding "revolutionary" proclamation: "We do not call upon the masses to restrict themselves to any stage of the anti-Stalinist revolution, but urge them to press forward until they have put an end to Stalinist totalitarianism and established socialist democracy." The negation is here negated; the "tactical" concession to the Polish workers is withdrawn, and instead they are given their instruction: "press forward"! And what if pressing forward might result in a massacre? No matter - the masses are not to "restrict themselves to any stage."

All this is quite comical - but only because it is so completely irrelevant to the Polish and Hungarian revolutions. If the statement of the NAC majority had any influence on the Polish and Hungarian workers it would be extremely dangerous - for these comrades show a tendency to make up for their lack of revolutionary politics at home by a persistent tendency toward ultra-revolutionary words on the subject of the workers in the Stalinist countries.

Thus one of the authors of the NAC draft resolution wrote an article in the March 4 "Challenge" mainly reporting on the article by "Hungariscus" in France-Observateur. The Challenge article referred to "persistent reports that another uprising is scheduled for the spring" and later stated that "the Communist opposition and the students are continuing their work, preparing for a new rising.." The obvious impression was that the writer of the Challenge article favored a "new rising" in the spring or soon after. He completely omitted to state the fact that the article he was discussing, the Hungariscus document in France-Observateur (translated in LA the next week) very specifically and urgently warned against any tendency to resort to armed resistance against the Kadar regime, which he stated was in a process of consolidation, and was capable of drowning any uprising in blood.

Obviously, the resolution could easily be amended to say something like: 'the Polish workers should press forward whenever they feel able to do so without precipitating a showdown fight with the Russian army and secret police if they cannot expect to win such a struggle.' You mean to say the future course of the Polish revolution should be decided by the Polish workers, and not by the inspired revolutionists on 14th Street? Comrades, I'll let you in on a secret - not only should it be, it will be.

III anti-Semitism

It is obvious that the Stalinist charges of "anti-semitism" in the Hungarian and Polish revolutions are crude lies, and must be rejected. However, in order to discuss anti-semitism in Poland and Hungary in a resolution one should know a little more about the subject than that Stalinists (and Zionists) are congenital liars. The NAC Draft Resolution, on this as on so many other questions, displays a truly lamentable ignorance of certain well known facts.

As far as I know, the resolution is accurate when it says that "There is scarcely a shred of documentation for the charge of anti-semitism in the Hungarian revolution." However, in the case of Poland, the resolution completely distorts the actual situation: "In Poland, it was the pro-Stalinist, Natolin group which has utilized anti-semitism against the revolutionary forces." It is, of course, true that the Natolinists have utilized anti-semitism. But the Stalinist group is a tiny discredited minority, reviled by the entire Polish people. If only these Stalinists were anti-semitic, as the resolution implies, anti-semitism would be no problem whatever in Poland.

The facts, alas, are very different. According to persistent reports from Poland in the American press, anti-semitism is a live and virulent force in Polish life precisely among the backward, petty-bourgeois elements of the anti-Stalinist camp. The N.Y. Times correspondents in Poland have, on several occasions, pointed to widespread anti-semitism as a major cause for the large scale exodus of Jews from Poland to Israel. In particular, the column by M.S. Handler in the Jan. 9 Times gave a frightening picture of anti-semitism in Poland.

"Last Sunday two young men walked into a crowded restaurant, the Crystal, in the center of Warsaw exclaiming, "we want to kill a Jew!" They attacked a

a man who appeared to be a Jew, but who in fact was not, and beat him unconscious as most patrons watched in silence.

"A Polish reporter who witnessed the scene threw a heavy ash tray at the attackers. When the reporter departed he was attacked by ten men. He also was beaten until he lost consciousness."

Handler went on to add that "The situation is believed to be so serious that many Jews have withdrawn their children from public schools, fearing they will be beaten."

Perhaps most significant, in the same article Handler stated that the Revolutionary Student Council of Wroclaw University "demanded the expulsion of all Jewish students from the university. The authorities refused to accede to this demand when faculty members said they would walk out if Jews were expelled." It is noteworthy that in October Wroclaw was the scene of a violent mass anti-Russian demonstration. In a letter to L.A. (Dec 31) Rudzienski stated that the Wroclaw riots "must be condemned as the efforts of Polish reactionary nationalism to throw off the control of the working class and to impress on the workers class war against Stalinism; the purely national character of a Polish-Russian war." (ital. in orig.) For this, comrade Draper wrote a vicious reply in which he accused Rudzienski of "smearing" the "internal democratic opposition" and said of Rudzienski's description of the Wroclaw riots "It is not true." It is thus not surprising that L.A. never picked up the Handler article - but, that does not excuse the comrades of the NAC majority. They have an obligation to read other papers besides Labor Action, and particularly the "Times."

To pretend that anti-semitism in Poland does not exist except among a handful of Stalinists is to fail totally to answer the Stalinist smears against the Polish revolution as a whole. But a resolution incapable of even recognizing the existence of a backward, peasant, petty-bourgeois, Catholic majority in Eastern Europe can't be expected to come to grips with the problem of anti-semitism in these countries either.

IV Free Elections for All Parties

In conformity to its orientation toward a classless, ie., bourgeois, democracy the resolution in para. 3^d states it "strong belief" in full rights for all pro-capitalist parties. It goes on to state: "we stand in opposition to all those who took a dim view of the reappearance of some of the old capitalist or peasant parties, or who advocated the restriction of political rights in revolutionary Hungary to workingclass or pro-socialist parties."

Let us look at some of those who are the comrades of the NAC majority "stand in opposition-to,"

- 1) Lenin, who was not exactly eager to grant "full rights" to capitalist parties after the victory of the Russian revolution.
- 2) The revolutionary workers of Hegyeshalon, who denied the former head/the Smallholders party, the reactionary former premier Erenc Nagy, his "democratic right to return to Hungary and resume a leading place in the political life of the country (in the process, depriving the Stalinist slanderers of a priceless political issue.)
- 3) Trotsky, and the entire 4th International of 1938 (including, of course, Max Shachtman and several other democrats), since the famous "Transitional Program" adopted at the first congress of the International called for "legalization of soviet parties [in Russia]". The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate what parties they recognize as soviet parties."

4.) The Workers Councils of the 11th district of Budapest, led by Sandor Racz who was also chairman of the Budapest Central Workers Council, and which demanded: "We demand that a date be set for free elections in which only those parties may participate that recognize and have always recognized the Socialist order, based on the principle that means of production belong to society."

V The Solution to the Fundamental Crisis of our Times

"The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership." So wrote Trotsky in 1938 (Transitional Program, p. 6), and so has proven the accumulation of socialist failures and reactionary victories, all due to the absence of a revolutionary leadership since that time. And now the NAC Draft Resolution has offered a Way Out. As the reader will recall, it says that "Under Stalinism...the fight for democracy...becomes the revolution for democratic socialism even if it is not so consciously expressed."

No longer is a revolutionary leadership needed to accomplish "the revolution for democratic socialism." Now not even a socialist-conscious workingclass is necessary -- a socialist revolution can be made "even if it is not so consciously expressed." All you need is a Stalinist state that collapses and can be replaced by "democracy." The NAC majority has obviously presented us with the greatest advance in the history of human thought -- it has solved "the historical crisis of manhood."

True, the NAC majority, like all great thinkers, should not get all the credit for its discovery. In fact, the fundamental work was done by that great practical thinker J.V. Stalin. This epochal genius was faced with a situation in which the objective conditions for socialism had become over-ripe, while the subjective pre-conditions had not matured. With the simplicity characteristic of the greatest genius he devised the form in which the problem could be solved. There was really nothing to it. Just get rid of the old capitalist system which is breaking down anyway, and, since the workers aren't ready for socialism yet, put in its place a new system which doesn't need too many changes to transform it into socialism, and which is so jerry-built that not too much of a push is needed to knock it over.

Thus Stalinism has been revealed by our geni of the NAC majority as the most progressive event in human history so far -- an event which has simplified socialism so much that the workers of a Stalinist country no longer have to learn from the musty books of Lenin and Marx, they need just look at a functioning democracy like the U.S. and install the same political system in their own countries.

We can rest assured that if these comrades continue to call Stalinism "reactionary" it is purely out of ingratitude and jealousy, not for political reasons. Though their contribution is by no means negligible, it is human and understandable that they do not want their glory dimmed by the light of the greater genius who has gone before them.

How Things Look from the Back Row

by Faith Wallstrom

The time for pre-convention discussion is now upon us, and the YSL turns further inward. There will be less time for public meetings, less time and energy for contacting on the "outside," as our best people devote even more of their energies to the internal factional tasks. This inward-turning, which has been the characteristic of the past eight months, follows upon the heels of an "outward" period, during which we recruited a batch of new members -- much to the amazement of the old members, who had become accustomed to the hard, lean years preceding. External reasons, internal reasons, the young YSL has been writhing inward and outward with the regularity of the shifting seasons.

I thought that perhaps the members would be interested in the thoughts of a not generally vocal rank-and-filer on these questions. From my point of view in New York, the experience of the last far-too-many months has been deplorable. I see that in the New York unit the majority of the membership has long ago decided in favor of unity with the SP-SDF. I see that a tiny fraction of the unit membership has succeeded in immobilizing that unit's outward growth and development with endless, boring factional arguments. I see that nobody in the majority is going to change his or her mind about unity per se, although there are obviously shifting differences of opinion within the majority. In fact, the trend appears to be a depletion of the number of the minority, which, from my point of view, is the chief value of these discussions.

Meanwhile, back on the campus. A few encouraging signs appear here and there -- a really brilliant job of capitalizing on the Gates academic freedom issue, at Columbia -- two or three new high-schoolers around -- a gain of respect in the civil rights movement thanks to our hard work for the Prayer Pilgrimage. But we are not doing anywhere near the amount we could to really gain from a slowly opening up situation! Where are the experienced people? In the back office, pounding out documents, YSR articles, conferring on factional strategy. And the open meetings and business meetings -- our members are getting more and more creative at thinking up excuses for staying away from them. Because no imaginable subject can come up at either a business or an open meeting, but Tim, who has made a principle of opposition for its own sake, feels obliged to speak against the view presented -- on labor racketeering, for instance, he could dream up a basis for a view-point contradictory to the one presented, thus enabling him to take the floor and our time. Then somebody, or usually several, from the majority feels obliged to speak against Tim. Meanwhile, the rank and file, or what there is of it present, drowns uneasily on those hard chairs.

Is this educating our new members and winning our contacts? I assure you, most of us don't find it educational, this re-hashing of old arguments and invention of new ones, not for the sake of serious and honest discussion but for the sake only of getting

one's voice heard -- again. The differences within the majority, which are as yet only implied, promise to be educative. I look forward to that discussion. But we know, oh we know so well, what Tim has to say. And we've rejected it. We are jolted out of somnolence only when he gets particularly outrageous.

Yet the pre-convention discussion must, of course, go on, and the convention must be gotten through, with full respect to democratic procedures. In this, I bemoan only the poverty of content of the discussion. But, comrades, please let the convention be the end of it for a while! Once the convention has voted in favor of unity, and Tim and Shane's point of view is finally repudiated, let us get ourselves un-hamstrung, so that we can turn outward again and win new members and encourage and teach those we already have but haven't had time for! I understand that we can free ourselves of this intolerable burden simply by enforcing the discipline which the YSL constitution demands. Then, by all means, let us do so! There is no democracy in an organization which permits a minority to prevent the majority from carrying out its decisions!

I am perhaps betraying a lack of political zeal and "hardness" when I say that the minority bores me. I don't take them seriously. Although it is this movement that has produced them, and we must take certain cognizance of that fact, they are the worst sort of sectarian, and have theorized themselves right out of any rightful place in a democratic socialist, third-camp organization. They have nothing new or original to contribute to thinking in the American socialist movement, any more than the SWP has -- and this American socialist movement is in great need of real, creative thinking. We in the YSL especially should be thinking more about our relations with the SP, about the realities of what unity will be like. We should be spending more time making sure that our new members do not entertain an over-abundance of illusions about what life in the SP holds in store for us. Permitting our newer members to go in full of illusions and unprepared would be a real threat to the survival of our politics, and to ourselves as a tendency.

We should also be thinking of new areas in which we can work, and reviving our activity in ones with which we have had only token contact for some time -- the NAACP, for example. I think it is true that, affiliated with the SP, we will be able to reach more groups that have been proven fruitful in the past -- for instance, religious and pacifist groups. However, in the meantime, we must realize that unity is very probably not just around the corner, and we must concentrate on turning outward in order to train what we have, and build what we have (thus incidentally presenting the image of a lively and outward-going group to the SP, to whom we will seem all the more desirable for it.) I propose that, instead of just sitting on our behinds waiting for unity to cast the magic spell that will bring hundreds of new recruits flocking to us, or instead of devitalizing ourselves with interminable and inconsequential factional arguments with a "left-wing" whose entire perspective and premises differ fundamentally from ours we look outward once more, and seriously concentrate our efforts upon building the YSL.

The Pros and Their Con -- Part # 2

By Scott Arden

The Privy Faction (subtitle: "How To Be and/or Not To Be")

The first part of this article (YSR, Vol.4, No.3) concluded by informing the YSL membership that those supporting one variation or another of the "Unite For Unity" line have concretised their organizational aims in factional form -- at least in Chicago.

Unfortunately that information came to my attention after the first three sections of this article were drafted and it was therefore impossible to include it in more than a brief mention -- or postscript.

Now that we are less rushed we might for a moment examine several of the extremely interesting questions that this "faction" brings to our attention.

We learned, it must be remembered, of the existence of this "faction" (the term used by its supporters) when Comrade Debbie mentioned it in passing in the course of an informal discussion after a recent Unit business meeting.

While the Chicago Unit had never received "official" notification (either before that time or since) of the formation of this "faction" it must be confessed that those of us who are suspicious by nature -- or "paranoid" as some will have it -- did note the amazingly monolithic presentation of the Right's position at the last few meetings.

We charitably marked this off to "coincidence" but that we were wrong is now established. The Chicago Unit, and the YSL generally, finds itself in a most peculiar position. It has one open grouping, the Left-Wing Caucus, which declares itself, states its positions, and whose membership (and basis thereof) is stated and known to all. It also has, however, another grouping... this new "faction" which has never declared itself officially, has issued no statements and posited no position in its own name, and whose membership, and basis thereof, is at best "obscure".

This is made clear (if obscurity can be made clear) by the failure, to date, of this "faction" to issue one statement at any regularly constituted YSL meeting or in any YSL publication. In short it's a secret faction -- or functions like one.

"Come now", we might be asked, "is it fair to term this a secret faction?" "Didn't", our doubter continues, "Comrade Debbie herself tell you that it existed?" Completely true, we must answer, Debbie informed several of us informally that a "faction" had been formed. But, should we be allowed to return the hypothetical question of this hypothetical comrade, why hasn't she informed the YSL???

If such a "faction" (whatever it may be) was formed on purely local issues then informing the local unit might meet the minimal requirements for responsible functioning. The fact is, of course, that this "faction" is not by any means "local" in terms of its aims, functioning, or affiliations....

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In the interest of Pure Truth (should any think that such exists) let me confess that I have managed to glean certain further information -- which I shall now impart to all and sundry.

The "faction" we are concerned with exists to "expedite business meetings!"

An expression of this amazing item of incidental intelligence we owe entirely to an unexplainable interest on my part in ancient Grecian Drama. Likened, that is, into one of my semi-annual cinematic excursions by the title "Oedipus Rex", I chanced to run into two of the better members of this remarkable "faction" in the lobby of the local "art-theatre". One of them kindly granted me this "expedite" tidbit.

In all fairness it should be confessed that our discussion was cut short by the beginning of the feature and the Comrade in question might have offered more substantial information under other circumstances. In view of the importance of establishing the exact nature of this new "faction" I have determined to sacrifice all personal prejudices, however deep-seated, and shall spend the next few weeks lurking in the lobbies of local movie-houses.

Until this effort pays off we are restricted to "deduction", and in these terms can say certain things with no fear of honest contradiction.

Does this "faction" have any meaning in terms of "democracy" and related "nice" words which the IWC majority mouths with clocklike regularity?? If we can just for a second or two forget our individual "alignments" we might well see that it does.

The IWC has been called about everything that is to be found in Merriam-Webster's Unabridged with any derogatory content. Nevertheless, whatever its actual faults (should such exist), the IWC has functioned openly.

Contrary to both Haskell and Harris (the former misinformed -- the latter misinforming)* this is no exaggeration. The formation of the Caucus was immediately announced, a statement was issued, available for consideration by all YSLers, and all YSLers in agreement with the statement were invited to join. This statement outlined the basis then existing for the formation of the Caucus and listed the names of those who supported and endorsed the Caucus.

Admittedly this statement may not have been a masterpiece of phrose -- literary or political -- but at least it had the virtue of letting the national membership know precisely where we stood on the issues that had been defined at that stage of the discussion. Further, a mere handful of us signed that statement at the time it was first issued. Since then, fortunately, we have grown considerably -- and are, indeed, still growing.

The main point should be obvious to all. Even when we were a relatively insignificant proportion of the YSL's total membership we were not ashamed

* Contrary to Harris neither Ed nor Tim is a liar. The report Tim mailed out on the Shachtman-Haskell debate came with a covering letter requesting that it be circulated -- and not just to IWC members. If IWCers failed to circulate it that was a failing on their part and we can deduce no desire for "secrecy" on Tim's. Ed explained this (quoting from the covering letter) in answer to Haskell but Harris prefers to treat Ed as a liar. I hope Harris will now honor me by adding my name to his list.

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to come out and say that we, however few, take this position, here is what we are for, and against,.. here are our names so that the rest of the YSL will know exactly who we are.

Our opponents have of course made use of these names. As the second section of Part # 1 of this article indicated, a sizable segment of their argumentation has been along the lines of "so-and-so's a so-and-so". Lacking political arguments to prop up their proposal (which a New York Comrade has aptly called "The French-Fried Turn") they have naturally resorted to personal invective and beating, collectively, on our breasts... but we have elsewhere seen this to be true.

Let me return to the subject at hand by suggesting to our newer readers that an "open" approach is not necessarily the most "politic". We didn't "gain" through being open and honest about our differences, our proposals, our (if you will) minority status. Quite the contrary, as we shall see.

While the DMC has operated under the handicap of only winning and keeping those who agree with its stated positions, the MAC Majority has tended to naturally gather in everyone else, of whatever point of view. That is, most of those, whatever their various differences on unity may be, who cannot agree fully with the DMC have in effect (if not formally) been sucked into this other "faction". If this "faction" functioned as the DMC functions its support would probably be a lot less than that it would seem to have. We should like to see, for example, a "statement" which all supporters of the current MAC Majority could put their names to... to date no such statement can be produced.

This "faction" is a weird thing. That it has obvious points in its favor we readily admit. It is the "faction" of the majority of the established leadership (MAC-MEC majority) and only "professional-minoritieites" -- a somewhat extinct breed which cannot seriously concern us -- are insensitive to the attractions of majority status. Newer, or uncertain, or lazy, members normally tend to support the "respectable" established majority leadership... this is just a fact of political life, fortunate or otherwise, which no one can deny.

It has other attractions as well. The MAC majority offers a "scheme", details vague, which they claim can alter the miserable Sect-existence that we are limited to by the nasty objective conditions which determine political reality. Also, there is question of the subversive list... a very difficult matter to explain to relatives, employers, etc. This is mainly, to date, a problem for those of us who are or were in a "listed" organization (SYL, ISL, S.I.P., whathaveyou) but we know that certain elements among the powers-that-be, and kindred cretins associated therewith, are not too discriminating. Well, thank the God that Comrade Shachtman oratorically refers to, there won't be any of that in the SP-SDF. Our maiden aunt (whether in New Rochelle, N.Y. or Keokuk County, Ia.) may disagree with the party of Norman Thomas (and it is just that) but she doesn't consider it "subversive"... even the Chicago Tribune doesn't go that far!

Other "attractions" could be stated but most of them are obvious. Let's stop for a moment and anticipate a slander. The point concerning the "list", immediately above, does not imply that the MAC Majority wants into the SP-SDF mainly to be respectable... far from it. The point is simply that many contacts and new recruits are concerned with such problems and one attraction (which is what we are talking about right now) of any "entry" is that it would substantially decrease this concern. Slander diverted? Can we proceed now? (Note, Comrade Debbie, the "paranoia".)

(more)

Now that we know some of the "good things" about this new "faction" let's take a closer look and see if maybe we can't find something wrong with it. Okay? Well, who is in it? Those who agree with Shachtman versus Draper? (Two completely opposed positions) Yep! Those who agree with Draper versus Shachtman? Yep again! Little Orphan Annie maybe? No?

Taking Chicago as an example the privy faction includes, presumably, both Draperites and Shachtmanites. The fact that they would be hard put to issue a statement, equivocal to that of the LMC, to which they could all honestly agree doesn't seem to faze them in the least. After all, they are not "fuzzy" on Stalinism and can therefore afford to be more than that in terms of minimal political and organizational requirements.

Though the responsibility of such functioning is dubious, the advantages are not. Our opponents, locally and nationally, are carefully collecting their major differences on the unity question and are keeping them out of sight.... perhaps with a view to burying them under some carefully fabricated "agreement". So far, however, we only know that the differences are concealed -- we haven't seen any "agreement".

Here and there an occasional "token" has been passed off for genuine coin by the Draperites in the course of their attack on the Left. With the exception of Comrade Bone, however, we have yet to see an article basically aimed at the Shachtmanites. And, it goes with-out saying, the Shachtmanites are far too astute to more than hint at their point of view in one single YSL article.

This makes it possible for them to "work together" against the YSL Left... but is it fair to the YSL membership as a whole? Can we understand and come to grips with their arguments and ideas if they are only half, at best, stated? If they "bury" their differences, instead of presenting them openly to the membership, as we do, aren't they denying the YSL membership the opportunity to democratically educate itself on the issues involved? Doesn't the membership have the right to an open discussion?

We have seen what they substitute for open political discussion -- and the atmosphere that has developed in the YSL as a result of this substitution. Martin, in one of his rare public appearances during the course of this discussion (and only semi-publically at that), has carried the discussion a step further, as did Harris before him, by recently terming Tim a "liar".... What made Tim a liar? Well, Martin interpreted a discussion one way, Tim another, thus since Tim does not have semantic rapport with Martin, Tim's a... "liar". Another example ... but enough. Much more could be said about the YSL's privy "faction" but we will restrain ourselves to one or two final comments.

Comrades should be aware that the Chicago section of this "faction" includes those who do not view unity with the SP-SDF as particularly likely, would oppose (and probably not participate in) any "unity" except on a Draperite basis, and have a number of other differences with the Shachtmanite position. They are, in short, for something essentially different from that which the YSL Left was formed in opposition to.

Why is it ruled out that such comrades, if they stated and organized for their position, could find large areas of real agreement with the Left? Further, why couldn't they even hope to win over a substantial proportion of those who have been (and are being) forced to the Left as the only meaningful alternative to Schachtman???

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Don't we have a right to hear their views? Don't they have an obligation to attempt to win support to their position? They may not convince the Evil Comrade Robertson, it is true, but they may convince some of the more than 3/4ths of the unit that supports him (don't forget, the second largest unit in the YSL -- which by itself has about as many members as the 'YPSL' nationally). Many of these comrades are new, remember, and almost none of them are "SWPish" in any sense.

Thus for the barren privy "faction". One of its major components, the Shachtman supporters, is politically sterile -- the other, the Draper supporters, is politically mute. When it presents itself (if, indeed, it ever will) to the YSL in an open fashion then we may find it possible to treat of it in a serious fashion.

In the meantime they have shut themselves in a political privy built-for-two, locked the door from the inside, and are attempting to flush their political differences down a common drain... Making use of the only paper available to them, and using suitable arguments, they presume to issue pronouncements to the effect that their privy has now become the YSL. They couldn't be wronger.

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Democracy and Discipline (subtitle: "Bill Bailey revisited")

Readers of the YSR cannot fail to be aware of the increasing flood of "implimentary" motions which are aimed at the July Convention. The aim of these motions (most particularly, but not exclusively, those framed by Arlon and Harrington) is to "rid the YSL" of the "growing cancer" of its Left which, Martin forbid, if not subjected to ruthless surgical treatment might easily have a majority in the YSL before the end of 1957.

This is a risk that can't be taken!.... the nature of the YSL as it has existed up til now and elementary considerations of organizational democracy non-withstanding. Those who fear the growing Left are hysterically donning the cocked hat of the lunatic-fringe followers of "Lenin" and preparing to transform the YSL into something which might well meet the approval of the organizational "hards" of the SLP. Were Pogo a YSLer he might well yell "Ilan the dikes! The Damn at the Booby-bin is burst!"

An exaggeration? By no means! Listen to this... The coming Convention is to "settle" everything, "once and for all" -- this and no less! This is what various supporters of the MAC Majority tell us openly.

Now among some supporters of the "monolithic party" theory the view has long existed that when a dispute arises the two sides discuss the questions involved, take a vote, and from that point on (once the decision has been reached) the majority policy is then the permanent, unchanging, undiscussable position of the organization -- the minority must accept this position and cease to present, organize for, propose, or even mention, its alternative point of view toward the end of eventually changing the then majority attitude.

It is a fact that the YSL and the vast majority of its members have always rejected this fals conception (which its supporters usually call "Leninism") and have refused to accept the notion that questions are "settled" once and for all" after the Convention reaches a decision. Yet this is the aim of our ultra-democrats!

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The exact details have not been fully revealed to us but by way of promise we are regularly informed that the Left will find it extremely difficult to remain in the YSL, no matter how loyally, after the July Convention. Indeed, already (already, Comrade Arlon, before the Convention!) our future "second class" -- at best -- membership status is being tried-on for size. As one of the clearest examples of this let me refer doubtful readers to the NAC's own record of the discussion and decision on Tim's tour (NAC Minutes of the Meeting of April 30th, 1957).

Further it would seem that the NAC is unwilling to await the "Democratic Decision" of the Convention it seems certain to dominate. Instead, it is already "implimenting" decisions that have not yet been made!

That is, it has come to my attention that the NAC has adopted some sort of rule prohibiting the acceptance of any member of the SWP into the YSL "because of" Arlon's motion (which the Convention may pass) "implimenting" the Convention Decisions (not yet reached!) by excluding SWP youth from YSL membership.*

Just stop for a minute and think! Is there any so stupid as to not realize how fantastic this is?

Let's just examine the "logic" for a half-minute. What if one of us (Scott, for example) were to present a motion for the consideration of the Convention to the effect that "dual membership in the ISL and YSL is incompatible". Suppose, further, that I introduced such a motion right now! O.K., are we now to assume that from this minute on the membership of all ISLers in the YSL is "suspended" or "held in abeyance" pending Convention action on such a motion? Well, why not?

This question of "barring SWPers" is not just hypothetical. Tonight, May 30th, the Chicago Unit will vote on the membership application of a young SWPer who has been in contact with the YSL for sometime. I have been led to believe that the NAC's position will bar her membership. If this is so then the YSL will have a special chapter devoted to it in any future work on "The Sectarian History of the American Radical Movement!". This position is also in clear and open violation of the YSL's Constitution (which they ignore cheerfully) which leaves the question of acceptance or rejection of individual applications to the local units except in case of "membership-at-large".

This is particularly outrageous because of the particular SWPer in question. She is not a "hard-and-fast Cannonite", basically in disagreement with the specific politics of the YSL. On the contrary! This SWP comrade is a member, or supporter, of the "State-Capitalist" tendency in the SWP, a tendency which is "non-defensist" on the Russian question. Get that? She disagrees with the "degenerated workers state" theory and its concomitant "Defense of the U.S.S.R." position. The position she holds is perfectly compatible with YSL membership as defined in the Constitution.

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* I must apologize in advance for any inaccuracy in this report but I have not yet received the minutes of the NAC meeting of several weeks ago at which this decision was reportedly reached. Normally I would reserve comment until I had the NAC's statement before me but in this case that is impossible since this article must be finished this afternoon (May 30th) to meet ISR's deadline, and because the question involved is of immediate importance.

If her application is not accepted it will be (it can only be) on the crudest organizational grounds with no political question involved. It will mean that the YSL is no longer open to socialist youth who are in basic agreement with our minimal political requirements for membership, as defined in the Constitution, and who are willing to accept the duties and obligations of membership, as also defined in the Constitution.

A "clause" will have been written into the Constitution redefining conditions of membership -- written in, we must remember, in the Constitution of the Democratic YSL, a Constitution which only the Convention is allowed to alter in any manner shape or form! Why? Why make this unsupportable move? Well, it seems that one comrade, not even a present member of the MAC, has proposed a motion on the subject to be considered by the coming Convention. This is the shabby pretext the MAC gives us for tearing up the YSL Constitution!

It used to be that "A-B-C" was "A-B-C"... lately, however, its become "S-P" in some strange fashion. Let's try our "A-B-C"s, comrades. We all know, whichever side we support, that any action by the MAC barring membership in the YSL to those SWP youth who meet all Constitutional requirements for membership -- any such action -- is an openly undemocratic use of powers it does not have, to intervene into the affairs of a local unit, to bureaucratically limit the growth of the YSL Left, to impose a particular faction's ends on the YSL, and to artificially decide in advance the outcome of the July Convention (which is supposed to make such decisions if they are to be made at all).

The next logical step is to bar the Left from any recruiting whatsoever! That is, to make agreement with the MAC Majority's factional position on SP-SDB "Unity" a pre-condition for membership. Why not? Hurry up, Arlon, write another motion tomorrow barring recruitment of any who do not agree with your faction off the unity question. Rest assured that the MAC Majority will hasten to exceed its powers again and say "In view of the pending resolution..."

Here we get to what's really involved. The Right is frightened silly by our proven ability to recruit to the YSL on a Left basis. In Chicago, for example, we have two applicants for membership, both on a Left basis. One is the SWP comrade mentioned above (who in terms of her political views belongs in the YSL) and the other is a 17 year old high school student. In addition to these two we have more than a good likelihood of several other high school recruits (within the next month), plus a couple of present YSLers (of long standing) who are seriously considering MAC affiliation. Is it any wonder that the MAC Majority fears its majority in Chgo is at best tenuous? Is it any wonder that the MAC Majority may attempt to restrict the Left's elementary democratic right to recruit to the YSL rather than run the risk of losing another major unit to the Left?

We know what the picture is nationally. In Berkeley one of the YSL's smallest units has been re-built, on a Left basis, until it is now the second largest unit in the YSL -- and still growing! * Antioch has been firmly
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* If Comrade Harris can be taken seriously then Jim Robertson has demonstrated an amazing degree of personal magnetism.... a quality he must have been holding tightly in check during the many years he has worked to build the Berkeley Unit. Of course we know that Harris is full of.... inaccuracies.

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re-established as a unit -- also on a Left-Wing basis. In Denver and Phila, if the MAC allows us to recruit non-SWPers, we will probably be able to establish new units within a month or two. In New York (the stronghold of the MAC Majority -- which constitutes about half of its national support) and in Newark support for the Left is slowly developing. This is by no means a complete roster but it leaves the MAC Majority "safely" (and that for the moment) only two units outside of N.Y. -- Pittsburgh and Los Angeles -- neither of which is particularly strong in size or prospects and both suffering in varying degrees from a "Leadership crisis!"

We now have (easily) the support of one quarter of the YSL and if the MAC Majority allows us our right to recruit, in terms of the standards outlined in the Constitution, we may have close to one third of the total YSL membership within a few months. The MAC realizes this and is very naturally disturbed.

Let's stop, again, for a moment and anticipate another slander. Can it be said that the Left is "packing" the YSL? Absolutely not! The growth of the Left represents legitimate YSL recruiting, both from within and without. That is, almost everyone who has been (and is being) won to the Left is a present YSLer, ex-YSLer, former Stalinoid or Stalinist, or relatively or completely new to any socialist political activity. I might add, just for those interested in such matters, that almost none of them are members of the SWP.

On this last point it might be worth while to point out that in the above discussion of the growth possibilities for the Left I have, for purposes of this discussion, carefully excluded the SWP youth as a major factor. In the event
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To charge that the Berkeley Unit (remember, the second largest in the whole YSL) is a personal clique of comrade Jim's is not only totally inaccurate but, even if it were true, is irrelevant and represents argumentation on the lowest possible level.

All of us know that at least one of the two units, outside of N.Y., that "solidly" supports the MAC Majority was founded by one comrade, has been held together by the same comrade, and, as a point of fact, would probably fall apart tomorrow (or the next day) were that one comrade to leave -- a fact well attested to by the long stated desire of this one comrade to "retire" from youth work as soon as his unit can sustain itself without him.

Is this sort of thing "relevant" to our discussion on the Unity Question? I, for one, am damned glad that the comrade in question has sacrificed his personal desires and continues to hold together a unit of the YSL, regardless of what position that Unit takes on "Unity". Most units of the YSL have been established and are "held together" by one or two key comrades. The present "Leadership crisis" in the Los Angeles Unit is largely due to the loss of just one such key comrade. So what? So nothing!

The only legitimate points that can be made on this "factor" are evaluations of the relative strength or weakness of the units in question, the possibilities of their growth or decline. If comrade Jim were considering leaving Berkeley then Harris might correctly raise the question of whether or not his loss would weaken the unit and if so what steps (if any) we could take to correct the situation. But obviously this is not the sort of thing Harris is talking about. Rather he, Harris, "charges" something that is not only not true but which, even
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of a general influx of SWP youth (an event which would be immensely progressive, and which I favor) -- in such an event -- then the YSL would have at least one new unit (Detroit), considerable strength in N.Y., new forces in Los Angeles and elsewhere... In short, the YSL Left, under such circumstances, would almost automatically be the YSL majority. I mention this only to show that it is not what I'm talking about in my above discussion of the growth potential of the Left.

If, after this somewhat long digression, we can return to the original point -- the introduction of the "Monolithic Party" concept into the YSL -- there are several points worth making in the time still left to us.

It can be readily established that at least the more articulate supporters of the NEC Majority want to "rid the YSL" of those YSLers who oppose them on the Unity Question. They hope to do so by altering the YSL, now and at the next Convention, in such a manner as to make it "impossible" for those who oppose them on this one question to remain in the YSL. Expulsion, of course, will be used if necessary but as this would be "messy" it will only be a last resort.

Much preferable is the setting of "impossible" conditions -- and if the Left accents the "impossible" conditions, then a new set, even more "impossible" is
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if it were true, would be totally irrelevant and a "charge" that could be as readily established "against" units supporting Harris's position.

His second "charge" is just as dishonest and just as irrelevant... indeed, it's the above point restated. He "charges" that Berkeley, unlike other units, does not have "graduates" all over the country -- that is, that Jim for nefarious reasons has been unable to recruit and develop leadership people with only one exception who just happens to be a co-thinker of Harris.

Is this true? To name just two, Roger and Dave have both demonstrated leadership ability (and I single them out only because both have written -- something many "leaders" of Harris's group don't seem to be able to do). Others can be mentioned. Just as one such other there is Duran -- a comrade who so impressed the last Convention that it elevated him to Alternate NEC status, an honor without YSL president considering his "newness" to political activity. Let's check Harris's "other units" who have "graduates" (presumably leadership people) all over the country. Aside from two units, Chicago and N.Y., who else, comrade Harris? How many "leaders" were developed by Arlon in L.A. and have "graduated" to other units all over the country?? Offhand we can only think of one -- Comrade Art in N.Y. How about Pittsburgh?? At most one. The record of other YSL units that exist and have existed is not much better, if as good, is it Comrade Harris?

Once again we see that Harris's "charge" amounts to...hogwash -- and an inferior grade of hogwash at that. Also, of course, this "charge", even if it were correctly founded (which it is not) is "irrelevant" in exactly the same way as his first "charge" was.... If Jim is "guilty" Arlon is even more so... and I don't accuse Arlon of any guilt on this score.

But enough of this footnote... Let's save what's left of Comrade Harris for section three.

formulated and put forth. That is, no matter what the Left is willing to accept they will still not be allowed to remain in the YSL.

The crystal-clear example of this is the new "Resolution" proposed by that famous anti-leninist, and organizational democrat, Comrade Harrington (YSR, Vol. 4 No. 4, May 19th, 1957), in answer to the L.C.'s statement that it would go along with the Majority should the Majority decide to enter the SP-SDF youth (subjecting certain conditions).

A little worried by this, Harrington makes the point: "We are, of course, in favor of full, free and open discussion of differences within a regrouped socialist movement. But such debate, we believe, must take place within the context of a commitment to the basic notion of a broad Debsian party." (Emphasize mine, S.A.)

What on earth can this possibly mean except that Harrington will now set as a "condition" for continued YSL membership (after "Unity") full acceptance of his "basic notion" of a "broad Debsian party"??? That excludes the Left from this "Unity" completely and entirely -- if by commitment he means that we must change our views and accept his viewpoint (i.e., agree with him). Could he mean anything else but this? Let's see.

Just in case we didn't all understand he spells it out a little further in his "comments" on the motion involved. In discussing the question of insisting on the right of any YSLer to enter the "Unity" organization (should the SP-SDF demand the exclusion of certain members) he tells us: "I will fight for the rights of anyone who is for the unity which is becoming a fact and wants to enter it as a loyal member."

Note this carefully. You now not only have to enter as a loyal member -- that's not good enough. You have to be for the unity! That is you have to agree with Harrington that the unity is a good thing if he (our National Chairman) is to go out of his way to assure you your right to stay with the YSL.

Perhaps Harrington may not yet have managed to figure out that the YSL members supporting the L.C. are not "for the Unity". If, however, this fact has come to his attention then he clearly establishes what "commitment" means as used in his resolution... It's not commitment to abide by majority decision or function loyally... nothing like that. Harrington insists upon agreement with the majority position and nothing less.

We must close for now... overwhelmed as we are by this magnificent display of "anti-Bolshevik" thinking on the organizational question by that master-democrat Harrington. All hail the monolithic party and its democratic advocates!!

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I must apologize for not including the projected third section of this installment but I must submit my stencils at this point if they are to be published in the current YSR. Though it is difficult for me to deny myself the pleasure of a whole section devoted to a certain Comrade Harris I must postpone that innocent past-time until the next issue.

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROSPECTS OF THE YSL

Chicago, Illinois
30 May 1957

After many months in the East, I have finally come back to the "heartland of America" - the Midwest. The experience has already proven to be a good one, for it has helped me gain a certain perspective on the political and organizational prospects of the YSL. Caught, as we have been, in a struggle with a faction to whose protestations of concern for building the YSL, we are forced, unfortunately, to reply "the gentlemen do protest too much." It has been a bit difficult to gain any perspective on what we have accomplished in the recent past and what we are on the verge of accomplishing in the near future. In the course of the factional struggle, some of the most active and concerned comrades, many of them relatively new to the socialist movement, have insisted, correctly, that the task of the organized socialist movement is the intervention in the political life of the nation. They have, incorrectly, but understandably, and from the point of view of a viable socialist youth movement, healthily, counterposed this task to the factional fight. However, for those committed to the necessity of socialist organization in order to intervene in political life, the successful prosecution of that factional fight is necessary to the healthy life of the organization.

The possible discouragement that this protracted struggle may have created among those comrades most committed to the point of view of the majority and who want to get on with the task of building a socialist youth movement which can intervene in the political life of the nation may be dispelled by looking at what we have done while in the midst of this fight - and what is on the agenda. In the first place, the YSL has continued to maintain a slow, but steady, rate of growth both numerically and in terms of the areas in which we have influence. In New York City we have gained strength and influence on the major campuses of the city, and were consequently in the position to lead the fight to protest the banning of Daily Worker editor John Gates from the City College campus. In the meetings that were held at Columbia and at Brooklyn College, Comrade Harrington was able to present the YSL to over a thousand students, while at the same time fighting for student rights and academic freedom. In the second place, the contribution that the YSL made to the Prayer Pilgrimage has gained us the respect and admiration of important sections of the Negro movement. This activity was carried on in the midst of the factional struggle - and represents the most significant and important act performed by the socialist youth movement in many years.

Recent weeks have witnessed encouraging growth within the YSL. It should be encouraging to learn that YSL units or organizing committees with serious prospects of becoming units in the near future have been formed in New Haven, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Boulder, Colorado, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington through the activities of leading supporters of the majority. At one western campus we recently discovered the existence of a club, which is oriented toward the YSL and is considered by the students of the campus as the "YSL club!" There are at least three Big Ten universities in the mid-west at which with some work at the beginning of the fall semester we could have at least an organizational toe-hold.

Both I and Comrade Denitch who has been on tour for the YSL have discovered that the YSL has become the socialist youth movement in the eyes of socialist-oriented students throughout the country. Particularly

among those radical youth breaking with the LYL and with the Stalinist periphery, the opportunities for the YSL are encouraging. Furthermore, there is a new atmosphere on the campus. At the University of Wisconsin, for example, there has been a group of undergraduates which has met to discuss problems of Student Conformity and related matters and have made certain beginnings toward a new political atmosphere on the campus. Most of them are non-ideological, consider themselves "liberals", but the content of their ideas could be, with the attention of socialists, easily pushed to the left. One of the comrades from the West Coast reports similar stirrings on campuses in that area.

The YSL will survive the current factional struggle, despite its exhausting quality, the personal nastiness involved, and the failure of the minority to act in a fashion that would convince anyone of their desire to build the YSL. The minority, with a few notable and commendable exceptions, has in a perfectly "legal" fashion, but totally irresponsibly, tied-up the activities of the YSL in those areas in which it has strength. On every possible issue it has developed a "minority" point of view. However, at a meeting at which I was recently present when the organizer of the unit, a supporter of the majority, asked for aid in an important campus activity, the minority comrades did not even give her the courtesy of listening to her proposal. The minority reserves its talents it seems for the "theoretical" problems of the organization. Any healthy socialist youth organization can only be so if there is a lively internal discussion carried on at all times. The minority has "forgotten", however, that one of the obligations of a democratic organization is to operate in such a way, even when fighting for a legitimate political position, that will aid the organization's growth, will aid the advancement of the democratically adopted politics of the organization, - rather than throwing roadblocks in the way of executing the politics of the majority of the organization.

The experiences of recent months, however, have proven that despite the actions of the minority we can be guaranteed substantial growth in the near future in the YSL. In a certain sense, the major task of the convention and of the incoming NEC-NAC will be to take the steps necessary to exploit successfully the excellent opportunities that we have. This is a task which will call upon the energies and resources of all those loyal to the organization.

GEORGE RA LINGS

P.S. After writing this note, I had the opportunity to read Comrade Faith's article which appears elsewhere in this issue of the YSR. I was happily "forced" to the conclusion that without any prior agreement or knowledge her remarks and my note are the two sides of the same coin. It's time to get on with the task of building the YSL!

ON TAKING POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE AMERICAN FORUM FOR

SOCIALIST EDUCATION

—George Rawlings

The question of the YSL's position on the American Forum for Socialist Education must be considered in some detail at this point. Some of those in the YSL while agreeing that the AFSE was a mistaken approach to socialist regroupment question whether our continued refusal to take organizational responsibility is correct now that the Forum is in existence. They wonder whether our continued absence from its National Committee will isolate us from those radical youth breaking with the CP and the LYL who will be involved in the AFSE. They question whether our continued refusal to become in effect a sponsor of the AFSE may not buttress those forces in the Forum who are interested in creating a Stalinoid regroupment.

Before we examine these questions we must clear the air of several confusing issues. We should not be against taking responsibility for the Forum simply because Wohlforth, writing as Secretary of the Minority, offered his services to Muste in a scandalous letter. Wohlforth the "private citizen," free to do as he wishes, and Wohlforth the Secretary of the Minority Caucus, merge in this act, as in others, into Wohlforth-the-Author-of-the-Method-of-Political-Madness. It was an undisciplined act, it stands morally condemned by all loyal, responsible members of the YSL, the NAC's resolution of May 23 says all that need be said on this subject at this time - but it has nothing to do with our attitudes toward the American Forum for Socialist Education.

Equally irrelevant to our attitudes toward the AFSE is the witch Hunt that has been aimed at it. Our position on this is, of course, unambiguous. We condemn and oppose the attacks on the AFSE as strongly and as vigorously as we can. We have nothing but open contempt for the attacks on the AFSE by Eastland, the New York Daily News, the New York Times, and other similar sources. But being anti-anti-AFSE does not make us - despite all sorts of equations about two negatives "making" a positive- necessarily pro-AFSE.

There is one more issue which has been introduced into this discussion. It is claimed in some circles that the AFSE is nothing but a center to organize the discussion between socialists and Stalinists and Stalinoids - and that therefore we can have no objection to participating in such a discussion center. But we ask the proponents of this view, "If this is so, why is it so necessary that we participate in such a discussion center, such a forum to formalize the discussion? We did not do this when the Bartellites or Muste himself were "privately" organizing the discussion?" Some of the proponents of this "we-are-only-formalizing-the-discussion-theory" are obviously sincere about this - others are disingenuous. It is clear that the AFSE is more than a center for formalizing the discussion - that it is a quasi-organization on the way to becoming an organization.

We now turn to the issue at hand - which requires a careful description. so that no one will have any doubts as to what is at stake. With the exception of the YSL Minority, there is no one in the YSL to my knowledge who believes that a healthy socialist regroupment could stem from the AFSE. (Comrade Bone seemed to have this position, but it appears that his position is changing.) Those who have been questioning whether we should now support the AFSE do so only on the grounds that we may have something to gain by supporting the Forum, even though we

were right in our initial opposition. The Minority looks upon the AFSE as some sort of necessary first-step in the kind of "regroupment" they want - of this more below in another context -; those in the Majority who suggest that we perhaps should now participate officially in the AFSE have no interest in it as a center for socialist regroupment, are concerned only with a very limited tactical question. It is to these members of the Majority that these comments are addressed.

The question is a simple one and the division between those of us in the Majority who oppose taking political responsibility for the AFSE by having YSL representatives on the National Committee and those in the Majority who have suggested that we might participate in the AFSE officially is slight. It would be ludicrous to blow up the differences into a major discussion - thus the brevity of this article. Those of us who have no doubts about the wisdom of refusing to take political responsibility have every intention of participating in any discussions of the serious problems which face the socialist movement which the Forum might organize. Those who suggest that perhaps we should have a few YSL spokesmen as "individuals" on the National Committee of the AFSE have no illusions about the Forum, certainly do not see it as in any way an alternative to unity with the SP-SDF as the basis for socialist regroupment. The Minority can gain little comfort from possible differences in the Majority and Majority supporters certainly should not mute their doubts on this question out of a mistaken fear of this.

The issue is simple: do we have more to gain at this point by taking political responsibility for the Forum, or by refusing to take such responsibility? No more grandiose issue is at stake, when posed this way - and the waters are not muddied by notions of the AFSE as a center for socialist regroupment or other similar nonsense - the matter becomes quite clear; everything that we hope to gain from the AFSE can be gained without taking political responsibility. There is no obligation to take political responsibility for a political form whose formation you opposed in the first place.

If the AFSE were likely to become an institution which would be on the American socialist scene for any length of time, if it gave any indication of being really viable, then the issue would be more serious. In such a case ~~we~~ it might be that we would have to work to convert it into an institution which we could support, that is an institution which was clearly for the defense of democracy everywhere. But does the AFSE at this point have any chance of being a viable organization? A glance at it should dispell illusions on this score. The AFSE has already burned its bridges to the Negro movement by its disastrous attempt to link the joint May Day meeting it sponsored in New York with the Prayer Pilgrimage. Some of its own leading figures have been shaken in their conviction as to the correctness of the entire operation. The Communist Party in the process of stamping down on the Gates tendency it is reported has ordered Gatesites Wilkerson and Blumberg off the National Committee of the AFSE. The political hostility of the SP-SDF to the AFSE (for both good and bad reasons) limits its effectiveness in the arenas of the SP-SDF. And one of the loudest supporters of the Forum, the Socialist Workers Party, is interested only in a very specific type of regroupment - regroupment around their finished program. The SWP is in short in the AFSE on a raid - a recruiting drive for the vanguard party. Their attitude on the entire question of socialist regroupment is amazingly like the attitude of the YSL Minority. They both are looking for programatic agreement - and it appears, "coincidentally," that they have similar programs.

The AFSE if it is to exist at all can turn only into a center for Stalinoid regroupment - and the kind of center in which the Stalinoids are not required to rethink too much, can remain content in a position halfway between Stalinism and democratic socialism. It cannot be a center for anything but such a Stalinoid regroupment. No democratic socialist unity is viable that is not clearly anti-Stalinist, for democracy everywhere. For us to take political responsibility for the AFSE would be to choose it as an alternative vehicle for socialist regroupment to the SP-SD. And such a vehicle with its Stalinoid overtones would not be a way of creating a broad Debsian democratic socialist movement - but of succumbing to the direction of those who in some way or other have a "defensist position" on the Russian question. Our hostility to Stalinism and our recognition that it has nothing to do with socialism is, of course, not a peripheral matter to our politics- but has been the crucial hallmark and capstone of Third Camp Socialism.

The only conceivable viability for the AFSE - and that possibility is limited - is as a Stalinoid regroupment. The independent socialist movement cannot turn its back on such a development, must in fact maintain in constant relations with it, must have its speakers at its forums, must be in constant contact with those it influences. Isolation, in short, from this Stalinoid regroupment is not being proposed - and is in no way to be the consequence of our refusing to take political responsibility for the AFSE. But there is nothing that we would want to do in relation to the AFSE that we cannot do remaining friendly critics who refuse to take organizational responsibility. Becoming part of the National Committee of the AFSE can only help in the creation of a Stalinoidish regroupment - precisely the kind of regroupment no member of the Majority is interested in.

For those who reject the perspective for socialist unity as proposed for the YSL by the Majority, participation on the National Committee of the AFSE becomes the natural alternative for their are many Stalinoid scalps present there for those "braves" who want a raiding party. For those who defend the Majority's position, and who understand it - who are not concerned with raids, but with a genuine socialist regroupment built about a Debsian Party of democratic socialism - participation on the National Committee of the AFSE we deem to be a political error. Our refusal to participate on the National Committee does not mean isolation from the Stalinoids - our participation on it means a movement away from the kind of regroupment outlined in the Document of the NAC Majority on perspectives for American Socialism, and more important it is likely to give additional support to the illusion that those who have not yet broken from Stalinism and socialists can together "educate" for socialism.