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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
<u>YSA LOCALS RUNNING SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGNS- -ONE EXPERIENCE AND ASSESSMENT</u> , by Douglas Pensack, Detroit local	2
<u>THE CHALLENGE OF MAOISM TO REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS</u> , By Douglas Pensack, Detroit local	4
<u>ON EDUCATION</u> , by Sandi Sherman, San Francisco local	6
<u>SOME NOTES ON THE REVOLUTIONARY UNION</u> , by Gordon Fox, Berkeley local	8
<u>THE NATURE OF THE POLICE: LESSONS OF AN ERROR</u> , by Gordon Fox and Tom Tomasco, Berkeley local	10
<u>SALES OF PATHFINDER LITERATURE AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE</u> , by Isabella Listopad, Brooklyn, N. Y. local	18
<u>ON OUR PRESS AND THE PRISON QUESTION</u> , by Bill Clayton, Milwaukee local	20
<u>SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT BLACK STUDENTS: CONTRIBUTION ON THE BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT</u> , by George Cox, Westside Los Angeles local	24
<u>YOUTH SUPPORT WORK AND THE BERKELEY EXPERIENCES OF THE '74 CAMPAIGN</u> , by Anne Chase, Berkeley local	27
<u>HOW THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE FRACTION DOUBLED IN SIZE</u> , by Isabella Listopad, Brooklyn, N. Y. local	30

YSA LOCALS RUNNING SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGNS--ONE EXPERIENCE AND ASSESSMENT

by Douglas Pensack, Detroit local

In 1974, one of the SWP election campaigns--the Indiana Campaign--was run primarily by regional locals of the YSA. There was, of course, some advice and direction from the regional center in Detroit and the National SWP Campaign Committee, but the bulk of the day-to-day decisions about all aspects of campaign work were made by the Indiana Campaign Committee. This was an opportunity to see how regional locals would act with the responsibility of handling state-wide election campaigns. It was decided that because of the relative experience and size of the YSA in Indiana this "experiment" would take place. This document is to partially assess the problems and gains of this experience in order to not only project further such actions in Indiana, but to help the discussion in planning similar campaigns in other areas of the country. As the YSA expands in coming years such opportunities will increase and it will be good to assess this experience with this in mind.

Petitioning

Since the resources of regional locals are more limited than those in regional centers, it is very important not to over-extend the local's resources in the mundane yet necessary tasks of a campaign--like petitioning. It is important to plan realistically how much a local can petition and plan one's candidacies accordingly. In Indiana we set our sights unrealistically, at first, by projecting that we would petition for a state-wide candidate for U. S. Senator as well as two U. S. Congressional candidates. This would have meant that we would have had to obtain approximately 19-20,000 signatures in a relatively conservative state, with the aid of only two regional locals (Indianapolis and Bloomington) of a total of about 30-35 comrades. Considering that the two locals were also involved in many other activities (the UFW, a right-to-choose pro-abortion rights demonstration, a major forum in defense of political prisoners, and a vigorous student government campaign at Indiana University, a campus of 30,000 students, to name a few) this was an unrealistic projection.

This was further complicated by the fact that our candidate for Senator, David Colton, was going to leave the country in August and we had no one else of the legal age of 30 to replace him on the ballot even if we had gotten him on. Also, we took too long figuring out the form for the petition itself and didn't get it printed until the students were out for summer break, making petitioning much more difficult.

So, we discussed the situation with national campaign officials and decided to (1) replace David Colton with

David Ellis as a write-in candidate for Senate and (2) to petition only for our two Congressional candidates in the 11th and 7th Congressional Districts of Indiana.

We did not petition systematically enough and wound up having to finish petitioning hurriedly in the last week possible (the last week of August). It is important to petition as much as possible at an early date so as to make real headway into one's overall goal. This is good because the more drawn out the petitioning is the more disenchanted and even more demoralized the comrades of a smaller local become. Because we did not finish our relatively small amount of petitioning (approximately 3,200 signatures in two Congressional Districts) petitioning became a real drag.

Therefore, it is best to start petitioning as soon as possible, very preferably before the spring semester is over, and to get it done as soon as possible.

Legal Hassles

Any campaign, as we found out in 1974 all over the country, can run into legal difficulties in getting on the ballot, getting equal media time, etc. Obviously, any campaign without the day-to-day aid of a branch of the Socialist Workers Party, without the experience and legal contacts, is in a disadvantageous position. Because of this it is very important to have a good lawyer who will be willing to file suits for little or no fee. This is difficult at times, of course. The ACLU is a good place to start looking, though, if there is one or a few "movement" lawyers in the area, they would be good to investigate.

As a result of our late finish to petitioning, we were ruled off the ballot for bull-shit reasons and did not have the time to challenge this undemocratic exclusion in time to be placed back on the ballot in time for the November election. This was further complicated by the fact that the lawyer we had working for us wasn't very aggressive in our behalf at all.

Victimization and Responses

The Indiana Campaign suffered basically two major attacks. One was the firing of the Campaign treasurer, Marc Schulz, from his job in Bloomington and the other was a red-baiting assault on the Campaign by the Monroe County (Bloomington) Clerk, threatening FBI investigation of persons signing our petitions.

Our response to these attacks were immediate and vocal. In both cases we held press conferences right away,

denouncing the actions and were able to get a lot of press coverage both then and in following weeks. (I cannot stress too much the importance of having and cultivating good press contacts; they certainly come in handy in times such as those! Many reporters, particularly younger ones, have been affected by the radicalization and are very instrumental in getting us sympathetic coverage--or any coverage at all!) In the case of Marc Schulz we investigated legal recourse in rescinding his firing, but they didn't pan out as his employer was a private businessman, and the firing wasn't an example of sexual or racial discrimination.

However, in the case of County Clerk we were able to put enough pressure on her blatant red-baiting that she did not repeat her attacks. Despite her "invitation" for persons who had signed our petitions to have their names removed by affidavit, "because they may not know they were supporting the SWP," only thirteen persons did so. In fact, we got more signatures than we might have from persons who were appalled by the red-baiting attack. Apparently the Clerk's warning that the FBI "would check out the names" on the petitions did not strike such a responsive chord any more.

Comrades in YSA locals who run election campaigns should anticipate that reactionaries in the local or state governments and/or in the community will try to make it as difficult as possible for us to get on the ballot, receive media coverage, and just generally campaign. This will be even more true in areas where there have never been SWP candidates on the ballot before. With this in mind, comrades should always be thinking of obtaining the broadest possible support for our right to run in the election as legal candidates--these are defense cases and should be treated as such. Endorsements from individuals and local politicians can be very helpful.

Campaign Publicity

Our ability to get publicity around our campaigns depends on two variables: (1) our aggressiveness in demanding equal time and simply barraging the written and broadcast media with statements on all important issues (both national and local) and (2) the receptivity of the media in the area to our Campaign. Many times it will be impossible to get coverage from certain newspapers and radio and television stations simply because they will refuse to give it to us, yet we found in Indiana that often receptivity depended largely on our aggressiveness. (An example of the arbitrary nature of media coverage is the Indiana Campaign's experience in Terre Haute, which is an industrial town in the 7th District: we were able to get repeated interviews on television and radio with hardly any effort, particularly after our candidate, Harold Schlechtweg,

got on the ballot, and yet never got a line in the Terre Haute daily newspapers.)

One lesson we learned about media coverage was the more professional the media was handled the more they respected our campaign and consequently the easier it was to get coverage. Attractive written statements should accompany every interview with the candidate(s). This not only professionalizes our campaign but also cuts down the risk of being misquoted.

An SWP Campaign run by a YSA local can get a lot of coverage in campus press. In fact, not only can we get sympathetic coverage, but we can draw student reporters closer to our politics and recruit them to the YSA on occasion.

Gains

Campaign work done by the local should not be seen as separate from the other work of the local, but an integral part of our work. It is important to make sure that an experienced comrade is placed in charge of the campaign fraction in each local, so as to insure that our campaign work--activity which is being viewed by thousands of people--is both organized well and politically correct at all times. Campaign meetings and other public activities can help a local's sales of the press considerably, and, of course, recruitment to the YSA.

It is truly amazing how much a state-wide, or even a local, campaign can do for the visibility of a YSA local. It can help draw people to you that might not be reached with other activities.

Indiana Campaign work in 1974 helped increase the periphery of the YSA locals involved and helped recruit several new comrades. Though there were many problems involved, the Trotskyist movement made great gains because of the 1974 Campaign. Our Congressional candidate in the 7th District got 3 1/2 percent in Monroe County, as high as 16 percent in predominantly student neighborhoods of Bloomington. The YSA should be reaping greater benefits in recruitment and sales in Indianapolis and Bloomington in the future because of the 1974 Indiana Campaign.

I would say that the over-all experience was a positive one. Not only should the Indiana locals be able to run campaigns in the future but their experience shows that it can be done. The 1976 Presidential Campaign of the SWP will give many regional YSA locals a chance to try their hand at Campaign support work, and perhaps running candidates of their own for federal and state offices in order to maximize their own visibility and effectiveness in reaching masses of people with socialist ideas.

December 1, 1974

THE CHALLENGE OF MAOISM TO REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISTS

by Douglas Pensack, Detroit local

At this particular stage of crisis in world capitalism, there are large layers of youth questioning the very roots of capitalist society, challenging the institutions that foster, protect and defend the rule of the capitalist class. This is no less true here in the U. S. --the heart of world imperialism--than in other "Western" capitalist countries. As we in the YSA go about our task of winning people over to revolutionary socialism, we find more people willing to listen to and agree with socialist ideas now more than ever before.

There is an ever-increasing number of young people, who are seriously searching for an alternative to the degeneration and decadence of capitalist society, and are very demanding and wanting to know how a more equitable, socialist society can come about. And, of course, we are certainly not without opponents--opponents who are more or less actively involved in trying to win over the same radicalizing young people to all sorts of reformist, ultra-left or blatantly counter-revolutionary ideologies and perspectives.

By far the most serious and insidious currents in the socialist movement are the Stalinists--both the Moscow and Peking oriented tendencies. The Stalinists use the existence of the workers' states in the USSR and China to legitimize their class-collaborationist politics and blatant sell-outs of revolutionary struggles in Chile, Portugal, Bangladesh and numerous other countries as well as in this country. Both groups of Stalinists (I'm grouping Maoists together as one group, though there are many Maoist sects who virulently oppose one another on many petty issues) still peddle the reactionary concepts of "socialism in one country" and the disastrous "two-stage theory" of revolution. These two basic tenets of Stalinism aid them in justifying everything from support to every and all gyrations of the parasitic bureaucracies, that control the workers' states in the USSR and China, to class-collaboration on an international and national scale (e. g., detente, support to the capitalist army in Chile and in Portugal, Chinese support to the bourgeois regimes in Ceylon and Iran that are murdering revolutionary workers and students, Communist Party support to bourgeois politicians in the U. S. and Western Europe, etc.)

My purpose in submitting this document to the 1974 YSA Convention discussion is to (1) stress how important it is for YSAers to understand both types of Stalinism and be able to deal with their ideology whenever possible and necessary, and (2) more specifically, to urge more internal education on the Chinese Revolution within the YSA

so that we can better deal with the current challenge that the various Maoist groups offer us now. It is my belief that in the past few years there have been many radicalizing youth in the U. S. who have mistakenly turned toward China as an example of a revolutionary regime to emulate, and accordingly to the Gospel according to Mao. This trend is continuing at an increasing rate.

I was a member of the Michigan/Indiana YS Team this fall and had the opportunity to speak to students on a couple dozen campuses about socialism. I noticed that there was a high interest in China and in wanting to know what we thought of the Chinese Revolution. Many radicals were very confused and misinformed about China and, therefore, thought that there was a qualitative difference between the bureaucracies of China and Russia. Of course, this confusion is aided considerably by the relatively effective left-cover the Maoists have from their profuse use of the terms "Marxist-Leninist" and "revolution" and their Third World orientation. This last point is serious because many Black radicals seem attracted to China because of this Third Worldism, despite the general anti-nationalism of the Maoists.

Unfortunately, I found that there was very little written material in the Trotskyist movement to answer many of the questions these people had about China. I feel that the YSA should orient more toward educating both our membership and the masses of radicalizing young people to the nature of Chinese Stalinism. This is imperative because the challenge of the Maoists is not on only a theoretical level, but also on an organizational level. In recent months there has been a turn toward the campuses by some of these currents, exemplified by the creation and proliferation of the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB). The Revolutionary Union and the October League, through RSB, have been internally educating its membership and student periphery in virulent anti-Trotskyism, and we can see the negative effects in some united front activities we are involved in. In Indiana the UFW support committees on various state university campuses have been weakened by the anti-Trotskyist slanders of the OLers in Lafayette. Many independents in the UFW committees, because of OL, believe that the YSA is involved in UFW only to recruit from it and that they spend their time in UFW meetings discussing "sectarian" issues with other groups and tendencies rather than build the Farmworkers struggle. Of course, this is a lie, as there are no better builders of the UFW in Indiana than the YSA, but this is an example of what the sectarian and anti-Trotskyist orientation the Maoists have can do in action.

Maoists have also split the Iranian political defense movement, because of their opposition to our participation in such groups and that said groups defend Trotskyists as well as other oppressed individuals. An activist in the Iranian Student Association at Purdue University (not a member of OL) told me she would not buy a copy of The Militant, because "we have a position that it is a bad paper..."(1)

In closing I would like to call on the YSA leadership to do what it can to encourage and precipitate internal and external education on Maoism. Also, everyone in the YSA should be alert to the activities of the Maoists, particularly in united front activities. We should be thinking of ways to combat the negative effect their sectarianism and Stalinism causes in these movements.

December 1, 1974

ON EDUCATION

by Sandi Sherman, San Francisco local

The Young Socialist Alliance is aspiring to become a mass revolutionary socialist youth organization. For that reason recruitment and the training of cadres in our program and organizational norms is the most important task facing the YSA.

This contribution to the discussion, it is hoped, will initiate some thought and discussion on the question of education of our cadre. In the 1973 Draft Political Resolution, which was approved at the YSA Convention in Chicago, the National Executive Committee stressed the importance of education. To aid in the development of this discussion, I will quote that portion of the resolution.

"The systematic education of the YSA membership in Marxist theory, the history of the revolutionary socialist movement, and our strategy and tactics is essential to the building of the YSA. Every YSA member should be conscious of the importance of reading and studying our press, educational materials, and the writings of the Marxist movement. In addition, through regular educational classes, forums, summer schools, and national conferences, we can help maximize the education and development of the cadres who will help lead the American Socialist revolution."

Unfortunately, in a period of heightened activity, where the YSA is participating in and initiating campaigns around a whole variety of issues, many comrades tend to put aside this responsibility, due to lack of time, which is a very real problem. It is, therefore, necessary for the YSA to begin to map out a systematic campaign to educate our cadres. There are a number of reasons for the urgency of this task, two of which I will mention here.

First, a systematic program of education would solidify our membership. Comrades need to study to develop a long-range perspective, to understand the tasks before us. Educational programs are one of the best ways to integrate comrades into the YSA and to cut across some of the demoralization that develops due to objective conditions in certain periods, and the subsequent loss of valuable cadres.

Equally as important, we know that young people are beginning to ask a lot of questions about a wide range of issues, from the question of the state of the economy (how deep the economic crisis is, etc.) to the question of democracy in the "socialist" countries of the world today. There is a need for our comrades to be thoroughly schooled in Marxist theory, to assimilate the lessons of the past and develop an ability to apply these historical lessons to

present day events, so we can fully answer the questions we are confronted with at literature tables, forums, and other activities.

It is necessary, therefore, for the leadership to go on a campaign, nationally, to insure that our comrades are developing through consistent education. The National Office can provide outlines for new members classes, which should be designed to continue as long as comrades felt them beneficial. These new members classes, as well as contact series, should be a norm for every local, if they are not already. Reports should be sent to the National Office on what local areas are doing in terms of education, and local areas should receive periodic reports on what other areas are doing.

The National Office can also provide, in collaboration with the Socialist Workers Party, an outline of readings that will give comrades confidence that they are studying the literature of our movement in a way that will make each book and article build towards the next one. For instance, comrades can become confused when trying to grapple with the national question now, if they are not familiar with the discussions that took place earlier and can be found in some of the classics. In addition, reading lists on topics of special importance right now, such as economics, should be provided and a class series outlined so that comrades can get a firm grip on Marxist economic theory, which is a weakness that many comrades feel they have. These reading lists and class outlines should be distributed in quantity to every local area so that every comrade can benefit from them.

Pre-meeting educationals are an excellent opportunity to discuss various issues. Reading assignments should be given and an effort should be made to involve the local as a whole in discussions. However, these educationals cannot take the place of carefully planned out class series and should be seen as a supplement and a continual reminder of the importance of education.

Informal class series initiated by several comrades interested in studying a particular topic in depth have begun in San Francisco and should be encouraged by local leaderships. An understanding on the part of a local leadership that comrades should be able to set aside time for personal study is essential. Discussions with comrades on what they are currently reading, surveys taken in locals to find out what comrades feel their strengths and weaknesses are, can all be beneficial to planning an exciting and well-rounded educational program. Each local should have an educa-

tional committee of two or three comrades, who, in center areas, can collaborate with the branch, in planning educationals.

This contribution should open up a discussion of this most urgent task of the YSA--the integration, education, and real strengthening of our cadres.

December 3, 1974

SOME NOTES ON THE REVOLUTIONARY UNION

by Gordon Fox, Berkeley local

The Bay Area has one of the largest Maoist milieus in the country. This is due to two factors. First, the size and weight of the student movement, particularly in Berkeley, tends to cause many of our opponents to concentrate their forces in the Bay Area. Second, many burnt-out radicals have either been produced in or have gravitated towards the Bay Area. Furthermore, because of these specific characteristics, many groupings, journals, etc., have originated in the Bay Area.

The Revolutionary Union began in the Bay Area. Due to this fact and the other factors noted above, they have a relatively large presence on Bay Area campuses, particularly at the University of California's Berkeley campus, San Jose State University, and San Francisco State. They see large, central campuses such as these as their major area of work at this time, much as we do.

Because the RU has for some time been our major opponent on the UC Berkeley (Cal) campus, we have had the opportunity to observe them at close range and gain an understanding of their functioning. Our observations on their methods of functioning may be useful to comrades elsewhere, since the RU is growing nationally and seems to have been successful in establishing a campus-based front, the Revolutionary Student Brigade. What follows, then, are some observations and generalizations about the RU's functioning, rather than a political analysis of the RU. For such an analysis, comrades are referred to Jon Hillson's article "Why U. S. Maoists Fail to Form 'New Communist Party'" (Intercontinental Press, Vol. 12, No. 7, February 25, 1974), and to The Militant's articles on the RU's line in Boston.

The RU is a very serious organization. They are trying to build a nucleus of hardened Maoist cadre with the ultimate aim of building a mass Maoist party, and they have grown significantly over the past few years. For this reason, they tend to approach political developments in a serious, political manner--more like our approach than that of most other opponents. However, the organizational functioning of the RU is unique among our opponents.

The primary characteristic of the RU's functioning is frontism. It is extremely rare that the RU ever does anything in its own name. In fact, they believe that a sizable portion of their membership should be "underground," apparently in preparation for any period when this might actually be required. On the Cal campus, we have seen only two or three individuals openly identify themselves as RU members over the past several years. This is despite

the fact that they clearly have a much larger campus base; in general, RU members are rather clumsy at attempting to conceal their membership. Invariably, the "underground" members openly collaborate with "public" members, utilize the distinct RU jargon, etc. Nevertheless, their undergroundism undoubtedly hampers their ability to recruit in this period.

Undergroundism also fits in well with the RU's lack of public propaganda. The RU has no regular forum series; their occasional forums are invariably on theoretical questions and usually only attract other radicals. They do not make any effort to sell their press, either Revolution or the Bay Area Worker. At one point, some comrades at Cal were told by an RU member that it would be "incorrect" for them to sell their press like we sell The Militant and the YS. While this view is apparently no longer held by the RU, we have not seen any increase in their sales on campus or elsewhere. They occasionally have a literature table up on the Cal campus, but their table has only a few items, and few people stop at it.

Instead of functioning openly as we do, the RU functions through various fronts. For almost two years, the RU was the dominant force in the Radical Student Union (RSU) at Cal, which began as a general ultraleft group. However, the RU nationally made a decision to build the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB, formerly the Attica Brigade) as a campus front. This led to a split between the RU and the "independent" ultralefts in the RSU.

This split produced not only two campus groups, RSU and RSB, but at least one revealing document that we have acquired. In this document, "RSU Position Paper on Why We Didn't Join the Brigade," the real nature of the RU's frontism becomes clear. The RSUers complain that the "RU failed the RSU last year by not helping raise and in some ways actually stifling the political development of other RSU members." While this charge reflects the general ultraleft worship of abstract theory, it also shows that the RU members in the RSU tended to act in an elite, bureaucratic manner, refusing to discuss political questions and even making their own political decisions in the name of the entire group.

The RU also participates, in the name of the RSU, in the Ethnic Studies Defense Committee (ESDC), a group set up to defeat a University attack on the Ethnic Studies department, and under the domination of a rival group of Maoists. The RU waged a fight against the nationalist character of the ESDC, which ultimately led to the ESDC's

approach, they utilize what they apparently think is language used by workers: Nixon was always a "bum," Ford is a "chump," and in response to Nixon's fall we should "Kick 'em while they're down." Obviously, this cheap substitute for politics is doomed to failure.

At the same time as the RU is hampered by these limitations, they have some advantages. Functioning as they do in the ultraleft "vanguard," they can attract others because they are well organized, disciplined, and represent the Chinese revolution in the eyes of many radicals. They can present clear and cohesive politics to fuzzy-minded radicals. This is a distinct advantage. Whether this advantage is outweighed by their bureaucratic methods or unpopular positions (e. g., opposition to nationalism and feminism) remains to be seen.

Furthermore, the RU orients to the major political questions of the day. They have oriented to the question of financial aid cutbacks at Cal, not to some secondary question. Within the mass movements, they are extremely flexible tactically, and often attract people by being more ultraleft than the ultralefts. For example, during the struggle around the Criminology School at Cal, they were the most vehement defenders of "militant actions," i. e., building occupations.

Finally, one other limitation to the RU's ability to win over significant numbers of people should be noted, aside from their general political limitations. The RU's bureaucratic methods within the mass movements sometimes go over into heckling and violence against their opponents. They carried out a vicious assault against the Spartacists at a demonstration in San Francisco last spring. When we intervened in a Criminology School forum this fall with our position of demanding the abolition of Criminology, the RU organized heckling and attempted classical Stalinist smear methods ("Your position is the same as the Chancellor's, etc."). While these methods can be attractive to ultralefts, they tend to be repulsive to broader layers of students.

The key problem for the RU is their political line. Their line on many questions is hard to swallow for many students. The RU is capable of the most crass opportunism imaginable. On the Cal campus, they have opposed the nationalist character of the Ethnic Studies struggle. They oppose the women's movement and the gay liberation movement. They are currently attempting to move into the center of the Committee to Save the Crim School, thereby revealing their fundamentally reformist line. They recently held a public forum "proving" that the Soviet Union is a capitalist country. They give back-handed support to the Democrats by abstaining from the elections. And they side with the racists in Boston. In general, they follow very closely all the twists and turns of the Maoist bureaucracy in China. These are the kinds of issues on which we want to expel the RU. The RSU "Position Paper" says that "this important struggle in ESDC grew for nearly two whole

quarters, yet it wasn't brought to the attention of the RSU until the end of Spring quarter, and even then it came from people working in the CSCS [Committee to Save the Crim School; see the article on the Berkeley Criminology School elsewhere in the discussion bulletin] after the division in ESDC had become almost explosive. During the year occasional drifts of conversation would lead RSU members to ask our representatives in ESDC what was happening but each time we were either told nothing or the 'insignificance' of the struggle was offered as a neutralizer. As it turned out the division was very serious, led to a split in ESDC. . .", etc. If this isn't convincing enough about the RU's bureaucratic methods of functioning in their fronts, another example is offered by the same RSUers: "For example, a Bay Area-wide demonstration was being planned around an expected visit by Kissinger to San Francisco. A couple independent RSU members went to what was called a preliminary planning meeting and found that they were the only non-RU people there, the meeting having been hardly publicized. There the politics, slogans, and even [!] the leaflet was decided upon and only then was the call put out to organize other political groups and people to join in."

This sectarian approach characterizes everything the RU does. They do not consult others in an organization they're working in, they call demonstrations in their own name, etc. It is only under the most extreme circumstances that they work with others, particularly the YSA, and even then their functioning is dishonest. They frequently refuse to work with us under any conditions. For example, they completely rejected our proposal for a united action against a visit by Rockefeller to San Francisco this fall; they, after all, had already called a demonstration and were not about to let the YSA in on it.

At the center of the RU's strategy for building a "new communist party" is their vanguardism. Despite the apparent failure of the Maoist regroupment, the RU is still looking around for any already radicalized elements they can find to regroup. They do not approach newly radicalizing people, as we do. Their approach is to people who are already ultralefts. Obviously, this fits well with their frontism and lack of any independent propaganda. While they do hold actions in the name of their fronts, such as the RSB, these actions are invariably directed at drawing in the "vanguard," not broader layers.

Even when the RU attempts to reach out to broader layers, their attempts are extremely clumsy. Instead of a united front approach, they either work only with other Maoist and ultraleft groups, or set up new fronts, such as the "Worker's Committees to Throw the Bum Out," the "Bum" being Nixon. As a substitute for a united front fight the RU. In this context, an understanding of their methods of functioning can be very helpful.

December 4, 1974

THE NATURE OF THE POLICE: LESSONS OF AN ERROR

by Gordon Fox and Tom Tomasco, Berkeley local

Introduction

Last spring, thousands of students at the University of California, Berkeley (Cal) campus participated in mass marches, sit-ins and other actions around the University administration's plans to close the School of Criminology. These were the biggest demonstrations on the Cal campus since the antiwar upsurge in May, 1972. For this reason alone these actions are well worth attention. The Berkeley YSA actively participated in these actions, and in fact, played a major role on the tactical level. Our work was of such importance that it is clear to us that it was our tactical intervention alone that accounted for the size and scope of the actions.

However, a much more important question than simply assessing these demonstrations presented itself to the Berkeley YSA following the close of the school year in June. This question was whether or not we had been correct in supporting and participating in the struggle around Criminology in the first place. After careful discussion, collaboration with the National Office, and evaluation, the Berkeley local concluded that our support and participation had indeed been in error, and that the error was one over a principled question.

An error of a principled nature is extremely important to our movement, since it is in reality a question of the class lines involved. It is our feeling that our experience both in the campus struggle and in evaluating our line afterward could be of considerable value to the YSA nationally. By utilizing our experience and our evaluation of the error, the YSA should be able to avoid such errors in the future; it is not unlikely that similar situations may present themselves to other YSA locals in the future.

The Police and Berkeley Radicals

Questions around the nature of the police and struggles around aspects of the police have arisen more frequently in Berkeley and the Bay Area than anywhere else in the country. In Berkeley, in particular, these questions tend to be posed in a very sharp form for us. In the last three years, we have seen two major sets of police reform initiatives on the Berkeley ballot, attempts at setting up a civilian review board for the University police, the struggle to prosecute the Oakland killer-cops, who shot down an unarmed Black youth, and other major questions. Across the Bay, last spring saw San Francisco Mayor Alioto's racist "Zebra" dragnet.

The history of struggles around the police question in Berkeley is so long because of the relatively large weight and size of the student movement in Berkeley. This size of the ultraleft milieu in Berkeley, the "radical" nature of the local Democratic Party, and the rather notorious brutality of the local cops, tend to add to the likelihood of struggles around the police. However, it would be a mistake to assume, as many do, that Berkeley is a unique place; on the contrary, Berkeley tends to act as a testing ground for both the student movement and many reformist experiments.

The Trotskyist movement is alone in its understanding of the police. No other group or tendency has the same attitude to the police, including both organized tendencies and the Berkeley ultraleft milieu. For this reason, we are often forced to limit our intervention in these struggles to a propaganda intervention, since serious questions of principle are involved whenever the question is one of the police.

The Police and the State: Our Attitude

Questions around the police are different from other questions. Different considerations apply, because the question of the police is in reality a question about the capitalist state. Marxists have always understood the state to be a system of institutionalized, organized force and violence, the purpose of which is to enforce the rule of the dominant class. This is the only purpose of the state. In fact, Engels showed how the state itself arose only with the development of class society.

At the core of the state, then, is the total of all repressive and coercive institutions in capitalist society, such as the police, army, jails, congress, etc. Certain aspects of the state, such as the post office, firefighters, etc., must be viewed differently. These are not fundamentally necessary for the preservation of bourgeois rule, and many of these could equally well be institutions of a workers state. But the coercive institutions exist only to enforce class rule.

All the lessons of the past, beginning particularly with the Paris Commune, show that the capitalist state cannot be reformed or transformed. The state has a definite class character that cannot be altered. The lesson of all the defeats and victories from the Paris Commune to Chile is that instead of relying on the capitalist state, the working class must develop its class power and its own state machinery independently of the capitalists, and finally, crush, destroy,

and dismantle the capitalist state.

This is particularly the case with the police. Engels defined the state as ultimately being constituted by "special bodies of armed men," i. e., the police, army, etc. We understand that the police cannot be reformed. Never in history has even a small section of the police been won over to the side of the working class. There is an important reason for this: the police are used on a daily basis to enforce class rule. They are completely divorced from the working class and the oppressed nationalities, although some cops come from these backgrounds. We view the police as a hostile enemy, largely composed of degenerate elements.

The Police and the Army

Our attitude to the army is different than our attitude to the police. The army, too, is part of the state machinery; it, too, must be dismantled and replaced with workers militias. However, the army is very different in several important respects.

History has shown that in order to win a working class victory in a revolution, soldiers must be won over to the side of the workers. We have also seen that this is entirely possible, repeating itself many times.

While both cops and soldiers may come from the working class and oppressed nationalities, there is a fundamental difference. Cops volunteer for their jobs, with the perspective of a lifetime career. GIs, on the other hand, are either drafted or are forced to enlist out of economic necessity. The cops break their ties to the working class. They are charged with the day-to-day enforcement of class rule. They are totally corrupted by their surroundings, role, and extremely high pay, much of which is collected illegally. The cops are the elite of the bourgeoisie's defenders.

None of these considerations are applicable to GIs. GIs have a perspective of returning to civilian life. Because the army is so massive, GIs are a cross-section of the population, susceptible to radicalizing currents as was shown by the U. S. army in Vietnam. Except in war, soldiers are not charged with the day-to-day enforcement of class rule. These are important reasons why soldiers can be won over to the side of the working class.

The difference in our understanding of the cops and the army means that we take different attitudes to many concrete events. When our comrades are drafted, they enter the army, function as the best soldiers, and seek to win over as many others as possible. Under no conditions would any comrade become a cop; we would insist that any cop approaching us politically first quit being a cop. We are strongly in favor of GIs right to organize against imperialist wars, for better conditions, etc. But we oppose all cop "strikes," since their demands for better pay mean "better"

oppression. We are against any pay for cops, and we are against cop "unions." We support the organizing efforts of Black GIs. But we do not support organizations of Black cops. We view GIs as potential allies, but a cop is a cop.

The Application of our Theory of the State

The workers have repeatedly shown an instinctive understanding for this point. This was shown most graphically by the Portuguese workers, who immediately rounded up every PIDE they could find after the fall of Caetano. They didn't attempt to win over the cops; they jailed the cops. At the same time, the workers embraced and fraternized with the soldiers.

Fundamentally, then, our attitude to the police is to disarm, dismantle and destroy the entire police apparatus. We know that the police cannot be reformed. Any "reform" of the police will only serve as window dressing for their real role, or in some cases, even help the cops do their jobs "better."

This is one aspect of our program that is particularly difficult for most people to understand today. Since there are no workers militias to counterpose to the police, most people, including all of our opponents and most radicalizing youth, look to various "reform" schemes to control or limit the police.

While we oppose police "reform" schemes, we approach some mass struggles against aspects of the police somewhat differently. Frequently a struggle arises over a particular case of police brutality. The struggles against STRESS in Detroit and SWAT in Atlanta are good examples. We participate in these struggles because their demands are supportable ("Abolish STRESS or SWAT"). Additionally, the dynamic of mass actions around these demands is anti-cop. But we also point out that these demands are not sufficient, that the police must be removed from the Black communities and replaced with units selected and controlled by the Black communities.

Thus we often support certain mass struggles against aspects of the police, because their dynamic is anti-cop. But we don't support any of the various reform schemes under any conditions. For example, we do not support the concept of "community control" of the police, because this implies control over the present police force, an impossible task. We expose these schemes because they serve as cover for the cops.

Most frequently, these reform schemes take the form of referenda. Here, we must be especially careful: while mass struggles may have an anti-cop dynamic, referenda never do. Moreover, these referenda almost

invariably are worded in such a way that to vote for a reform is also to vote for the continued existence of the cops. A good example was on the 1973 Berkeley city ballot. This was a measure entitled "de-militarization," which would supposedly restrict the number and types of guns the police could carry. Such weapons as sub-machine guns and shot-guns were ostensibly prohibited by this measure. However, the referendum allowed the use of these weapons in "states of emergency"--which, according to this referendum and California law, can be declared by the chief of police! Needless to say, we opposed this proposal, pointing out that it simply allowed the cops to continue to function, and would in any case allow certain weapons under all conditions. We also pointed out that the police could always get whatever weapons were necessary; the fact that the British cops don't carry guns doesn't change their nature. Thus, we are particularly careful with referenda; these often have the opposite effect from their purported purpose. Our opponents, organized and unorganized, claim that these measures will be partial victories for the working class. We know that these measures will simply serve to confuse the masses on the nature of the police.

The School of Criminology

The University of California established its School of Criminology on the Berkeley campus in the early 1900s as a center for police training. During the late '50s and early '60s the School began to develop more programs in police research, police theory and the training of "professionals"-- police administrators, etc. The more "vocational" aspects of the School were largely de-emphasized and transferred to the state university and junior college systems. The Criminology School thus became more of a "think-tank" than a training center for cops walking beats, etc. It was now training the more sophisticated cops.

This development of "think-tanks" for sophisticated cops is a national phenomenon. Sections of the police apparatus, such as the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, are consciously fostering the growth of "new methods" for the police. These methods do not represent any improvement for the working class, even though they are often presented in liberal reformist terms. Rather, these methods are attempts to make the cops "better" able to do their jobs.

According to The University-Military-Police Complex (New York: North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA), 1970), 750 colleges in 1970 had "police science" courses, over five times as many as in 1960. This work also quotes Quinn Tamm, Executive Director of the International Association of Chiefs of Police: "a man who goes into our streets in hopes of regulating, directing or controlling human behavior must be armed with more than a gun and the ability to perform mechanical movements in

response to a situation. Their intellectual armament-- so long restricted-- must be no less than their physical prowess." The report goes on: "Police officials and university administrators counter student and faculty hostility to police training programs by explaining that such programs will 'professionalize' and 'humanize' the police."

The nature of this "professionalization"--even when covered with radical sociological rhetoric--is also commented on by NACLA's report. In reference to Justice Department research grants, the report says, "Many of these projects call for the application of social science research in determining how the anger and frustration of minority peoples can be channeled into 'constructive,' non-violent activities." Even under its "radical" cover then, the U. C. School of Criminology was carrying out valuable tasks for the ruling class.

Under the impact of the current radicalization, many teachers and students began to question aspects of bourgeois thought. Hundreds of courses are taught today in colleges across the country that are "radical-minded." This does not mean that these colleges have been transformed, but we do view this development positively.

This process began to take place in the School of Criminology in the late sixties as well. Many students and faculty developed what they call "People's Criminology" or "New Criminology." This theory is based on the idea that society, not individuals, causes crime. Revolutionaries, and even most liberals, can agree with this point. However, a fundamental aspect of "People's Criminology" is the idea that the police can be reformed. This idea is clouded by a lot of ultraleft rhetoric about "imperialism, racism, sexism," etc., but all proponents of "People's Criminology" hold this view.

The School was, in fact, the origin of the phony "police reform" initiatives on the 1973 Berkeley ballot. At a forum this fall on Criminology, the leading faculty exponent of these reformist ideas, Tony Platt (a "Marxist-Leninist," according to himself) replied to our line by saying, "You're operating under the old Marxist notion that the police are the hired thugs of the state. I don't think that's true anymore. I think that we in this room have more in common with the Oakland police than the Oakland police have in common with Rockefeller." Platt also stated in an interview with the Merritt College newspaper that it was necessary to work "on all levels" through the state, and that the police could be reformed through a general revolutionary process.

The "radical," "revolutionary," and "Marxist-Leninist" faculty of the Criminology School thus continued to teach courses to "radical," "revolutionary," and "Marxist-Leninist" future cops.

The common illusion among Cal students is that the School had been "transformed" into something new. However, the facts contradict this view. Our investigation showed that the School is currently receiving over \$81,000 from the Justice Department. According to the Cal student government's study, at least 31 percent of current graduates get "professional" jobs, i. e., as cops. This study said that these graduates "frequently take jobs with the California Department of Corrections, Department of Youth Authority, Department of Justice, Department of Motor Vehicles, Highway Patrol, Bureau of Criminological Statistics, or as policemen, game wardens, criminalistics experts, and probation officers."

The same study pointed to the "outstanding records" of the faculty--including the "Marxist-Leninists"--in acting as police consultants. The faculty consults for the Justice Department, U. S. Supreme Court, U. S. Senate, Presidential commissions, California Department of Corrections, California Youth Authority, California Attorney General's office, California Department of Mental Hygiene, and the Alameda, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Oakland and Berkeley police departments. And this in a "transformed" School!

Even the University's study of the School stated that "our information indicates that the School has a good working relationship with various criminal justice agencies." This is in direct contrast to the common illusion that most cops hated the School. In fact, the prize product of the "transformed" Criminology is currently the Sheriff of San Francisco County, Richard Hongisto. This "people's cop" has a liberal image, holds rap groups with prisoners, etc. But he not only enforces capitalist laws; he has even been confronted with a prison revolt at the county jail in San Bruno.

The empirical evidence thus shows that the School of Criminology had not been "transformed." Moreover, we understand that such a "transformation" is impossible. The establishment of "antiwar universities" in May 1970 took place only in the context of an immense student upsurge. The transformation of any bourgeois educational institution can only come about in a similar fashion. And in the case of a cop-training institution, the only transformation possible is its abolition.

Because the students and faculty tended to be somewhat critical of the current methods and organization of the police, the University administration made a decision to close the School and open a new, more restricted program, thus purging the critics. At no time, though, had the School ceased its essential function: cop training. The cops being trained used radical rhetoric to put forward reformist ideas, functioning as a sort of loyal opposition.

The YSA and Our Opponents on the Criminology Struggle

After the University's intentions became clear, a group of Criminology students organized the Committee to Save the Crim School (CSCS). Their perspective was to build student support for the continuation of the School and to pressure the administration to change its course. Throughout the 1973-74 academic year, CSCS organized petition campaigns, rallies, picket lines and other activities to pressure the chancellor.

Virtually every radical group and individual on the Cal campus supported the Criminology School. The administration's actions regarding Criminology came in the context of the phasing out of several departments due to cutbacks, a racist attack on the Ethnic Studies department established by the two-month 1969 strike, and a general threat to "review" a number of major departments. Most radicals viewed the administration's actions on Criminology as part of the same general process plus a political attack on the "radical" nature of the School.

We did not view Criminology as the major question on campus; our orientation was to the Ethnic Studies Defense Committee. Because of this, neither the Cal fraction nor the Berkeley local investigated the issues or facts around the School of Criminology. Our mistake was simple but fundamental: we failed to think things through and therefore took the word of campus radicals for good coin.

This error on our part had some important consequences. Even before the issue became a major one on campus, and when we were therefore free from pressure on this issue, we took a position supporting the slogan "Defend the Crim School." For this reason, we supported a student government referendum on this issue.

The fact that we had failed to think things through on this question became painfully clear to us after the Criminology struggle exploded. Virtually every comrade had a different opinion as to what the School was, what "People's Criminology" was, and what our attitude to the struggle as a whole should be. The reason was simple: we had never analyzed the question.

The Criminology Struggle Explodes

In late May, the CSCS began to gain strength. Previously, most of its activities had consisted of 50 or 100 radicals, and we therefore made no orientation to them. In May, the mood on campus began to shift, and CSCS activities began to draw more people. The CSCS demanded a final decision on the fate of the School from Chancellor Bowker, as it was clear that he was waiting for the campus to close before announcing his decision.

Finally, the CSCS held a rally of about 500 people who marched on the building housing the School, Haviland Hall. They seized the building and began a sit-in. Although it had been our opinion that the Ethnic Studies issue was more important and explosive, we immediately oriented to this development. A large number of comrades participated in the sit-in and intervened in the mass meeting taking place in Haviland Hall.

However, our intervention was largely around tactical questions. The leadership of the struggle was in the hands of ultralefts who had no idea what to do with such a large number of people. We presented our ideas on how to reach out to the largest possible number of students and draw them into the struggle. Our proposals included ending the building occupations (there were three others in the course of the following week), holding mass democratic planning meetings, etc. -- lessons we had learned in the antiwar movement.

We viewed this upsurge of the struggle as a positive thing, and saw the major dynamic of the struggle as being towards student control over the University. For this reason, we tried to link the Criminology struggle to the Ethnic Studies struggle. We saw that the struggle was not pro-cop; most students involved were not Criminology students and most subjectively hated the cops. Furthermore, Chancellor Bowker was clearly allied with some of the most reactionary forces in the capitalist state.

This partial analysis was correct. However, since we had not analyzed the major issue and were in the midst of an upsurge, we gave in on a question of principle and agreed to the slogan, "Defend the Crim School." This meant that we were supporting the existence of a cop-training school on the campus, whether or not we realized it. Viewed in this light, our tactical intervention becomes an even more serious error: since we were and are the only ones who knew how to build a mass struggle, our tactical intervention served to build a fight to retain cop training, albeit in a "radical" guise, as well as serving to reinforce illusions among students in the police and in the Criminology School.

It was only due to our tactical intervention that the first sit-in at Haviland Hall did not mark the end of the struggle. The sit-in was ended with the police-enforced suspension of 157 students from the campus for two weeks. The CSCS did not plan any special activities. We knew that momentum in a mass struggle is crucial, and we convinced the CSCS to call a mass rally for the following day.

This became a general part of the entire two-week upsurge. Our tactical intervention showed many students that we were the ones who knew what to do next, and our practical knowledge led to several comrades becoming key organizers. When our tactical line won, a march of 5,000

students was held. When our line lost, a suicidal building occupation took place, which ended with campus, city and county cops forcing the students out and injuring several. As a result of our intervention, several comrades were even able to gain positions on the CSCS steering committee, much to the chagrin of the ultralefts. It was clear to us that if the school year had not ended, we would have been the key leaders within a short period of time.

However, we would have been the key leaders of a struggle which we should have opposed on principle. The fact that we won one tactical fight or lost another is immaterial. Questions of principle are primary for us. Tactical victories or defeats are irrelevant if we are wrong in principle.

Our Evaluation of the Question

Following the end of the struggle on campus, comrades in the National Office initiated a discussion with the local leadership. They indicated that they had a different evaluation of the situation than we had at the time, and presented their thinking for our consideration.

We did not immediately thrash out the issues in a local meeting. Rather, we carefully considered both the point of view presented by the comrades in the National Office and our point of view up to that time. As soon as we began these considerations and discussions, it became very clear to us that our factual knowledge of the situation was seriously lacking. We therefore felt that it was necessary to do extensive research into the School of Criminology. This was encouraged by the National Office as well.

As a result of our research and reconsideration of the question, the local leadership as a whole became convinced that we had made a rather serious error. However, it was also clear to us that our error had consisted in not thinking things through, rather than politically adapting on the question of the police. Had we known the facts earlier, or had we considered the theoretical impossibility of the School being "transformed" (even without knowledge of the facts), we would not have made the error. For this reason, we saw the error in a balanced way. On the one hand, we had supported a struggle contrary to our principles, and as a result had helped to sow confusion about and illusions in the police. On the other hand, our comrades had not adapted on the question of the police; it simply seemed to most comrades as if that were a separate question entirely.

Since the campus was closed during the summer, we took as much time as possible to research the question thoroughly. Because of the magnitude of our error, it was our thinking that the local would have to be well armed with both Marxist theory and the empirical facts, in order to fight this question on the campus. We therefore waited

until we had completely thought out all aspects of the question involved, and until we had thoroughly researched the facts, before the local executive committee presented its report to the local.

A test of any revolutionary or group of revolutionaries is their ability to soberly assess and learn from their errors in order to counter the error's effects. Thus, our discussions, both within the local leadership and the local as a whole, were important tests for us. We found that the care we took in preparing the discussion paid off. The fact that we had slowly and carefully reconsidered all aspects of this rather complex question, and had backed up our rethinking with empirical data, allowed the local as a whole to have a full, rich and educational discussion. In this way, the local unanimously arrived at the evaluation presented in this article. The Berkeley local successfully passed a difficult test; it is much easier to make an error than to recognize and rectify it.

Our New Position

The local voted to call for the abolition of the School of Criminology. To make this absolutely clear, we also decided to raise the slogan of opposing the establishment of any new cop-training programs on campus, as well as the demand "cops off campus." We also thought it valuable to raise, in this context, the propagandistic call for student-faculty-employee control of the University.

We were also confronted with another complicated question in our discussions. For some time, the University administration has been attempting to deny tenure to the leading advocate of "People's Criminology," Professor Tony Platt. There are strong indications that the moves against Platt were motivated by different considerations than their decision to phase out Criminology; the attack on Platt's right to teach seemed to us to be part of the general assault on academic freedom that began after May 1970. Platt was attacked by Chancellor Bowker for being a "Marxist," etc.

It was our feeling that we should view the Platt case a bit differently, especially since it was viewed by many on campus as an important fight for academic freedom. We view questions of ideas differently than we view actual material collaboration with the state. For example, we call for an end to University complicity with the U. S. war machine, but we never demanded that pro-war faculty members be fired.

We concluded that we should support Platt's defense. However, Platt was fighting for tenure within an institution to which we are opposed, the School of Criminology. Therefore, we adopted the demand of "tenure for Platt in any department but Criminology." This, we believed,

would also serve to politically expose Platt as a reformist; if, after all, he was only teaching radical sociology courses centering on crime, (as the claim went) he should have no objection to teaching elsewhere. If, on the other hand, Platt was really interested in teaching cops, he would expose himself by insisting on teaching in Criminology and only Criminology.

There was some evidence that Platt, like most other Criminology faculty, serves or served as a consultant for the Oakland police. This evidence, however, was not clear. Moreover, being a consultant is not the same as being a cop. Many faculty members consult for various parts of the state machinery. We do not oppose, for example, the right of any member of the Cal physics department to teach; we do oppose the "right" of many of these professors to conduct war research. Therefore, we also added the demand that all University and faculty ties with the police be broken.

Obviously, we also had to view Chancellor Bowker's decision to abolish the School in a new light. This decision was made in order to purge the reformist critics from the cop-training process; in the same breath he announced both the phase-out of Criminology and the establishment of a "Law and Society" program. Therefore, we neither support nor oppose Bowker's decision. Our role, we felt, was to expose his decision and to expose him as the real defender of cop-training on campus.

How We Publicly Presented Our Position

We were known on campus as leading activists in the Criminology School struggle. Furthermore, the issue of Criminology remained a popular one, even though the CSCS was not making any substantial projections for actions this fall. And the entire campus radical milieu remained solid defenders of the School. Therefore, we took care to present our new position carefully, in order to have the greatest possible impact.

It was clear to us that our approach would have to be pedagogic and propagandistic. Our position on the police is not understood by most people, and especially by the campus radical milieu. Our goals were to educate on the question of the police in general, to win over to our position everyone we could, and to demoralize and expose the remaining defenders of Criminology.

The Socialist Workers campaign issued a statement with our position on Criminology. We decided to distribute this statement, which carefully stated and documented our position, to the entire radical milieu and to anyone else interested in the question. We also decided to organize a public forum on campus, entitled "Criminology and the Police: The Marxist View."

During the week of our forum, the CSCS also held a forum. We intervened in this with our campaign statement and forum leaflet. During the question period, we raised a number of questions, turning the entire meeting into a debate between ourselves and the CSCS. We were able to make a number of points in this meeting, and we succeeded in raising questions in the minds of many of those attending. We also went on an all-out campaign to publicize and discuss with others our position. We had constant debates and discussions with many campus radicals, including many CSCS activists. On the whole, we were able to have a real impact on many of these people. They became noticeably less aggressive and sure of their position, although none came over to our position. Unfortunately, the CSCS and the ultralefts boycotted our forum, despite their promises to attend and debate us. They seemed to be rather afraid of confronting us.

Since these events, we have publicized our position at every opportunity. Our campaign statement was distributed at every CSCS event (which declined in frequency and size). Our campaign platform for the student government elections contained a section explaining our position. We plan to continue this propaganda work, always making sure to take a careful, pedagogic attitude to Berkeley Criminology supporters.

Conclusion

Our error has many valuable lessons for comrades around the country. We should strive nationally to be crystal-clear on questions of the police. Whenever a question involving the police arises, comrades should stop and consider our fundamental principles before taking a specific position. Questions involving the police are not only different from other questions; they are tricky for us to evaluate and difficult for others to understand.

We made a serious error because of specific pressures operating on us. Not only the campus radical milieu, but huge numbers of students as well, participated in actions supporting the Criminology School. Against these actions, the large numbers of cops, who did not hesitate to use their mace and clubs against the students, including our comrades. It seemed to the masses of students that a classical confrontation over academic freedom and the right of students to control their education was taking place.

In the minds of most students, these were precisely the issues involved. Most students knew little about Criminology, although most undoubtedly held reformist illusions about the police. In this specific situation of a large student upsurge, most of which was subjectively directed against the University and the cops, we decided to intervene and participate. We had never seriously thought out this question, and it was therefore easy to make this decision. Campus upsurges

don't occur every day, after all.

This experience points up the necessity of carefully thinking out every political step we take. If we do not do so, we can make serious errors in specific situations. If we don't think out our political actions, we can only take the word of others for good coin. And, as Lenin said, those who take someone else's word for it are fools. We should do our own thinking and our own careful investigation of all political questions, particularly those involving the state.

On the campuses and in society as a whole revolutionaries must be able to resist public opinion and pressure, to swim against the stream. Had there been little interest in the School of Criminology, our error would have been much more limited in scope. However, in the context of widespread support for the Criminology struggle, without thinking out our approach, we were swept along with thousands of students. Revolutionaries should never be afraid to be in a minority, particularly where principled questions are involved. There are times, particularly around questions of the state, when the only possible intervention for us is propagandistic. In these situations, we should make the best of the situation but stand fast to our principles, knowing full well that we will be vindicated by real life in the end.

It is not excluded that similar situations will arise on other campuses in the future. As noted earlier, think-tanks for the cops are becoming more widespread. Illusions in the cops, especially on campuses, are very widespread. Our task is to educate and propagandize around this question whenever it arises, and, where possible, participate in mass actions directed against the cops.

The fact that the Berkeley YSA was able to reverse its error without serious difficulty shows that we have basic programmatic clarity on this question within our movement. The difficulty lies in the application of our program to certain confusing situations. In this respect, our experience in Berkeley may prove valuable in providing some guidelines as to how to proceed on such questions. Unlike other political tendencies, we learn from our errors as well as from things done correctly, from defeats as well as victories. The Berkeley YSA was able to do this with the Criminology question. This shows that our error was specific in nature, not a general political adaptation to other forces. Hopefully, the YSA nationally can make good use of these lessons as well.

Appendix

A Footnote on a Sect's Evolution

It is worth parenthetically noting the evolution of the Spartacist League's position on the School of Criminology.

This small sectarian group went through some rather instructive twists and turns on this question.

The Spartacists originally held a principled position on Criminology; they called for its abolition. Naturally, they did so in an extremely sectarian manner. They took a hostile attitude to the students participating in demonstrations. True to form, they not only opposed Criminology but demanded "the rebirth of the Fourth International" as well. As a whole, however, their position was a principled one at the outset of the struggle. Their paper even printed an article this summer denouncing our former position; to a large extent, many of their criticisms were correct.

It seems, however, that it is impossible for a dead-end sectarian group to remain correct for long. They intervened in our fall forum on Criminology to announce their new po-

sition. After denouncing us as "cop lovers" during the Criminology struggle, the Spartacist League has now taken the position that they are neither for nor against the School of Criminology. They oppose criminalistics (i. e., police techniques, such as ballistics, etc.) on campus. In any case, there is very little criminalistics instruction on campus now, most of this being referred to the state universities and junior colleges. But, the Spartacists told us, there are some very valuable courses being taught in the School of Criminology! These are, of course, precisely the courses which "intellectually arm" future cops, but which are cloaked in radical rhetoric. Thus, from a formally correct position, the Spartacists moved to one of complete opportunism, and this in the face of the facts listed above. The twists and turns of which small sects are capable can truly amaze even the most hardened observer!

December 4, 1974

SALES OF PATHFINDER LITERATURE AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

by Isabella Listopad, Brooklyn, N.Y. local

(The following is an edited transcript of a presentation made at the Pathfinder workshop at the Socialist Educational and Activists Conference held in August, 1974.)

What I plan to talk about is how the Brooklyn College fraction was able to integrate the sales of Pathfinder literature with all aspects of the work that we did on the campus. It's important to realize that the Pathfinder consciousness of the fraction, the consciousness of getting out our ideas and the literature, can't be separated from the work of the fraction as a whole. We've been involved in a lot of different struggles on the campus and the YSA is seen as a group that is leading struggles and taking part in all the struggles on campus. Pathfinder literature has been an aid in all these areas of work in reaching people.

One thing that we did on a consistent basis was to set up a YSA table in a busy area of the campus. Students got used to seeing us there and knew where to find us when they wanted radical literature. We set up the table practically every day because we had the forces to do it, but I think that on other campuses even if the table is set up once or twice a week, it should just be done on a consistent basis so that people know when and where to find you.

On our table, in addition to having papers and campaign literature, we had a large selection of Pathfinder literature on a wide range of topics. We took out a consignment that included basic literature on socialism, the Black struggle, women's liberation, Chile, different topics that students are usually interested in. Also, we had literature in Spanish and French and also Arabic and Persian since there were a number of Middle East contacts that were coming around us, very impressed by our stand on the Middle East. When they saw this literature that we had in Arabic and Persian they were even more impressed.

Sometimes we put literature on the table that isn't Pathfinder literature. We don't do this too often, but if we are working with certain groups and they ask us to put literature on the table, we may do so. For example, a Haitian group asked us to carry their Haiti pamphlet, and we sold many of those pamphlets. It was a very good pamphlet that gave a lot of information on Haiti.

In a way, we used the table as an

office too. When calling contacts in the evenings, we would ask them to come to the table and help us staff it and help us do any political work we had to do around the table. Also, during the student government election campaign we petitioned from and around the table. We did our campaigning around there and we organized a lot of our activities from the table. Contacts would come there that were running with us in the election campaigns. That was a central place where people knew where to find us and where we could meet. In a way, you could do many things with a table that you couldn't do with an office. Even if we had an office, we definitely would still want to set up a table because of the visibility it gave us on the campus.

Many times we would have debates going on around the table. At one point we had a hundred people gather around the table because one person disagreed with us on our position on the Middle East. There was a big discussion with a hundred people standing around the table debating the question of Zionism. People really started gathering around wanting to know what was going on. I think that made some more people come around us who seriously wanted to find out what we stand for and what positions we have on different issues. When situations like this arose we would usually hawk pamphlets. If a discussion started on the Middle East we would hawk one of the pamphlets on the Middle East. Or sometimes a lot of the Zionists disagreed with us on District 1 and we would hawk the Fuentes pamphlet and we'd have debates on that around the table.

Many times discussion began because people came around the table and saw the literature we had and were interested in knowing more. This induced discussion that was very helpful for our recruitment work on the campus. Because of the wide range of topics we had on the table it was very easy to do that.

What happened with the YSA table at Brooklyn College is that students began to see it as the place where they could get radical literature. Many times they came over asking us if we had something on the radical point of view of art or on different aspects of everyday life, whether it was for writing a paper for school or just for their own interest.

We also sold many of Mandel's Marxist Economic Theory because there was one class where a teacher recommended it and the students knew just where to come to

buy it. We also put up a sign at that point saying "Mandel's Marxist Economic Theory sold here."

In addition to the table that we set up outside, we also set up literature tables and hawked pamphlets at political events on the campus, at forums, and at meetings. One example is a forum we had in defense of Chilean political prisoners. We hawked the Chile pamphlet and sold many of those. When Leonard Boudin came to speak at Brooklyn College, we hawked the Watergate book. At a Malcolm X memorial we set up a table and sold a lot of literature, not just on Malcolm X but all kinds of radical literature, since these people were interested in various topics. Also, we had a feminist festival at the campus where we set up a table and were able to sell a lot of literature. When we had an election rally where we had the candidates that were running for student government from the YSA, we moved the table there and sold our literature.

One thing we consciously did that was very important was to encourage people we came into contact with through the election campaign and any other aspect of our work to read specific things. For example, the Puerto Rican Socialist Party members on campus didn't understand why we were running an election campaign, so there was a great opportunity for us to explain why socialists should run in election campaigns. We sold several copies of Lenin as Election Campaign Manager. And to many Blacks we sold Black Power in the Caribbean. They are often very interested in the struggle going on in the Caribbean. We were able to draw many people closer

to us because of our literature.

A lot of the work that we've done in Brooklyn College has been in classes. We ask teachers to use Pathfinder publications and sometimes they do. But besides doing that, we actually go to classes and set up tables. For example, when we have candidates touring the classes we set up the literature on a table, and after the presentation we ask the students to come up and buy the literature. We've run into teachers who are very open to that and don't mind us setting up tables and selling literature in the class. When we do this we always tell the people that they can come outside to the regular table we set up, where they can see other literature.

Also, comrades were sometimes able to sell in classes they were taking. For example, in Black studies classes and in Puerto Rican studies classes we were able to sell a lot of our literature. In a class on the Afro-American community, there was a discussion on "what road to liberation?--reform or revolution?" The next day we came in with the pamphlet, The Fraud of Black Capitalism and sold around ten copies. That also happened with the pamphlet on Black women's liberation. In the Puerto Rican studies classes we sold many Fuentes pamphlets.

So to sum up, we were able to really integrate our literature sales into every aspect of work that we did on the Brooklyn College campus. It's possible to do that; it's just that consciousness is needed to realize how important it is to get out our ideas.

August, 1974

ON OUR PRESS AND THE PRISON QUESTION

by Bill Clayton, Milwaukee local

In the October 11, 1974, issue of The Militant a prisoner at a state penitentiary in Illinois wrote in the letters column that he had been reading The Militant for six months. He said he recognized that it is "vitally important to the socialist segment of this country." He further stated:

"Although I have been extremely reluctant to admit it, even to myself, I have finally accepted the realization that The Militant gives very little coverage of prison and prisoner problems in this country."

He feels that The Militant should strive to inform more people of the "dehumanization, degradation, and brutality" of prisons. He concludes with the suggestion that The Militant begin a regular column (published biweekly or monthly) concerning prison and prisoner problems."

In the November 8, 1974, Militant another letter, this one from a federal prisoner--one of the Leavenworth Brothers--states:

"I personally would like to see a small column on prisoners in your paper because I feel it would be in the best interests of the overall struggle."

So do I.

We don't necessarily have to agree with the first prisoner when he says The Militant gives very little coverage to the prison question. As comrades know, usually a couple of letters appear each week in the letters column written by prisoners. When the facts are available coverage is also given to various strikes and rebellions that occur in this country's prisons. Coverage goes also to the numerous frame-up trials of prison rebels such as the Attica and Leavenworth Brothers.

However, in our movement's efforts for a correct orientation to the prison question, I do not believe that mere coverage of events is enough.

It is my understanding that the YSA N.O. receives from prisoners on the average of some three or more letters a day requesting more information on the YSA. These letters are prompted by the fact that many prisoners read The Militant and would not otherwise know of the existence of the YSA. I should explain that my own

membership in the YSA is, in part, due to this very fact. I spent three years in a federal penitentiary and wrote not infrequently to both The Militant and YSA N.O. on prison-related questions as well as for more information on the YSA.

Unfortunately, at that time, I would receive on occasion a form letter from the N.O. explaining how to gain membership, form a local, sell the press, etc. That was all very interesting to me then but basically irrelevant--and for good reason. Forming a YSA local in the penitentiary, sending delegates to the convention, hawking the press--these things were a bit difficult to consider, at least at the current level of the revolutionary struggle in this country.

The N.O. recognized this, too, of course, and steps were taken to improve our correspondence with prisoners.

A form letter has been drawn up specifically for prisoner inquiries and it explains, among other very important things, what you can do as regards membership in the YSA after your release from prison.

But what can we do in addition to the letters column in The Militant and the form letter from the YSA N.O.? Before answering this question there are a few things we should carefully consider.

First some statistics. According to government figures (U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1971) presented in Comrade Joe Johnson's pamphlet "The Prison Revolt" (and all comrades should read this pamphlet) in 1969 5,401,600 people were arrested. That was one out of every 37 people in the country. 1,558,700 of these were Black. In 1969 one out of every 15 Black persons in this country was arrested.

Comrade Johnson quotes, on page 6, Christian Science Monitor reporter Jack Waugh from a series Waugh wrote on prisons:

"Ninety percent of all black males can expect to go to jail or prison sometime in their life.

"Blacks and Mexican-Americans alone now make up more than 50 percent of the inmate population of some of the nation's prisons. . . . And 85 percent of the inmates in some prisons in large urban states are black." (Emphasis added.)

These figures are from 1969. They are no doubt much greater today. We have only to recall our orientation to Black and Chicano nationalism to understand what these figures should mean to us in our orientation towards prison.

Comrade Johnson points to the class nature of prison reality by quoting, on page 7 of his pamphlet, President Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement in its 1967 report:

"Among those offenders for whom income information was available 90 percent had incomes of less than \$5,000. . . . 23.9 percent of the offenders were laborers. . . . Only 5.8 percent of the offender population engaged in high status occupations. . . ." (Emphasis added.)

The class divisions are clear and, again, the figures today are surely greater than those of 1967 (for holders of "high status occupations" as well, to their chagrin, since Watergate--but this does not alter in any way the class relationship of the prison population).

Is there any decline in sight in the number of prisoners in this country? Absolutely no. Aside from the increasing number of frame-up trials as a response to the growing radicalization in this country, the federal government has, in fact, recently built two new prison facilities. It has also acquired another in Wisconsin where the liberal governor of this state closed down several prison projects. The federal government has purchased one of them so far--a clear view of the ruling class' projections for the future.

Most interesting is the new federal facility in Butner, North Carolina. This is where certain of the "incorrigibles" will be sent, i.e., political types and rebels of every stripe. But Butner is simply a manifestation of the growing radicalization in this country.

The United States, unlike other countries, has never admitted to having political prisoners. In countries where this is admitted to, the government simply incarcerates political prisoners and other rebels in specially designated institutions--apart from other prisoners where it is more difficult for radical ideas to spread. In the United States where there are supposedly no political prisoners it has not been so easy for the government to pull off this sort of segregation.

But now, as a result of uprisings in prisons like Attica and Leavenworth and

the many work strikes in various other institutions, we begin to hear the term "incorrigibles" more and more frequently.

In reality the deepening radicalization in prisons is directly linked to the various rising struggles in the world at large; e.g., the womens movement, Black and Chicano nationalism, and the anti-war movement. Besides the political awareness these different struggles have provoked throughout the country--and their effect has been soundly felt even in the prisons--many people involved in these struggles are themselves now in prison. They do not check in their ideas at the gate to be picked up on release; they bring them with them, thus directly influencing attitudes of the incarcerated.

Many of these people are the "incorrigibles," then, and these types, we are told, must be isolated "for their own protection as well as the protection of others." Where? In new institutions such as Butner which come fully equipped with closed circuit TV cameras in the hallways and cell-blocks, electronically controlled guntowers, and a vast supply of the latest mind-control drugs. As usual Blacks and Chicanos will comprise the greatest segment of the prison population at Butner.

But the first thing these prisoners will do--as other prisoners have done in probably every prison in this country--is to organize study classes. The character of these classes is political and radically so. These classes in reality are organizational cores with the distinct purposes of recruitment, education, and action where possible.

Oppression, capitalism, socialism, revolution--these are the topics of intense study and discussion. Marxist-Leninists, Trotskyists, Stalinists--these are terms becoming more and more widely understood. From the September 13, 1974 Militant letters column by a prisoner in Indiana:

"For several years we were aware of the conflict between the adherents of Trotsky and those of Stalin (Communist Party, USA), but were totally unaware of the cause. By reading between lines, comparing notes, and reading other materials we've reached a conclusion in favor of Trotsky. We think the CPUSA is a nonviable, reactionary, bourgeois-oriented social club used to misdirect the oppressed."

A mouthful, true. And the direction this Black Study class will take in their struggle behind the walls is fairly obvious. Furthermore, if and when they are released from prison some of their members

will probably join our movement. And can anyone forget where Malcolm X forged the basic tenets of his thought?

A basic tool then for these study classes is The Militant--clearly this has been testified to by the prisoners themselves. But we should not want them to have to "read between the lines," as the prisoner quoted put it. These people need more than simple coverage on the prison question. They also need a clear and correct analysis. Of all the radical papers read in prison, including The Guardian and the Daily World, only The Militant can do this.

This analysis need not be on the theoretical level such as found in the ISR. Rather it should be along the lines of our analysis found in Militant articles reporting on strikes, struggles against union bureaucrats, racist attacks on civil rights gains and the like, raising democratic demands wherever possible.

Questions like why prisons exist, what is their function in capitalist society, who goes to prison--all these and more must be answered by Marxists in a Marxist way. Prisoners have the right to call for any programs they deem relevant, even the "behavioral modification" variety. But the real nature of such programs as utilized by agents of the ruling class must be clearly explained. Demands for relevant and meaningful education and job-training programs must be consistently raised.

The Militant can link the struggle of prisoners with the struggle of the working and oppressed masses at large. Demands put forth in these regards could include minimum wage, better working conditions, health benefits, and union representation for all prisoners.

Union representation may be key to the prison struggle. Through a union prisoners could begin to collectively challenge brutal treatment, exploitation of their labor and the dehumanization process in general.

When The Militant covers and analyzes strikes at various plants it plays not only an informative role, but also a role of supportive action. Workers in other plants and factories considering a strike, for example, are given certain insights into their own situation by The Militant's careful explanation of the situations of their co-workers elsewhere. The same can be done as regards prisoners.

When a strike or rebellion occurs in a prison, prisoners in other prisons may not even know of it; or what they do know is only what little they have been able to find in the bourgeois press. The Militant

can serve to inform, support and inspire prisoners in this situation when the facts are available by providing a Marxist explanation of events.

How do the facts become available? By having prisoners identify The Militant as their paper. Only then will prisoners consistently supply The Militant with the real facts. And as they begin to develop a Marxist perspective of the situation so, in turn, will they begin to present a more articulate analysis of the unfolding events behind prison walls.

What can we do in addition to the letters column and the form letter from the YSA N.O. as regards the prison question? We have been discussing the question rather broadly up to now. Concrete proposals are in order.

In my estimation we should consider strongly the opinions of both prisoners and ex-prisoners alike. It has been suggested that The Militant provide a regular column on prisoners and prison problems. I would add that this column be printed on a monthly basis and be allotted one-half a page in space. Someone would have to be assigned to write this column, or at least to be certain that contributions by other comrades are prepared for the column on a consistent basis.

Whoever heads up this assignment would also want to prepare a form letter for all prisoner subscribers. This letter would explain the column and could also suggest the idea of guest contributions for the column by prisoners. This is done, for example, by Baxter Smith, Linda Jenness, Miguel Pendas, and Frank Lovell. Having guest contributions obviously serves an important service as regards leaders and prominent figures in the various struggles at hand.

A guest contribution by a prisoner would of course, for security reasons, have to be signed by "a prisoner" from such and such penitentiary. This would in no way render ineffective the purpose of such a contribution because it is more important that a correct analysis of the situation begin to emerge and be identified with our press rather than the identity of the individual leaders themselves.

A prisoner from Pennsylvania wrote in the September 20, 1974, Militant letters column:

"I have been receiving and reading The Militant consistently for close to a year or more, and it has been very effective and instrumental in raising my political consciousness.

"Stay on the job serving the people

and the people will remember you."

This is just what we want--to raise political consciousness and for the masses of oppressed people to remember us, to know us, to know our ideas well: what revolutionist could ask for more.

We should want to recruit out of the prisons just like from anywhere else. We should want to have our ideas well imbued in the struggle inside the walls. How do

we do this? We organize an intervention with our press along the lines proposed above.

This contribution does not pretend to fully discuss our movement's orientation to the prison question. Rather, it lays the foundation upon which, in further discussion, we can and should develop our thinking on this very important question. Then we should translate our ideas into action.

December 1, 1974

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT BLACK STUDENTS:
CONTRIBUTION ON THE BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT

by George Cox, Westside Los Angeles local

In his Black Struggle Report, Malik Miah correctly emphasizes that we must continue to recognize the importance of maintaining our campus base. Although many current struggles in the Black movement are centered off-campus, YSA members, including Black members, should remain on the college and high school campuses.

This calls into question, therefore, the role of Black students today and I would like to direct my remarks to this question.

We are witnessing an obvious downturn in activity on the campuses. This downturn could be, and has been, misunderstood when not viewed in the correct political light. Students on campus today are not less political and less radical than those of a decade ago. If anything, the radicalization has deepened to include the experiences of the radical movements of the 1960s, the continuing process of decay in American society, and the effects of Watergate. More and more students are looking to socialism in a serious way--not just in an academic fashion, but as a viable alternative to the problems of capitalism. However, while there is a heightened interest in Marxism, there is at the same time a decline in activity. This characterizes the current trend in the student movement. . .contradictory. And the role of Black students must be seen in this light.

Black students have traditionally been the most militant organizers of protest actions that occur both on and off campus. Lately, however, there is seen to be a trend away from active involvement of Black students. There is said to be a lull in the Black movement. It's harder to sell The Militant to Black students than has been the case previously. Many chapters of the Black Student Union (BSU) are currently inactive or have folded. What are some of the factors we can point to in order to get a better understanding of where Black students are today?

The first, as I have stated, is the status of the student movement itself, as well as of the current radicalization in general. There are no national focal points of protest in the country at the present time. Although we have witnessed many forms of struggle in local areas--protests against police brutality; strikes by labor unions; demands for child care;

anti-inflation demonstrations--there is still no central avenue for protest that millions of people can rally around. This has affected the campuses as well. Aside from the YSA and SWP, students have no real example of activism.

The "contradictory" position of students today also holds true for Black students. Although many BSUs are inactive on the campus, we still find most Black students remaining as members of that group. Where the BSU does not function actively, we find that often its members are involved in community projects--education, sickle cell anemia fund-raising projects, breakfast programs, protesting police brutality in the community. During my experience on the regional team this fall, I found two campuses where the BSU chapter was active. In both these instances, their leaders felt that there was a conscious turn being made by their members away from "cultural nationalism" and to an interest in revolutionary socialism. On these two campuses, the BSUs were planning for spring educational activities and were friendly to the idea of having an SWP or YSA speaker attend.

So we see that where there is no political direction nationally, students are still engaged in some forms of activity. But when an action of national scope occurs, people will respond to it.

The situation in Boston today is instrumental in proving this point. Boston, as we know, is the current testing ground in the fight against racism. Nationally, a move has been made from the right to squelch the effort by Blacks for quality education. Many forces, including the Ku Klux Klan, have arrived on the scene in all forms from demonstrations against the busing program to mob violence.

In response, the Black community of Boston has taken steps to defend their children from attack. The December 14 Freedom March planned in Boston and the solidarity demonstrations planned around the country, show that Black people are seriously attempting to unite against this racist threat.

And Black students are also playing a role. Although this incident is happening in Boston, Blacks realize the

gravity of the situation. They realize that a victory by the anti-busing forces there would hamper or halt entirely the desegregation plans in other areas. They also realize the inherent blow to the fight for racial equality such a reactionary victory would deal. As a result, we see on the December 14 endorser list many names of student organizations and professors from around the country. This endorser list, along with the actual forces joined in organizing the December 14 demonstrations, shows us that this is one of the broadest in years, mobilizing support from many areas and layers of society.

This should be seen as an indication that radicalism has not died but will continue to deepen as life in America becomes more unbearable.

Another factor to recognize in the changing role of Black students is the change in the Black movement as a whole. There have been many setbacks suffered by this movement. The Black Panther Party, for example, faced murderous police repression in the late '60s. Because of its ultraleft rhetoric, the Panthers were unable to mobilize the Black community in its defense. In addition, many Black leaders were brought into the Democratic Party apparatus. Other militants eventually became enmeshed in the bureaucracy of government poverty programs. This has resulted in a crisis of leadership in the Black movement.

This overall downturn in the Black struggle affected the student movement as a whole. Together with the relative quiescence of the labor movement, it had the effect of making it more difficult for students to see the social forces that could bring about fundamental change.

In addition, the current economic situation must be viewed. Black student enrollment is down this year. Although still higher than it was a decade ago, the enrollment of Black freshmen is lower than it has been in previous years. This is true not only because Black families are hardest hit by inflation and unemployment, but also because of the drastic cutbacks in federal and state grants to minorities. These cutbacks have had a very real effect on the campus as well. Black Studies Departments, installed after years of struggle, have been cut down and in some cases cut out entirely. Black professors have lost their jobs or been refused tenure for "economic reasons." BSUs have lost their funding or have gotten less funds this year than last. What has been the role of Black students in fighting against these cutbacks?

We have only to flip through back issues of the YS to see that quite a lot

of fights were waged during the spring of this year. Students at City University of New York, Brooklyn College and Federal City College in Washington, D.C. engaged in such fights. At the University of Missouri and the University of Connecticut, Black students initiated protests against the racist policies of those schools, including cutbacks to minorities. This summer, the only protest to be seen was at the University of California at Santa Barbara, where Black students joined with Chicano and Asian-American students in a united front to halt the cutbacks. This fall no such protests were evident.

The economic situation is not getting better. In our Southern California/Arizona region alone, every one of the eight campuses visited by the team had suffered from federal or state financial cutbacks. On many of these campuses, leading Black professors had been fired. The BSUs on two campuses had been closed and an attempt was being made on one campus to get the Black and Chicano students to agree to a merger between the two studies departments, and label it "Ethnic Studies Department." And yet, no discussion of protest was yet to be heard.

In addition to the factors already stated, the very condition of Black students must be realized. Many of these students are in school on an academic or athletic scholarship. These students often fear that their scholarships will be taken away from them if they engage in radical activity. On some campuses it was reported to me that this was a constant occurrence with Blacks who tried to become active within the BSU, and that undercover cops were often seen "cruising around" looking for offenders.

Other Black students are in college under their own steam, that is, financing themselves or being financed by their parents. Some of these students have button-holed themselves into training for a career, with the idea in mind that their education comes first in order to secure a career once outside school.

But in spite of these factors, or maybe because of them, we cannot help but see more protests occurring both on and off the campus. The activism of the '60s may not be there now, but that does not mean that radicalism has died. Today more than ever, YSA members are needed on the campus. Sales of our press to students is crucial. But more than that, we cannot forget the role we have to play in teaching students how to fight back. In every instance where students are attempting to fight the cutbacks that are affecting their right to an education, the YSA must be there to help in this struggle. Where a protest arises against professors being

fired, the YSA must be there to help organize that protest. Only by being the best models of activism on the campus can

we hope to educate Black students on our methods of struggle and win them over to revolutionary socialism.

December 3, 1974

YOUTH SUPPORT WORK AND THE BERKELEY EXPERIENCES OF THE '74 CAMPAIGN

by Anne Chase, Berkeley local

In 1972 with the launching of the Young Socialist and the experience of the '68 election campaign behind us the YSA began a campaign to open up the YSA to new radicalizing youth. Because of the YSA's leading role in the antiwar movement and the women's liberation movement we were able to attract large numbers of young people to the YSA. We sought at that time to eliminate all barriers to membership and to project the YSA more clearly through all of our work.

During that time we realized that there was an acute need to develop more precisely the organizational tools and methods of recruitment. Since then YSA locals throughout the country have experimented with new ways to formalize recruitment and make it a regular and central area of the local's work.

With the upcoming presidential campaigns we want to be in the best position to take up the challenges and opportunities. Already the discussion bulletins have presented important transcribed contributions from last August's workshops on youth support and recruitment. And, the Draft Political Resolution has included a sizeable section on this work.

In Berkeley we were able to utilize the experiences of the past two years of recruitment work through the recent Olga Rodriguez campaign. During the campaign we were able to see very exciting results as 27 campaign supporters joined the YSA. In working out the youth support campaign many questions were raised, ideas tried and modified. With this contribution I want to go into, in a specific way, many of the aspects of youth support work.

I. The Concept

The campaign is a valuable tool for our movement enabling us to reach broad new layers of people with our program, convince them of the viability of that program and recruit them to our movement.

It is the YSA which takes up the immediate and concrete gains of the campaign through recruitment. For this reason the YSA's primary role in the campaigns of the Socialist Workers Party is to draw in and convince those people reached by the campaign through meetings, media, interventions, etc. to join the YSA. As we have seen by the important response to our recent campaigns combined with the widespread lack of interest in the capitalist candidates the opportunities for recruit-

ment during the '76 national campaign should be great. The YSA must be prepared organizationally and politically to respond.

For these reasons we viewed the primary assignment to the campaign from the YSA as youth support director; not as assistant campaign director whose energy would be dissolved into general campaign work. We wanted someone who could devote their full attention to organizing the YSAers as the best campaigners reaching out to draw in support, from wide layers of radicalizing youth, for our ideas. We wanted someone who could work with the campus comrades, with the recruitment committee, who could organize endorsers into active campaign work, and who could become familiar with the wide majority of individual endorsers, drawing them into activity and into the YSA. Though the availability of forces differs from area to area we found it important that the youth support director spend much of their time on the campuses where they can work on a day-to-day basis with many of the endorsers.

II. The Structure

The campaign committee was structured as such--a campaign director from the SWP, the youth support director from the YSA, and a number of assignments to the campaign in general from both the SWP and the YSA. Some of the YSA assignments were to youth support work, though not all. We had weekly campaign meetings open to the public and the campaign committee called endorsers to get them to the meetings. A steering committee of the directors, the organizers, and heads of particular areas of the campaign functioned to make political and organizational decisions on a more regular basis.

The YSAers assigned to youth support work were generally representatives from different campuses. Though we had limited experience, something we began to organize was a separate work committee to organize youth support work. We saw this as valuable in primarily coordinating the activity of the local. Some of the responsibilities included: a. specifically designed reports to the local reflecting endorser work in every aspect of the campaign; organized motivation for particular youth support activities.

- b. coordination of the endorser drive on campuses and in general.
- c. organizing the calling campaigns involving every member of the YSA.
- d. recording results of calling on

permanent files.

e. answering correspondence from endorsers.

f. putting out Young Socialist for Rodriguez mailings.

g. organizing interventions of supporters for all types of meetings.

Those assigned from the campuses coordinated the youth support work of the campus fractions. They organized the building of campaign meetings, interventions, media, etc. Because of limited forces and the more self-contained nature of the campuses it is more logical that campus campaign directors take on wider responsibilities than strictly gathering new supporters and working with endorsers. But the primary focus of all the campus work is to establish our campaigns as the energetic and viable socialist alternative through which we attract new people to the YSA. The majority of our supporters came through campus work. But never did we see a necessity of setting up separate YSR committees on the campuses. The endorsers identified with the central campaign headquarters and often came by to pick up materials, attend meetings, work on banners or look around the bookstore. Because we did not pose a formal YSR committee separate from the YSA I think most endorsers came to see the YSAers as the most active campaigners and the YSA as the on-going campaign. Instead of minimizing the relationship of the YSA to the campaign we pushed it forward. Newsletters all included the different activities of our movement stressing the need for an on-going political organization to take up the struggles which the campaign supported and built. The newsletters contained calendars citing forums, YSA parties, demonstrations and more. And, the final newsletter included the "Join the YSA" brochure.

In one case in the region a local was formed from a group of functioning campaign supporters. But especially in the case where there is no YSA or access to the campaign center it is particularly important to draw out the role of the YSA, making sure that individuals who are consciously campaigning for our program are quickly recruited to the YSA.

III. The Recruitment Committee

An important apparatus for clearly injecting the presence of the YSA for endorsers is the recruitment committee. A further explanation of the experiences of the recruitment committee in Berkeley can be found in YSA Discussion Bulletin Vol. XVIII, Number 1. The close working relationship between the campaign and the YSA recruitment committee cannot be stressed enough.

The campaign accumulated broad support of over 800 endorsers. We then worked to

involve them in activity, bring them to campaign events and generally set them in motion towards joining the YSA. But it is the recruitment committee which is organized to provide the concentrated effort to convince the closest endorsers of the need to join the YSA. Where the campaign would organize the local to call all of the endorsers, the recruitment committee would organize serious political discussion primarily through individual dinners. The recruitment committee is a regular functioning body composed of heads of the different external work including the youth support director, campus fraction heads, Chicano and Black work directors and others.

IV. The Endorser Drive

The primary vehicle for youth support is the endorser drive whereby hundreds of individuals make a conscious statement rejecting the capitalist parties in favor of a socialist alternative. The endorser card is an important vehicle for comrades to aggressively seek out individuals open to our program and engage them in discussion.

In charting out the endorser drive we wanted to make sure that we attracted those who were prepared to make a conscious break with capitalist politics. During the '72 campaign some locals found themselves with thousands of names that were collected on a less than clear basis and often people would sign to support our right to run rather than to support the basis upon which we run. We wanted to stay away from projecting too high a goal which would result in civil liberties type support or getting names for the sake of making a goal.

The results were important as we were able to devote our time to people who were interested in and friendly to our ideas. The results of the calling were always rewarding as a high percentage would express interest in attending the different campaign functions.

We viewed the endorser drive as we would a sales drive; as a reflection of the local's work. We based our projections on what we thought we could get from sales, forums, campaign meetings, campus literature tables, the bookstore and more. Each campus fraction had its own goal to contribute to the overall drive.

The endorser drive was divided into three periods; Spring, Summer and Fall to reflect the objective situations facing the campaign with campuses closing, with the fluctuating campaign tempo, and with different spans of time. This gave the drive a more concrete form and enabled the local to see the progress of the endorser

work in a more accurate framework.

As comrades sought out new endorsers we stressed that they find out as much as they could about the political ideas of the individual. Because the endorser card is the first step in drawing people into our movement we wanted to make the most of it. Comrades were encouraged to write down most pertinent information on the card itself to help us later in involving the endorser in activities.

We utilized a filing system discovered in Boston, to give us the best accessibility to endorsers as we saw possibilities for drawing them into activities. The system known as "key sort" cards eliminated alphabetizing, colored stickers and all the other confusing and awkward methods of trying to keep track of endorsers. The system is a primitive hand computer enabling a wide number of cross references into alphabet, campuses, and all other possible categories. It is a very worthwhile investment of several dollars.*

V. Drawing Supporters into Activity

Once you have your endorsers and a system to keep track of them the key to recruitment is to constantly keep in touch. People who commit themselves to supporting a campaign expect to be contacted to work on the campaign and donate money. We want to make the most of this opportunity. Keeping in touch includes such things as:

a. calling the endorser within a few days after they've endorsed to see what their interests are and if they are interested in coming to campaign meetings, forums, giving money, working on campus, etc.

b. sending regular newsletters which provide concrete information on how they may become involved. While the campaign sent out newsletters around major campaign events the recruitment committee sent out weekly newsletters to selected endorsers.

c. involving them in campus activities, i.e., staffing literature tables, going on interventions, passing out literature, building campaign meetings, selling our press and more.

d. having campus comrades get to know them by face, developing a friendly working relationship with the majority of endorsers on their campus.

e. intermittent calling to select groups to get them involved in particular actions such as campaign interventions, demonstrations, a campus struggle, or work on particular campaigns like the Boston demonstration.

f. Following up closest endorsers with visits to talk about the issues around the campaign and the YSA.

There is a wide range of possibilities for involving endorsers in regular campaigns of the YSA and new and creative ideas should be explored. One thing we projected, but were unable to carry out, was a one-day class for the many Black, Chicano and Asian endorsers on nationalism and socialism. Other class series were planned and organized by the recruitment committee. Endorsers were encouraged to attend and often did.

During the course of the campaign as a result of constant communication with endorsers we were able to draw around us a growing periphery of about 45 who came to a number of different campaign events including banquets, educational weekends, forums, and others. Many of this growing periphery eventually joined the YSA. Through five major calling campaigns to all the endorsers we found that people who were uninterested or unable to come to one event would show up at something later. For two major events we organized special visiting campaigns in conjunction with the recruitment committee to talk to close contacts and/or endorsers about buying a ticket, getting a Militant or other subscription, about issues in the campaign or about the YSA in general.

As the campaign ended we looked forward to the final statewide wrap-up weekend in San Francisco. In order to maximize recruitment we launched a special ticket sales campaign to see if we could bring between 75 and 100 endorsers to the Rally. With only two weeks to go we were able to mobilize over 80 endorsers from Berkeley in addition to the 27 new YSAers who had joined our ranks since the beginning of the campaign.

VI. Conclusions

The key to turning youth support work into concrete recruitment gains for the YSA is the developing of each member of the local into an active and aggressive campaigner prepared to seek out new people and to devote much time to patiently convincing these individuals of our ideas. While organizational tools should be perfected and expanded to facilitate access to the most interested supporters there is no substitute for long hours of working with endorsers on a one-to-one basis drawing them into activity and engaging them in political discussion. This work can and should be done by every member of the YSA.

HOW THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE FRACTION DOUBLED IN SIZE

by Izabella Listopad, Brooklyn, N.Y. local

In Brooklyn between the beginning of September '74 and the beginning of December '74 21 people were recruited to the YSA. This was a result of two important factors. One was our consistent YSA work especially on the campus, whether it be on the election campaign or work in support of struggles that broke out on or off campus. From a fraction of 8 the Brooklyn College fraction grew to the size of 17. We also have four active sympathizers there. We actually recruited 11 at Brooklyn College, but one comrade transferred out and one left the YSA. The other factor that resulted in the high recruitment was the consciousness of the local and the local leadership for the need to build the YSA into a mass youth organization. This second point is very important. In order for the YSA to provide leadership in the struggles that arise and guide them into massive actions independent of the capitalist class we have to be both quantitatively and qualitatively strong. When we take part in a struggle we want to both score a victory and to recruit anyone that agrees with our program. In order to defeat the ruling class in America we will have to be huge and organized. Only these type of revolutionary forces will ensure the victory of the socialist revolution.

Consistent YSA Work

Out of the executive committee of 8, 4 are students at Brooklyn College, 1 works at New York City Community College, and the organizer is often at one of the two schools. We consciously decided to do this because of the political importance of being on the campus. This provides a leadership for the fractions in their work. Some of the recruits have had their eyes on the YSA for quite a while. At Brooklyn College the YSA has done consistent work in defense of Palestine through huge teach-ins and forums as well as in our student government election campaigns. We take part in leading budget cut fights and the struggles for student-faculty control. Our student government election campaigns are used to build these struggles as well as to educate people on our program for socialist revolution. On the slate we run both comrades and close sympathizers that are willing to run on our program. We involve these sympathizers in petitioning, drawing up a platform, and campaigning, which many times brings these people that much closer to joining the YSA. When it comes to struggles around the budget cuts or student-faculty control (see contribution by Robb Wright on the Brooklyn College fight) we work with people coming around our

ideas, explain to them our mass action perspective, and involve them in actual organizing as much as possible. You can really say that we recruited 17 people from B.C. since two Puerto Rican women joined the YSA as a result of working with us on campus in the spring even though they are no longer on campus. This was a result of consistent contact work with them during the summer as well. Other things we do on campus to show that the YSA is a viable organization that radical students should be a part of are our classroom tours. We have been quite successful in organizing speaking engagements in classrooms of more political classes. Also comrades enroll in classes where we think it is politically important to be, especially Black and Puerto Rican studies classes. Here we are able to have more of an impact on people that are more conscious of their own oppression. When we take these classes we speak to contacts about taking the class with us. Another thing that makes us very visible is the table that we set up almost every day. Whereas once we had a hard time getting enough people to staff the table, now we can also send teams of comrades all over the school to sell our press in addition to staffing the table. The literature table is very impressive to most people because they realize that we are a serious organization with points of view on all major issues. We have recently expanded our literature consignment and are able to more extensively provide answers to questions by selling a specific book or pamphlet.

International Students Work

Out of the 11 students recruited one is West Indian. Out of the active sympathizers now working with us three are West Indian and one is Arab. Since international students are usually already involved in and concerned about their own specific struggles, we have to work with them in a special way. First of all, we are internationalists and are involved in struggles all around the world. Our consistent defense work in the Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran, the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners, and Haitian defense is impressive to these students and we try to involve them in this work as much as possible. We also work with their specific organizations in building forums and other activities. It is a good idea to assign one comrade on the fraction to work with these students. Getting their endorsement and support for other actions is also very

important. At B.C. we involved the International Students, Haitian Students, and Dominican Students in both the fight for Puerto Rican control over the Puerto Rican Studies Department and the building actions for Boston. In this way we are also able to find out which students within those organizations are more political. Most of all, extra time has to be taken out to sit down and talk to these people. They also should be encouraged to read our literature. Because of security they are not always able to come to all the activities, and these consistent discussions are very important in winning these students over to our program even though they might not be able to be actual members of the YSA.

Open YSA Meetings

One thing that we began in the beginning of the semester at Brooklyn College are open YSA meetings that are held almost every Monday. These meetings are in two parts. First is a class, then a business meeting; the classes are planned according to specific situations. For example, during the Puerto Rican studies fight, we had a class on Chile and Portugal, going into the lessons of the popular front and the difference between that and the united front approach. For the business meeting, there are two or three reports on our major activities on campus that week and discussion on them. To these meetings we invite all our contacts that we meet at the table, from sales or from our work in specific struggles. From there we give these people papers to sell and involve them in the work of the YSA fraction. This brings people that much closer to feeling like YSAers, and joining the YSA.

Dinners And Discussions

Recruitment has to be organized or else many opportunities for recruitment will be overlooked. An executive committee comrade should be assigned to head up recruitment. Even though mailings and telephone calling campaigns are important, the focus has to be put on the few people that we think are most likely to join the YSA. In Brooklyn we have been successful in organizing weekly dinners or more often if necessary. We invite close contacts and new comrades to them. You cannot expect people to be convinced of the need to join the YSA all by themselves. Only through extensive discussions about our politics will these people be convinced why each one of them is needed to build the revolutionary movement. Many times we have to go out of our way to meet with contacts, talk to them for a while, and bring them straight to our functions. Many times these people have to be picked up and brought to the meet-

ings. After forums we have begun to set up tables, serve coffee and cake, put on some music and have discussions with contacts in a relaxed atmosphere. All this has to be very organized. In Brooklyn at almost every meeting of the executive committee there is a discussion on the close contacts and new members. We discuss what is needed to recruit the contacts and integrate the new comrades. Each comrade on the e.c. is assigned to work with a few new comrades and close contacts. This means not only calling these people and keeping them on top of what we are doing, but also having extensive discussions with them and working with them in our everyday work. When we meet people that seem interested, even when selling, we have to take time out to sit down and explain what the YSA is. It is good to take someone's name and phone number when they seem interested, but that is not enough. In Brooklyn many comrades are getting into the habit of right there and then going with an interested person for a cup of coffee. This puts you in a situation where you can discuss our politics when the person is beginning to become interested. From there we set up other discussions. Most of our recruits are a result of this type of work. High school students also need special attention. In Brooklyn we have recruited two high school students. One from our work at Brooklyn College, since he goes to school near campus, and the other from regular community sales. In both cases we had to spend extra time talking to them. With high school students it is also very important to work with them at their schools. Help them to organize speaking engagements, sales, and other activities. Even after they join, special attention has to be given to these comrades. Like I mentioned before, it is important that each e.c. comrade works with specific new recruits to help integrate them into the work of the YSA.

Mood

The atmosphere that we set and the way we present ourselves to new comrades and contacts is very important. Anyone that wants to work for a socialist society should be in the YSA, and they are needed in the YSA. Every person is important whether he or she works full time (like the organizer), or can only spend some time selling our press and coming to YSA meetings. The reports given at YSA meetings have to be clear and set the mood where new YSAers will see the need to recruit and build the YSA. Reporters should avoid using initials or phrases that will confuse people new to our politics. In Brooklyn new YSAers are very conscious of recruitment. This is a result of both the mood set at the meetings and the involve-

ment of new YSAers in discussions with contacts. When a leading comrade arranges to meet with a contact, a new YSAer should be asked to come along. Every member should consider him or herself a recruiter to the YSA.

This type of atmosphere together with carefully organized recruitment work will prevent us from missing possibilities

for increasing our size and influence.

The gains that we have made on campus shows the importance for the YSA having a campus base. We have found that more and more on campus, more than any place else today, young people are willing to listen to new ideas and devote as much time as they themselves can to fight for a humane, socialist society.

December 9, 1974