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YOUNG SOCIALIST FORUM

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YOUNG SOCIALIST FORUM
Internal Discussion Bulletin
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Material should be sent (already stenciled, if possible) to
YSF, P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station, New York 3, N.Y.

YOUNG SOCIALIST DRAFT RESOLUTION

ON TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES

General Orientation

1. Our goal is the building of a revolutionary socialist youth movement in the United States. The general political character of such a movement was defined by the Detroit National Conference of Young Socialist Supporters. The conference also organized the basic nucleus that will lead in the building of a revolutionary socialist youth movement.

2. It is our task now to elaborate a general orientation for our work in building such a youth movement in the current period. The United States today is still marked by the existence of the witchhunt and a relative degree of political conservatism among the working class. Within this general framework, however, signs of discontent on the part of the masses of people are beginning to be noted. These stem from the impact of continued large-scale unemployment within the country and the "brink of war" approach of U.S. foreign policy. It is under these conditions that we must today strive to build a revolutionary socialist youth movement.

Our History : Regroupment

3. The forces that now constitute the basic cadre of revolutionary socialist youth were assembled primarily through a process of regroupment, over the last two years, within the socialist youth movement itself. The concept of a revolutionary socialist youth movement was first formulated by the left wing within the now defunct Young Socialist League as an alternative to the rightward movement of that organization towards the official social democracy.

4. After it was forced out of the YSL in the fall of 1958, the left wing joined forces with the youth of the Socialist Workers Party and a number of independents to launch the Young Socialist. The Young Socialist has consistently promulgated revolutionary socialist views among young people and promoted the regroupment of socialist youth on all levels.

5. This new youth cadre joined with others more distant from revolutionary socialist politics, primarily from the Stalinist milieu. Local discussion clubs were formed on the basis of organizational independence from any adult tendency, broadness in composition and common action wherever possible. These new clubs provided a milieu within which revolutionary youth could reach others with their ideas.

6. By the time of the Detroit Conference of Young Socialist Supporters, these local formations of a broader political coloration than the Young Socialist had, by and large, either disappeared or changed their political complexion. Those elements within the clubs, who did not agree with the political outlook of the YS, tended to leave and the uncommitted elements began more and more to identify with the YS. Since the Detroit Conference the general trend has been further in the direction of solidifying the former broad clubs with the YS. In addition, new YS clubs have been formed to replace defunct broader clubs.

7. These developments mark a new stage in the building of a revolutionary youth movement. However, they do not mark an end to the regroupment process. The YS now has the highly important political advantage of having actively participated in this process and establishing itself as the only tendency among youth to further regroupment in every way possible: through participation in the American Forum for Socialist Education, through the formation of broad local youth clubs, through united socialist electoral activity, and through its readiness to work in a united way with all socialist youth regardless of their differences with the policies of the YS. Because of this policy and its continued willingness to remove any organizational barriers that might prevent leftward-moving forces from becoming a part of the future revolutionary socialist youth movement, the Young Socialist will, in the period ahead, continue to attract young people coming from other socialist backgrounds.

Campus Orientation

8. As a youth organization it is our special task to reach young people as they are assembled by society into a separate organized entity. In the United States today this means our orientation must be toward the campus youth. For it is on the campus that young people are organized separately from older people, where they have special problems and interests, and where they are able to play a certain social and political role. A youth orientation therefore is equal to a campus orientation.

9. The American campus is primarily petty bourgeois in its class composition. Political apathy is prevalent on all campuses and an orientation toward a career -- to get ahead in the old Horatio Alger sense -- is the dominant ideology of the American college student. The American campus differs from those in other capitalist lands in that a much higher percentage of students in the lower income bracket can be found. This will be of extreme importance when the class struggle begins to increase in intensity.

10. Today signs can be seen of the beginnings of an awakening among all social strata on the campus. These signs take the form of increased support to liberal activities such as SANE, the Youth March for Integrated Schools, and new student parties like SLATE. Also the more radical elements on campus have participated in a modest revival of socialist activity on some campuses with the formation of new socialist clubs. There has been a growth of older clubs, and an interested response to socialist speakers on many campuses.

11. The current recession has engendered in the minds of young people an increasing sense of insecurity. They realize that upon leaving school they face a glutted labor market. The constant threat of war together with the continuation of the draft adds to this feeling of insecurity. However, the insecurity has not reached a point where any large section of American youth are willing to engage in any significant action against the recession or the war drive.

12. Our campus work must therefore be conducted primarily on a propagandistic level. We should utilize such insecurity as does exist to propagandize for a socialist solution to the problems posed by capitalism. Further, we should not artificially limit our propaganda on the campus to so-called "youth questions." Young people are interested in all political questions that face the working class and the whole world. Young people are further attracted by the socialist ideal itself and we, above all, should not hide our socialist identity or minimize the socialist content of our propaganda for the sake of "issues" as do the Communist Party youth and to a lesser extent the social-democratic youth.

13. The American student body is not homogeneous. Its largest section is made up of students whose intellectual interests are very narrow, such as specialized engineers, business administration majors and the like. That section of the student population which is concerned primarily with ideas of a social, political or literary nature, the intellectual elements, are the most likely to be interested in socialism. It is important, therefore, to strive to become the center of a revival of Marxist thought on the campus, in addition to putting forward general socialist propaganda. These intellectual elements will find Marxist philosophical and historical methods attractive as well as socialist politics.

14. The general tactics of our forces on campus should be: (a) To push the sale of the Young Socialist; (b) To work toward the formation of campus clubs affiliated to the Young Socialist. However, under many circumstances, it may be advisable to work inside existing clubs even if these are distant from the politics of the YS, or to form with others broad clubs on a non-exclusion basis. Formal or informal support of the YS should be our general goal for work with such clubs; (c) In addition to functioning on campus openly as socialists, our forces should participate in and help initiate broader movements of students which have generally progressive but non-socialist aims. These include anti-nuclear tests movements and demonstrations, struggles against the witchhunt, opposition to fraternity domination of campus politics, anti-segregation struggles such as the Youth March for Integrated Schools. We should participate in such broader united student fronts as socialists, as supporters of the YS, and not attempt to hide our identity. We should favor in such movements a policy of non-exclusion, including toward youth identified with the CP where such youth exist.

15. The work of our comrades on campus should be given first priority by our local supporters. Every aid should be given to campus fractions and the local youth leadership should work closely with these fractions. In those cases where we do not have any forces on campus every effort should be made to gain access to the campus through: (a) Sales and distributions of the YS at the campus; (b) Possible free speech fights in connection with our right to distribute directly on campus; (c) Street meetings in front of campuses; (d) Special attention to existing contacts who are students; (e) Encouraging any teenage comrades to go to a college where they can do meaningful political work.

16. The high school campus is of considerable importance and will increase in importance as the country moves to the left. In a number of areas very fine response has been gained from distributions and street meetings in front of high school campuses and a number of high school students have become YS supporters. Special attention should be paid to the possibility of organizing separate groups for teenagers. It may very well be that teenagers will find the social atmosphere of such a group more conducive than the regular YS supporter group with its generally older age level.

Minority and Working-Class Youth

17. While our main orientation is toward campus youth, there are other areas of work not strictly related to the campus to which a socialist youth movement should pay close attention. Foremost among these are the minority youth such as the Negroes, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, who because of their minority status have special problems and have to a certain extent organized themselves to deal with these problems.

18. The best example of this process can be seen in the Negro community where in many areas separate NAACP youth councils have been formed. The last two Youth Marches for Integration have offered additional opportunities to get in contact with Negro youth in some organized form. The most typical form of Negro youth activity remains within the confines of Negro church youth groups. Negro campuses as well as mixed campuses also offer opportunities to work with young Negroes.

19. In the past the YS has paid considerable attention to the problems of Negro youth. We were among the foremost supporters of the campaign to free the "Kiss Case" boys. We have been active in the past two Youth Marches. It is highly important to continue to keep in contact with Negro youth, to explain the socialist alternative to them and to let them know that there is a place for them in the socialist youth movement in the fight for full integration and for a socialist America. Our press should continue its educational campaign aimed at the problems faced by these young people as well as those faced by other minority groups.

20. As a revolutionary socialist youth movement our goal is to build a working-class youth movement in composition as well as in politics. While at the present time we lay primary emphasis on campus youth, we must be the type of youth movement that young workers in the shop will feel at home in, not a Bohemian pseudo-intellectual movement such as the social-democratic youth. We must pay attention in our press to the problems faced by young workers. We must realize, however, that many young trade unionists will be more interested in an adult political party which does active trade union work than in a specifically youth movement. Our major task today is to forge an organic link between the American student and the American worker. This we must do by advocating working-class politics and supporting working-class organization among the students. We must convince the students that the future lies in an alliance with labor, not with capital.

Other Youth Tendencies

21. The Young Socialist is not the only radical tendency existing today among young people. The social-democratic youth exist in the form of the Young Peoples' Socialist League (SP-SDF), and the Stalinist youth are active, though at present unorganized on a national level. In addition there are a considerable number of unaffiliated socialist youth, especially those organized into campus clubs in the Midwest area.

22. Our major rival for the allegiance of young people on campus is the Young Peoples' Socialist League. This group is basically made up of the former right wing of the YSL and a number of semi-socialist elements it has been able to attract since the YSL-YPSL fusion. This tendency has taken a hostile attitude towards the YS, and has refused even to discuss any possible unification when we approached them with the offer of unity on the basis of our Editorial Policy statement. They have gone so far as to say that even if the YS supporters wished to join the YPSL most of them would be barred.

23. Politically this group must be characterized as a right-wing socialist group whose politics consist almost wholly of opportunism. It shows a high degree of disregard for theory or socialist principle and makes a specialty of rapidly turning idealistic young people into old ward-heelers. Its members generally support the policy of working within the Democratic Party, are opposed to united electoral activity, and refuse to work with Communist Party youth. While many in the YPSL consider themselves to be "third campers" the general drift of the organization is toward the State Department and they engage in virulent red-baiting. Their major orientation is one of adaptation to the official liberals.

24. This group, because of its longer existence, has more roots on the campus than we have. Its membership may be slightly larger than ours, though of a less dedicated nature. It is extremely important for the revolutionary socialist youth to explain in a pedagogic way to new young people on the campus the differences between ourselves and the reformists.

25. The Communist Party youth, while at present unorganized nationally, will in the near future probably take on an organizational form. Their major orientation is similar to that of YPSL -- adaptation to the official liberals. Their tactics are similar and their opportunism as pronounced. They distinguish themselves from the YPSL primarily in their adherence to the Soviet bloc, which makes any attempts of theirs for fusion with the liberals illusory. It is also very important to combat the influence of this group on the campus, but in such a way as to exhibit no trace of the red-baiting characteristic of the YPSL's approach.

26. A significant body of young people are today organized in campus clubs independent of direct domination by the social democrats or the Stalinists. The heaviest concentration of such young people is in the Midwest area. An important aspect of our campus work should be to counteract YPSL and CP influence to the extent that it exists among these youth and to build links between these

Our Forces

27. Our two years of political activity have produced a most vital product: a revolutionary socialist youth cadre. This cadre, coming from diverse political backgrounds, has a high degree of political and organizational cohesiveness. Our task in the coming period is to strengthen this cadre and to expand our influence nationally. Success in this task will go a long way in making possible the successful development of a revolutionary socialist movement as a whole.

28. This cadre has as its organ the Young Socialist. By making the building of this paper our primary organizational work over the past two years we have been able to achieve an influence far beyond our small immediate forces. The YS has the largest circulation among young people of any socialist publication. Its ability to present a revolutionary socialist program in a way that other socialists -- and most important of all, non-socialists -- can understand is a key to this success. The YS is also read and respected widely by socialist youth of many differing views. This respect is largely due to the reputation of the YS as a consistent promoter of regroupment among socialists. An integral part of our future perspectives is the continued sales, distribution and expansion of the Young Socialist, our educator and organizer.

We have succeeded, in most areas where we are active, in forming functioning Young Socialist clubs around the paper. These clubs carry on varied activity with primary emphasis on education and promotion of our press. In the coming period we must expand the work of the existing local formations and regularize the functioning of our forces in those areas as yet to develop stable organizations. Without such stable active local groups in the major centers of this country we will be unable to build a revolutionary socialist youth movement.

30. We have a functioning national center which makes possible the regular publication of the YS, the internal communications and political leadership of our forces. This was not easy to achieve. Its continuation and expansion is essential to the building of a revolutionary socialist youth movement. Its work is supplemented by the publication of discussion and educational bulletins in the Bay Area. This work also is vital to the internal life of our forces as well as to the educational work we must do to build new forces.

31. Through the past period of regroupment we have assembled precious cadres which can become the forerunner of a future youth movement. We must now expand our influence on the campus and by so doing increase our forces, strengthen our press, our national center and our local organizations. This is a period of promising opportunities. Through a correct political program, as elaborated at the Detroit conference, a proper perspective for our work and a stable level of local and national organization, we can make the most of these opportunities.

YS National Committee Meeting, July 29, 1959., Tim reporting. In reporting on the Tasks and Perspectives Resolution Tim emphasized two major points; 1) that we must increase our activities on

the American College campus and 2) that we have lagged in paying enough attention to the YPSL's. We must launch a vigorous ideological campaign against reformist views among American radical youth.

Discussion:

Proposal made by Carl F. of Twin Cities; That the YS and its Supporters orient toward the establishment of a formal national organization of revolutionary socialist youth at the next convention of YS Supporters. *

Bob H. of Detroit proposed the following amendments;
Paragraph 18 -- delete the word campus.
Paragraph 22 -- first sentence in paragraph be deleted.

*Motion by Tom L. of Twin Cities -- withdrawn after discussion. (He made Carl's proposal in the form of a motion.)

Summary by Tim: Tim urged that the Feingold proposal be withdrawn not because of opposition to it but in order to give more time for discussion of this necessary step among YS Supporters. He also proposed to adopt the Himmel amendments. However, he favored the striking of the first sentence in paragraph 22 not out of disagreement with it but rather that there could be more time to discuss it before adopting a policy on it. Motion to approve Resolution including Bob H's. amendments. Motion carried unanimously. Consultative unan.

Toronto Young Socialist Alliance
January 1959

Dear Comrades:

Let me wish you best greetings of the season from the comrades in Toronto. I regret that no delegates will be able to represent our group at this conference, partly because of social obligations that arise at this time of year, and largely because of financial obligations that confront the individual at this time in the capitalist crisis.

Since it is impossible for us to be represented personally, I would like to take up on myself the responsibility of giving a report for our district by mail..

Perhaps some of you will remember that last year I gave a rather enthusiastic report concerning Toronto. We had held these large public forums, and were beginning to attract a number of socially inclined but as yet politically uneducated youth to them.

However, a series of rather damaging events shortly afterwards caused the activities of the group to decline sharply. First, the city bureaucracy decided that, because we had invited an ex-LPP (that is C.P. in the U.S.) member of parliament to speak, we could no longer use the respectable hall we had availed ourselves of until then. This event in itself would have been negligible, but shortly afterwards the federal elections drew most of the politicals in the group into campaign work, rather than continuing to work in the youth organization. Then, within a relatively short period of time we lost several leading comrades - one to Australia, a couple to Vancouver, where they are now active - and a couple to Britain. The editor of the paper left a short while later on a cross-Canada regroupment tour, which while being immeasurably beneficial to the regroupment process now beginning in Canada, was immediately detrimental to the youth group.

So much for why what we expected to happen did not happen - now for what has happened.

Throughout the summer and early fall, where in Canada it is almost traditional for youth groups to take to the great outdoors, some contact work was done, and potential activists were listed.

By the beginning of November, we were again of sufficient size to hold a public forum. Since then, we have continued to hold them on a bi-weekly basis. The number of people attending has grown regularly, and our last meeting saw twenty people present. In the immediate future we will be trying out the possibilities of co-sponsoring socialist speakers with other left-wing organizations, such as left Zionists, left social-democrat, dissident LPP youth, or even the LPP youth organization itself (LPP is the parallel to the CP in the U.S.)

We have distributed the local high schools and the University of Toronto campus to advertise meetings, in addition to paid ads in their papers. We are beginning to find some support on the

Toronto letter, Jan. '59 ...

campus, in spite of a large CCF (social-democrat) organization already established there.

This is the only CCF youth group in Ontario at present, but consists of about fifty members. The whole group is far left of the parent organization and in a recent convention supported such resolutions as, withdrawal from NATO, abolition of apartheid influences in Canada and throughout the world, free university education, free health plan, etc; - Several of the left wing members have expressed sympathy with us.

So far we have given relatively little attention to the paper, placing it second in importance to building the forums and getting established. Now that we have to some degree established ourselves, it is quite likely that this situation will soon be rectified.

At the time of last February's conference, our attitude was optimistic almost to the point of smugness. At this one we are just reporting what has happened and continue to work. The future is much more likely to hold bigger gains for those who work than for those who just hope, and sit idly by predicting rich harvests.

Hoping for a successful conference.

Cliff Cotton, on
behalf of the Toronto Young
Socialist Alliance

The article in the October 20th issue of The National Guardian, entitled, - "Doesn't Anybody Like John Foster Dulles?" and describing the difficulties of the Cincinnati Council on World Affairs, in its effort to find someone to support the Dulles position in a debate on U.S. foreign policy in the Far East, brought to mind a similar problem we had in Baltimore a little while back when news came that the Unamerican Committee was about to hit town with a three day local TV hearing, the Socialist Study Group of Baltimore thought it would be a good idea to sponsor a debate on the subject, "Are Congressional Investigations and the Security Program a Safeguard or a Threat to Democracy?" We had no trouble securing George Moyers, a C. P. member and Smith Act victim, and Joe Atkins, the head of the state A.C.L.U. to take a position opposed to the Security Program and the Investigations. Then the search started to secure a speaker for the point of view of the ruling class. We decided to start at the "top" and wrote to the House Committee on Un-American Activities. After all, we figured, their performers would be in town at that time for their own show. Just to make sure, we sent a similar invitation to the Senate Subcommittee. Having received no answer from either of these groups, we spent the three weeks before the scheduled debate in a frenzied effort to find someone in these United States to defend Congress and the Justice Dept. The brave F.B.I. replied that they would be glad to supply us with a speaker -- but not if someone was going to present the other point of view at the same meeting. We felt certain that our Sen. John Marshall Butler, who owes his election largely to the assistance of Joe McCarthy, would be anxious to uphold the grand tradition. He replied with a letter asking us more about our group. When we oblige -- he discovered another engagement. The American Legion simply decided against participation. One of the suggested speakers copped out on the excuse that one of our speakers was a Communist -- another refused because he didn't quite approve of the color of our moderator - a Negro College Professor. The Republican Party somehow just couldn't be reached. On the other hand -- the Democratic Party, "the party of the masses," likewise couldn't be reached. The Internal Security Police of the State of Maryland must have felt themselves in a real dither. There they were -- rushing speakers to every little lady's club and Rotary type organization in the state -- warning of the dangers of "Communist subversion" and at the same time sending plain clothesmen to our meetings; and they were -- asked to come out in the open and defend their point of view and attack their opponents views. That's right. They declined. The Jr. Chamber of Commerce assured us that they didn't have anyone qualified to discuss the issue -- which is a good thing to remember next time they discuss it.

Well, Tuesday, the first day of the hearings, arrived. Our debate was scheduled for the following Friday night. The local press splashed the proceedings all over the front page but maintained their blackout of news of our pending debate and its related problem. During the station break I approached Congressman Walter and asked him why he didn't answer our invitation. He claimed that he hadn't received it. That night we typed another invitation to Rep. Walter, which early Wed. morning was handed to an usher at the hearing, together with a leaflet of our impending

debate, to be in turn, given to Rep. Walter. That morning, George Meyers, one of our debators, was called before the Committee. As a major piece of "evidence" of The Communist Conspiracy, our leaflet was read into the record and consequently seen and heard by hundreds of thousands at the other end of the radio microphone and TV cameras. Now the press had to acknowledge our existence with the implied paradox that through all the wild charges that the Walter Committee made under the Congressional immunity of the hearings; here was a still small voice challenging the Committee members and all their ilk, to make the same accusations in free and open debate. Press, radio and television throughout the following day announced and commented on the impending debate. That day, Thursday, was the last day of the hearings. The debate committee of the Socialist Study Group held a meeting that night and it was decided that since we had advertised it as a "debate" - the proper thing was to either have a real debate or announce to the public why a debate was not possible. Circumstances dictated that we do the latter. Due to the fact that (through a month of searching, and after approaching over twenty groups and individuals) no one could be found to defend Congressional Investigations on the Security Program, the debate had to be cancelled. The announcement of the death of the debate received more publicity than its birth. It served as a fitting, (although all too under-publicized) anti-climax to accusations and smears of the Congressional Committee Hearings.

P. S. The facts of the situation, and thousands of other similar situations, warrant wider readership than they will receive at this juncture of history in the U.S. There are vested interests which control the overwhelming majority of our, most effective means of communication yet devised by man. These vested interests, needless to say, are opposed to the freedom of the public to lean both sides of such issues as the Cold War, the Witch Hunt and Socialism. It is however very much to the interests of a democratic people, to read and know all sides of all such issues. Indeed, if there is any rock upon which democracy is founded, it is the rock of freedom of information, discussion and debate. We must now depend on the few periodicals which are free from class vested interests if we are to read the facts which the kept press keep from us. That is why it is so important for the hope of democracy itself, to support such periodicals as The Young Socialist. As such voices of truth become stronger, it will become more difficult for the capitalist class to ignore the challenges of the little people.

THE TASKS OF OUR 1960 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

By Tim Wohlforth

We are a very new movement and to the extent that we have "traditions" they are only two or so years old. In an older organization most steps such as plenums or national conventions are taken for granted. These events occur regularly every year or two and do not need any special motivation. They are looked upon as inherent in the functioning of a national body.

In our youth movement this is not necessarily the case. It is important for us to motivate each step we take to be sure that every YS Supporter, who will be called upon to make sacrifices, has a full understanding of why the step is necessary. While this does tend to make national functioning more difficult it adds a richness to the experiences of those in the youth movement. Rather than functioning in a routine way they have a higher consciousness of why they are functioning. This is one of the educational values of a youth movement--all that is taken for granted by adults is questioned anew by youth.

At our Detroit Conference we put into the "Interim Motion on Organization" a provision that the YS Supporters would hold national conferences once a year. This was established for good reasons. We felt that such national gatherings were essential to the democratic functioning of the youth movement. Further, they added to the national cohesiveness of the organization. The youth organization is distinguished from an adult party by its relatively high rate of turnover. Young people experiment with radical politics and a sifting process goes on selecting individuals capable of dedicating their lives to socialism. Such turnover can have a disintegrating effect if it is not countered by such centripetal events as national gatherings and national tours. Finally, such conferences allow for the movement to annually take stock of where it is and where it is going and to work out in common its tactics and its political program for the coming period.

The National Conference we are projecting for this coming Spring is a good example of the way in which national gatherings in general help the development of the youth movement as a whole. What is the basic task before this coming conference? To further develop a national revolutionary socialist youth movement both organizationally and politically and to apply the energies of this movement to its tasks of replacing the YPSL as the socialist youth organization and developing firmer roots on the American Campus. In other words we are to take what we have, develop it into a more effective instrument, and then apply that instrument with greater precision to our tasks.

I. A National Young Socialist Alliance:

The first point that must be on the agenda of this conference is an organizational one--the establishing of a national Young Socialist Alliance. While we already have what is in effect a national organization, due to its recent transition from a more amorphous form, its formal structure is somewhat confusing at best and could be downright harmful

at worst. Generally in politics organizational form must correspond to the political reality. On the one hand, if one forces a highly developed organizational form on a new, amorphous grouping-one will fail. On the other hand, if one insists on keeping an amorphous form for a politically highly cohesive organization, such as our YS Supporters Group, one will likewise get into trouble. Our task at this conference is to recognize in our formal structure the reality of our development. We must form a full-fledged national organization--The Young Socialist Alliance--with a formal constitution and rules of functioning.

Such an organization will give us greater cohesiveness. Further-it will establish regular rules of procedure for us, such as are in any democratic organization. For instance, at present the actual relationship between our local groups and the national center is dubious at best. This step will also undercut any demagogic arguments from YPSL that it is the only socialist youth organization. Our step in forming a national organization will look to the YPSL and those influenced by the YPSL, as well as to our own periphery on campus, as a forward step of strength on our part and as the first step in a drive to build a real national movement which can have an impact on American youth. We must not lose sight of the international role we are beginning to play. We already have considerable prestige with socialist youth in other countries. However, it is difficult for us to deal with them as we are not formally an organization. The YPSL is planning to reorganize a North American bureau of the IUSY and our existence as a national organization could be of considerable embarrassment to them in this project.

II. Towards a Revolutionary Program:

The formalizing of our national organization is only part of the process of building a national revolutionary youth movement. Just as important is the development of a revolutionary program for this movement. It is true that the youth do not have to initiate a program--create it out of thin air. There exists a body of revolutionary socialist thought worked out in Marx's time and carried forward by Lenin and Trotsky. But it is not enough for the youth simply to adopt this program.

In order for the youth to really comprehend the program they must think it out for themselves. The educational process of working on a political resolution is a necessary one if young people are to really understand political questions. Even for these youth to be members of the SWP and thus adhere to a worked out political program is not enough. The major portions of the program they support were adopted long before they ever joined the organization, and they may have difficulty plowing through the musty old bulletins to find the actual resolutions that were adopted. Even if they take the trouble to find these resolutions the study of them, while fruitful, is no substitute for working out the ideas for oneself. Our youth movement is composed both of young people who are members of the SWP and those who are not. The program for the YS movement must be a joint product of all the members of

the organization.

A revolutionary program must be adapted so as to fit the actual needs of the living movement. In this case any revolutionary socialist program must be so worked out as to be applicable to the tasks of the youth movement in this period. Such a program must consist not only of fundamental programmatic points but also of transitional formulations which relate the revolutionary program to the problems and thinking of the youth we are trying to reach. Thus an SWP resolution on the nature of war directed toward workers during World War II will not make much sense to a student at Columbia University in 1960. The fundamental conceptions may be identical with those of a war resolution the YS would work out today, but the way in which these conceptions were applied to the problems of today would be entirely different.

This is precisely what we had in mind when we put on the agenda the question of the "Fight Against Imperialist War." We wanted to develop a resolution which would apply the fundamental revolutionary class struggle approach to the War question in such a way that we could take advantage of the anti-war sentiment to be found among students today. We felt there was no reason why the pacifists should be allowed to pose as the only ones who sincerely favor peace. It is important for us to combat the illusions fostered by Stalinists and liberals as to the road to peace. Finally, the struggle for socialism in this country is a struggle against the reactionary role U. S. imperialism plays in the world. This is a political fight we must wage day in and day out. We need to equip ourselves for this fight by having the utmost clarity in our ideas on this question as well as working out the most effective way to bring these ideas to our audience.

Such a war resolution would link the healthy resistance among students to ROTC, the draft, and the witchhunt, to a struggle against the real source of all these-- the capitalist system. It would explain that the cold war is not the result of "misunderstandings" but of the inherent drive toward war in the capitalist economy. The only realistic way to achieve peace is to overthrow the capitalist system.

The resolution should be written in such a fashion that it not only formulates clearly our programmatic views but does so in such a way that our views are comprehensible to new people. Immediately following the conference we should publish the resolution and utilize it as an adjunct to our propaganda work on campus.

Do we need such a resolution? Well, all of you who have had some contact with the American campus--what would you give to someone interested in our ideas to explain to them our thinking on the question of war? Lenin on Imperialism? All well and good, but your contact will ask is this still relevant to modern capitalism. "War and the 4th International"? Even better as this is undoubtedly the finest work ever written on the question of war. But it was written before World War II and while still correct in essence it could not deal with a world such as we have today. Further, both pamphlets are aimed at an audience already familiar with Marxist methodology and terminology--this is certainly not true of our current audience.

But does anyone really care? Of course there is no large scale sustained anti-war movement among the youth today as there was in the thirties. Therefore obviously our anti-war propaganda should not be of an agitational variety in most cases (there are exceptions such as when dealing with an anti-ROTC movement or a case of American intervention such as Lebanon). Will anyone deny that there exists a stratum of youth in this country which sincerely opposes the American war drive and seeks some way out of the present world situation? Was not the reaction of youth to the student SANE movement (with all its limitations) last year a sign of this? I have heard two recent examples of such sentiments. During the current trailblazers' tour our comrades attended a debate between Norman Thomas and William Buckley at Yale. Before a large audience (1,500 or so) Buckley defended a sabre-rattling policy including continuation of nuclear testing. The audience reacted strongly against each pro-war statement of Buckley and warmly applauded any even half-hearted anti-war sentiment of Thomas. Even more recently two pacifists at Cal (see December YS) opposed compulsory ROTC and received a large measure of support from other students. Even our correspondent way down at the University of Alabama, no citadel of radicalism, reported grumbling about ROTC.

Such a resolution would be followed by a campaign not of an agitational but of a propagandistic nature to reach American students with our views on the question of war and to utilize any sentiment against the immediate effects of the cold war on the campus in order to interpose transitional concepts to bring these students to our full views on the struggle against war.

III. A Transitional Program for American Students:

Equally important to formalizing our organizational structure and the further development of our revolutionary program is the deepening of our work on the American campus. True, we adopted a resolution at our last plenum sketching out our work on the campus. Further, since that time we have made real headway in campus work. However, we still have a long way to go to develop anything approaching real roots on the campus and in this the YPSL is still way ahead of us.

There are two major ways that we should approach our campus work at the conference. The first, which is the most obvious, is through area reports, campus fraction reports, and discussion which follows such reports. There was a feeling at our Detroit Conference that the tabling of such reports was a serious flaw in the whole conference. Such a move was necessary due to the amount of time consumed by factional struggle with the now long-gone Marcyites. But such should not be a problem at our Spring Conference. Plans tentatively call for a three day conference so that we should have plenty of time for detailed area reports and thorough discussion.

There is another way to approach our campus work which we have been thinking about. That is the developing of a transitional program which will relate the interests of the American student to the historic struggle of the working class for socialism. At present the American student faces

a growing pressure toward conformity on the campus. The administration has, since World War II, been expanding and grasping more and more power both from the students and the faculty. It is utilizing this power to make American education subservient to the cold war needs of American business. Thus it institutes the witchhunt against radicals and in one way or another tries to prevent the democratic organization of the students. It is helped in this process by the militarization of campus life through ROTC and Reserve systems and the thought policing of students not only by the administration but by government and military thought cops as the campus becomes just another compartment of some defense contract.

Our resolution against war becomes, in this context, a more detailed exposition of part of the transitional program we can formulate for American students. Jim Robertson has promised to give some thought to this when he comes back from the Trailblazers tour and possibly work up a resolution on it. Contributions in the meantime from our supporters throughout the country to a discussion on a transitional program for the students would be excellent. There is no doubt that such a program would get quite a response on the campus and would be another example of how we can deepen our local work on campuses through a national conference.

IV. Towards the '60 Elections

1960 is an election year and as such opens up tremendous possibilities for the expansion of the revolutionary movement as a whole through proper utilization of the electoral process for propaganda purposes. The IS can play an important role in this and can look forward to a real increase of its influence on the campus this coming fall through vigorous intervention in the elections. It is possible to look upon the whole above process of strengthening our national revolutionary youth movement as preparatory for our work in the '60 elections. We will be the only socialist youth group which will appeal to the American youth to vote socialist and against the two capitalist candidates. We must lay the basis at this Spring conference for a real campaign to rally youth support for a socialist-ticket in 1960.

There may be some who still wonder of what use a national conference will be. There is a different problem that bothers me--how in hell are we going to find time to treat adequately the many important tasks which we have before this conference? The fact that the agenda is so packed is a sign of the life and vitality of our movement. Our Spring National Conference will be another important step in the growth of that movement.

(The article below is written by a former alternate on the NEC of YPSL. He has since resigned from YPSL. The following was intended solely as a first draft.)

Organization For Socialists

by Barry Shepard

1. The YPSL:

The YPSL has been operating on a conception of organization which I believe to be precisely out of phase with what a socialist organization ought to be. We have all been concerned with lack of political and the low political level of the discussion in the YPSL. This lack of politics is a reflection of our conception of organization which in turn is a reflection of our conception of socialism and of how to achieve socialism.

Mike Harrington has said that he wants an organization which both Baptists and Deutscherites can belong to. The YPSL has had this conception of broadness, and has had some success at being broad. By necessity, such a conception implies that a common low level of agreement be reached, that a minimum program be developed. In a strict sense every organization adopts a minimum program: we are concerned with a matter of degree. Mike's criteria for membership, his minimum platform, is "democracy and socialism." Anyone who is "for" socialism and democracy is to be maintained, no political current within it can dominate. Therefore, all analysis, all resolutions, all YPSL positions and statements must be kept at the level of common agreement.

At the level of being "for" socialism, the level is low indeed. This is why Mike opposed the analysis contained in Landy's foreign policy resolution. Analysis presupposes a viewpoint about the world, a philosophical and empirical position. Baptists and Deutscherites and beatniks and what not cannot agree on an analysis. Landy introduced his resolution hoping for a political discussion about the analysis. Given Mike's conception, which has permeated the YPSL, such a hope was utopian. Analyses can not be discussed in an atmosphere where analysis itself opposes the conception of the organization. Politics without analysis is nothing. Political discussion is analysis. Therefore there is no political discussion in the YPSL.

A general, powerful analysis is required to develop a conception of socialism. Baptists and beatniks, if they have any conception at all, do not agree on a general analysis or on the nature of socialism. In order to maintain the common level, Mike's ideas have us never say one word about socialism. We do not discuss socialism. We never make inquiry into the possibilities of socialism, except to mouth the slogan "socialism is economic democracy, where the means of production are in the hands of the people and are democratically managed." This is so profound that it can be found in Webster. This is the content of our thought and discussion of what Socialism means. In the YPSL there is no discussion of Socialism.

Again, the question of how to reach our ill-conceived goal is not discussed, except that we all are "for" a Labor Party. Socialist ideas have evaporated into the thin air of slogans. Broadness is nothingness.

The YPSL is a party with no platform. It stands for nothing but the word "socialism." As such, it can attract alienated types and real socialists. Of course it has attitudes and political positions, but these are not discussed. What is such an organization? It is a party without content. The only leading it can do is stray. Its only purpose is to perpetuate itself and make itself larger. If it was in a position to lead a revolution, it would betray that revolution because it has no conception of where it is going or where the revolution is going. I doubt if it will ever be in such a position: the YPSL is Social Democracy without a mass base. In such a position, however, its only course of activity would be for it to take power, and that is the graveyard of socialism. The present YPSL clearly reflects this trend, as it must, since it is nothing but an organization with some socialistic attitudes. YPSL's are concerned with contacts, not ideas; with recruitment, not politics. Build the organization! For What?

11. Towards A Revolutionary Party

In an optimistic frame of mind I look at the YPSL as something that can transcend itself. The present condition of nothingness presents the opportunity to attempt to begin discussion of a real socialist party.

A socialist party has a conception of socialism. It has a goal. It has an analysis of how to reach that goal. Therefore a real party has a position and a platform. It advocates a basic transformation of society: it is revolutionary.

The Marxist position is the only position upon which to build a socialist party. Anyone for whom this is a question should go home. Marxism offers the only coherent theory of capitalism and of the history of societies. It is the Marxist analysis which gives validity to the unsuccessful socialist movements of the past.

Marxists orient towards the working class. Why? Because the workers are somehow nicer than other people? Because they are supposed to have big muscles? Because they are more free from sin than others? It is because the working class and only the working class can smash capitalism and establish a new economic order based upon themselves, because this new order would contain no classes since the workers have no property, because the working class has been educated and organized by the capitalist system, because socialism is in the interests of the working class. This YPSL fumbling with campus clubs, with literaries and beatniks, is for nothing but the sake of organization. The campus is not the place to orient toward.

What is socialism? Is it economic planning? Social security? Public health? Socialism is the domination of society of no classes. How can the workers dominate society? By and through their own organizations. By and through their own councils and whatever forms they create. By and through a party? A party in direct control or in a parliament? Never. Can socialism be legislated? Can freedom be decreed? Of course not. Freedom in history is the seizure of power by the workers through their own forms of organization as was witnessed in the Paris Commune, Russia in 1905 and 1917, and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Any other conception of socialism except that of the direct and concrete seizure of power by the workers through their own organization is a lie, is fraud and deception and can only lead to a perpetuation of class society. Any "other" conception of socialism is therefore anti-socialist. That is why Baptists and beatniks are useless trash. That is why a broad organization cannot be socialist.

What is the function of a socialist party? To lead the workers to power. To stand as the conscious section of the working class, the political defenders of the working class. To educate the workers and make clear their interests. To have as its only aim the seizure of power by the workers through their own organizations, and therefore to have no existence after this event.

Only a party of vigorous discussion within the above framework can be realistic enough to succeed in the aim of establishing socialism. Only a Marxist party can be realistic enough. Only intelligent discussion aimed at understanding our present reality and aimed at establishing such a party can in fact establish it. A socialist party does not exist. The opportunity for such a party to begin does exist.

New York
Sept. 21, 1959

Carl Feingold
Minneapolis, Minn.

Dear Carl,

I have just read your letter to Tim concerning the conference agenda. My opinion on how we should proceed in organizing the conference is for the editorial board to propose a time and place, and begin discussion on the political and organizational questions to be raised there. It should organize a national discussion through the YS Forum bulletin. At the plenum which will immediately precede the conference it should propose a conference agenda to the National Committee. It's the plenum's job to discuss and propose the agenda to the conference.

I don't think a conference agenda is something which should be decided solely by the editorial board, nor by an NC poll which precedes rather than follows a discussion. In fact it shouldn't be decided by any kind of poll; nor should any other political question if it's avoidable. Such questions should be determined through a discussion and voted on at a meeting -- especially if there are differences. The proper subjects for a poll are technical questions, such as determining whether or not people can come to a meeting at a particular time and place.

That's what was intended in the poll recently sent out. In addition the questionnaire adds "...that the two main points on the agenda be..." This is not yet an agenda, to my mind at any rate. And from your letter I don't gather that you feel they shouldn't be the two main points. You have a point of emphasis in mind, and a particular point on the Tasks and Perspectives resolution. You must either think that the editorial board has overlooked these points or that it has a different emphasis than you. Actually, this point has not yet been discussed by the board.

The error of course is ours. The questionnaire does not clearly indicate how the agenda should be prepared; it appears as though this is it. It does though refer to "two main points", not to "the agenda" nor "the sole political points" nor anything similar. So that there will be clarity on how the agenda will be determined I intend to propose the above procedure at the next board meeting this coming Sunday.

I think that your opinions on the importance of our organizational form, your opinion that the Tasks and Perspectives document should be rewritten and discussed, etc., all properly belong in the pre-convention discussion bulletin, or as comments attached to the editorial board minutes. They don't belong in a letter attached to a poll which shouldn't be held at all.

I would be surprised to hear that you would disagree very much with what I have said. Most likely our action was unclear and so you jumped to a wrong conclusion. If you agree, I hope you will answer, withdraw your request for a poll, and publish your opinions in another way. In any case I am going to propose to the board that it present a conference agenda to the NC plenum, not to an NC poll, and that it clarify the present poll with a statement in the minutes.

Comradely,

Allen Taplin

Carl Feingold
Minneapolis, Minn.

- 21 -

New York
October 26, 1959

Dear Carl,

The correspondence between the editorial board and the supporters clubs that began with the EB proposal for a late December conference now raises for us a number of questions besides that of date. Some very good comments and proposals on our work have come in and I hope the writers will have this material printed in the discussion bulletin. However the bulk of the recent correspondence has been on the question of date: winter vs. spring or summer. The sharpness of some of the letters is surprising since on its face the problem is a technical one.

The difficulties of winter travel from the West Coast are appreciated here and in order to solve this problem the EB began further consultation on the date. After what appeared to be substantial agreement on a mid-semester date was achieved, this proposal was formally made through the second poll. The agreement proved illusory however and this problem is now sharper than before. Something new has begun to appear in some of the correspondence: a certain resistance to the idea of any national conference at this time, a posing of conflict between local and national work, what appears to be a feeling that the demands of a national conference will injure rather than help local work.

It appears to me now that something more important is involved than a disagreement over difficulties of winter travel. The problem I believe is that of the organization of our work and the central problem here is that of forces. This is not a problem that we alone are confronted with and I would like to comment on it.

The period has remained one of widespread apathy and political conservatism. The working class movement has suffered new setbacks recently, in France and England notably, as well as in this country. The radical movement has continued its overall decline; witness the rightward swing of all the mass social-democratic parties in Europe — and all the reformist parties here.

With the sharpening of class conflicts and the opportunities offered by the re-growth period, the revolutionary socialist movement has made some distinct gains. Outside of the British Socialist Labor League, the most notable gain has been our own youth movement. While youth work here remains the most lively and active field of work it has not at all been free from the pressures that are damaging all the socialist groups.

The disintegration of the YPSL was speeded because their conservative program and loose organization are not viable in a reactionary period. Our own revolutionary program and cadre organization on the other hand are suited to protecting the movement in such a period. We can't escape the pressures however, we're just able to cope with them more effectively than is the YPSL.

With all our accomplishments since the Detroit Conference, we haven't been able to grow in membership to any significant degree. We have gained some new people, but we've lost others, and excepting the notable growth in Philadelphia and Minneapolis, most of our clubs have not changed much in size. Some of them have declined in membership, and no new ones have grown up. Of course there are promising areas, as Boston appears to be right now.

But more important, we have qualitatively increased our membership in this sense: we now have more and better trained cadres in the local clubs and in the center. This is so important an achievement that we can say we have grown significantly in the past year. While the YPSL has been racked by a crisis of leadership we have been building our own.

The political and organizational base that was established last Xmas has proven to be quite solid. No basic change in our organizational structure seems indicated. Rather the work of the next conference should be to expand on this base. The local clubs have become much more homogenous in the recent period and now fit the pattern of a formal national organization quite well.

The adoption of a new name and constitution at the coming conference will be in the main a formal statement of this situation. It will help our work, particularly in affiliating new clubs and campus groups. But there is little indication that it will cause any rapid increase in membership or that it will effect any major change in our methods of work.

The question of our movement, the job of building a national revolutionary socialist youth organization, will however be the most important task of the conference. Or, as you put it, it should be the only task of the conference. A change in form to a national organization is not identical with this task; it is only part of it. The other points of the agenda: program, campus work, etc., are also part of this larger task. It subsumes them all and so does not appear as a separate agenda point. To the extent that the conference is successful we will be able to say that it has accomplished only one thing: the creation of a national revolutionary socialist youth organization.

The technical work on the first pre-conference discussion bulletin is being done now, so programmatic contributions will soon be available for discussion. A lot of credit is due the bulletin staff by the way. The recent two educational bulletins is an important contribution to our work and it's good that we were able to complete them before all effort was turned into the production of discussion bulletins.

I am especially interested in the idea of the West Coast comrades for a type of transitional program directed towards student youth. A discussion around this question at the conference deserves a good bit of time. It fits in with the area reports and will contribute to our main efforts directed towards the campus. It will be especially valuable now that the Trailblazers are selling so many subs and gaining us a more extensive voice on the campus.

As I said earlier I view the problem we have as basically one of forces. It hits us especially hard because many of our cadres are doing double duty, working on SWP activities in addition to YS. The letters that have come in on the conference date indicate to me that this is more of a problem than we had realized. With the revolutionary movement so strapped for active personnel, and considering the relative youth of our movement, such problems cannot be unexpected.

However I think we will have an opportunity to soon turn this problem into one of mutual advantage, and that is through the 1960 election campaign. We have learned from the tours of Tim last Fall and Jim last Spring, that there is a large, receptive, and easily reached audience for socialist speakers on the college campuses. We should be able to bring presidential, vice-presidential, and even state candidates to well over the 45 campuses Tim visited last year. This is a project in which much of the technical work can be handled by the local clubs. It will be a great aid to the campaign, especially if television and radio time are curtailed.

And it can boost our campus work. Not only can we increase YS circulation, both sales and subs, but quite likely this work can stimulate a number of new campus clubs into formation. The Detroit comrades have already pioneered this field, with a united youth committee for the socialist candidates in the 1958 elections. I hope they will write up a report on their work for the discussion. There is plenty of time to discuss and organize such a project. If the conference date is somewhat later than the original proposal, then this project would well be launched at that time.

Comradely,
Allen Taplin

REPORT FROM PHILADELPHIA

November 3, 1950

To the Editorial Board:

A very active phase of work has been completed in the Philadelphia area by the Young Socialist Club. It took place around the conjuncture of the Barenblatt tour and the press tour within the context of continuing direct political work.

Lloyd Barenblatt presented his case before thousands of Philadelphians over radio and at two public meetings. One was at Swarthmore College. The other took place at the Central YMCA under the joint auspices of four youth organizations including ourselves. Both public meetings drew attendances of 60, and the radio interview was permitted to continue for a full hour.

The Trailblazers came into town on Friday, October 23 and while tracking down subs at the University of Penn helped publicize the meeting to take place the next day. Two letters in the DAILY PENNSYLVANIAN (a University of Pennsylvania student newspaper) by Arlene stirred interest in the case at the same time as it gave her publicity as the chairman of the Independent Socialist Club, one of the co-sponsors of the YMCA meeting. The Independent Socialist Club had been trying to get recognized as a campus organization for almost a year and finally succeeded on Friday, October 23--at least partially under the pressure of the Barenblatt activity as well as from pressure through other sources.

* * * *

The YMCA meeting was the result of a united front. A call for united activity on the Barenblatt case was directed to a list of local liberal and socialist youth organizations. The response to the call was estimated at a small working conference summoned through the call. Present were representatives from four youth organizations and an observer from YPSL. The Socialist Youth Union, a stalinist organization, chose to ignore the activity. The four representatives were able to gather the endorsement of the project from their organizations: the YSC, the ISC (four members of which were present at the working conference), the World Affairs Discussion Group (consisting of teenagers interested in political and social issues and which use American Friends Service Committee facilities) and Teens Ahead (a progressive teen age cultural and social organization). While each representative was a member of the YSC, each of the groups lives an autonomous and real existence with very few dual relationships with the YSC.

The united front (on paper) worked itself out (in life) just about as expected. It provided an entree into various doors and drew an attendance from each organization that fully justified the joint sponsorship on this merit alone. At the same time, almost the entire bulk of the work was carried out by the YSC comrades with the result that of the four groups the YSC was the chief gainer.

An attempt was made to have Barenblatt speak at the one or more of five campuses, Penn, Temple, Haverford, Swarthmore, and Lincoln University (in Oxford, Pa. -- near the Maryland border). All campuses but Swarthmore were unable to provide a suitable sponsor. At Penn, the Club hadn't been

recognized. At Lincoln, an unreliable friend was simply devastating in his on-again, off-again method of arrangements. Haverford had yielded little solid contact of late so that not much effort was expended there. Swarthmore's forum did sponsor a meeting for Barenblatt on Sunday, October 25. And, as for Temple, that is a story in and of itself; it is basically a story of the Philadelphia YPSL--- and it must now be told, if only in summary:

* * * *

The YPSL observer at our Conference (Lillian Mirmak) expressed interest in the Barenblatt project but stated that even if it wanted to participate, the Philadelphia YPSL would not be able to do so without a head-to-toe reorganization, which she expected to take two months at least. She said she would undertake to make some phone calls and in the end was responsible for attendance at the YMCA meeting to the extent of about four persons (three of YPSL-SP-SDF membership). Asked about whether she could influence her comrades at Temple (who run the Three Arrows Club and a YPSL chapter) to sponsor Barenblatt, she said she would try. No visible results of her efforts appeared at any time thereafter. In the Three Arrows Club are a member of the YSC and a sympathizer, both of whom sit on the Program Committee. When the proposal came before the Club, along with a series of organizational objections, the following remarks were made by YPSL members: (a) Barenblatt must be an SWPer otherwise the YSC wouldn't sponsor him; (b) Let's write to Vassar and find out why they fired him; (c) we shouldn't participate in this because Arthur (head of the YSC and former chairman of Three Arrows for one year) is an opportunist and is trying to exploit this case for his own ends.

Nevertheless, at the Program Committee meeting, David Fineman, the YPSL-in-charge, said that the only impediment to having the meeting was the lack of forces (he and all other YPSLers refusing to help). After further informal discussion with myself, the majority of the Program Committee (i. e., our two friends) decided that it could run the meeting. A leaflet was produced and distributed on Monday, October 19; a meeting hall was gotten and press releases entered in the TEMPLE NEWS setting the meeting date for October 23 at 2 p. m. Next day, when Fineman was informed, he quickly cancelled the hall, and the press release, and called a meeting of the Club for October 22, to take up the matter of the Barenblatt meeting. That is, they delayed the decision right up to the last minute. The charge against the proponents of the meeting was that they didn't go through channels, and therefore couldn't have the meeting. These proponents -- new to the Three Arrows and politics, in general--replied: (a) They were led to believe that the objection to the meeting was a lack of forces whereas they were able to overcome that lack; furthermore, if the leaders spent as much time in building the meeting as they did in blocking it, it could have been rather successful. (b) The real objection was not technical but political: the meeting might hurt the respectability of YPSL and Three Arrows to be associated with either Barenblatt or YSC.

An interesting bit of documentation appeared as editorial material in the TEMPLE NEWS protesting the practice of last-minute withdrawals of copy (i. e., the Barenblatt press release, which was mentioned by name). Lloyd Barenblatt later put it this way: the YPSL leadership of Three Arrows acted worse than the Un-American Committee in the sense that at least the latter acted on principle. Furthermore, at the YMCA meeting this fiasco was publicly exposed by the chairman as well as being given mention in Mr. Barenblatt's remarks.

* * * *

Following the YMCA meeting, which was highly successful in its political content and organizational results, a reception was held at 3506 Powelton, to which about 25 people came. Refreshments were served and political discussion on socialism ensued to the wee hours. Literature was sold and names and addresses noted.

The Swarthmore meeting contained perhaps some of the best discussion on the case. Afterwards, the Trailblazers and myself were able to make contact with various students which produced some favorable political responses, including arrangements for a week-day sale (at which the Trailblazers sold 9 subs in two hours before being ejected for trespassing). Another result was a good basis for future speakers and other contact in the near future-- and possibly the formation of a socialist club.

* * * *

I might mention that the chief pieces of literature used in connection with the Barenblatt case were the interview which appeared in the YS and the Minority Decision by Justice Black. We sold over fifty copies of the latter-- our complete stock-- and could have sold more since we were all out by the time of the tour itself.

* * * *

The rest of the work of the Trailblazers will undoubtedly be detailed by them. In short, we have a good basis for some work at Penn, Temple, and Swarthmore -- part of which we certainly owe to the hard work and results of Jim and Danny. During the week of their stay, leaflets were distributed which announced the meeting at which Jim spoke on Sat., Oct. 31 -- thus bringing together some of the various strands of activity of the local comrades on campus, in the youth club and of the Trailblazers. Attendance of 45 was well represented by students (new faces). Further results from this can be expected

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Submitted by:
Arthur Phelps,
Philadelphia

Minneapolis, Minnesota
September 15, 1959

Tim Wohlforth
Editor, Young Socialist
New York City

Dear Tim:

I received the poll mailed to the members of the Y.S. National Committee regarding the proposed National Conference of Young Socialist supporters for the New Year's weekend. The procedure of a poll at the initial stage of laying conference plans should provide us with ample time to prepare a full pre-conference discussion and to organize plans for a fine convention.

The perspective of launching a national alliance of our supporters at this conference is the next step for us in my opinion. I therefore welcome the motions adopted unanimously by the Editorial Board at its last meeting that it "favors the creation of a National Young Socialist Alliance at this Conference" and that one of the two main points slated for the Conference agenda be on "National Organization".

As I see it, the main problem for the Y.S. today is the consolidation of our forces into a stable organization that can act cohesively on both a local and a national level. At this point we have a semi-organization around a newspaper. What is needed is an organization with a newspaper as its voice. The distinction is more than just a subtle conceptual one as shown by the organizational impotence of the National Guardian readers groups as compared with the dominant readership of this paper with all other radical newspapers. While the Y.S. is more than just a circle of readers, the general point is still valid.

Our projected Conference should be geared primarily, if not exclusively, to the task of strengthening our organization and consolidating our forces. It is from this point of view that I feel that the proposed Conference agenda is incorrect in its emphasis. The Editorial Board proposes that the question of "The Fight Against War" be one of "the two main points" for the Conference agenda, the second point being "National Organization". I believe that placing the question of "The Fight Against War" in such prominent position on the agenda will tend to side-track us from our main task at this Conference.

Our last Conference went on record in its Editorial Policy motion in opposition to American imperialism; in support of the colonial revolutions; and for socialism as the only alternative to capitalist wars. That set our basic line. A new memorandum on the question of war can, however, be useful now for further clarification of our line. We should continue in the Y.S. with a consistent campaign on this question to counter the illusions sown among young people by the status-quo-existence peddlers.

2.

In presenting the revolutionary point of view on war and peace and the only way to achieve peace through socialism, we open the door to explain our full socialist views to young people. But while such a memorandum will be useful and should be discussed by the Conference, it should be placed on the agenda so that it plays a subordinate role to our main Conference task.

In my opinion, the main point on our Conference agenda should be our adopted plenum resolution "On Tasks and Perspectives". This resolution should be revised to bring it up-to-date based on the changes in the regroupment arena, the cold war, and the current anti-labor offensive. This revised resolution will provide us with a basic orientation for the next period. The resolution can then be concretized by a motion to establish a National Young Socialist Alliance that can begin work implimenting the Conference decisions.

In addition, time must be allotted at this Conference for area reports so that every local club can get the benefit of national experiences and advice. Because of the unwelcome but necessary fight at our last Conference with the pro-Stalinist and sectarian "Marcyites", who in essence were opposed to the development of a revolutionary socialist youth movement, time for local reports had to be taken off the agenda. This time we have basic agreement in our ranks so that we can take the time for a leisurly discussion and exchange of experiences. This is why I want to be careful about the agenda so that, inadvertently, we don't get side-tracked into a long discussion on the peace question at the expense of our main work.

I propose that the projected Conference agenda be amended as follows: (1) Area reports; (2) Revised Resolution on Tasks and Perspectives and Motion on National Organization; (3) Memorandum on "The Fight Against Imperialist War".

I request that this proposal for an amended agenda be submitted for polling of the Y.S. National Committee with this motivating letter attached.

Fraternally yours,

Carl Feingold
Carl Feingold