

YOUNG WORKERS' LIBERATION LEAGUE
2nd National Convention
May 5th thru 8th 1972, Chicago

Main Report
by Jarvis Tyner

My good Comrades--Brothers and sisters:

Let me express to you my warmest personal welcome. And let me also express from the beginning: that I really have some positive feelings about this convention. I get some really good vibrations this morning just circulating among you--meeting many new comrades--meeting some of those comrades whom I haven't seen for some time;--just rapping and informally greeting each other.

Now, my good vibrations aren't metaphysical, or anything like that, I get a deep feeling of enthusiasm and positiveness emanating from you this morning. And though it's not usually a good practice--I want to say from the beginning, that this second convention of the Young Workers' Liberation League is going to be an overwhelming success. Having been to youth conventions many times, I can just feel it.

Events around us:

But I think what I feel here is again, not mysterious, or metaphysical for attitudes--our enthusiasms--our positiveness, I think has been molded by the tremendously important activities we have been engaged in up to this convention, and the tremendously positive events that have taken place just in the last months--particularly the last week and the last days.

What do I speak of?

Well, the number one event is, of course, the fact that, as we gather here this morning--in their historic military offensive, the liberation forces of South Vietnam are scoring devastating defeats (one after another) against the Saigon puppet troops--against U.S. imperialism. And let me say, that this offensive has destroyed the Vietnamization ploy.

It is clear that the puppet troops, even with massive U.S. air support, are no match for the highly motivated and organized forces of the National Liberation Front.

The offensive has destroyed the so-called pacification program--and what is really a concentration camp program. As the liberation forces have proceeded, they have liberated one concentration camp after another.

The offensive has sharply affected the situation in this country.

What was the Nixon tactic?--To keep the war out of the elections in '72--to center the debate on issues like bussing--on the confusion around this issue--racism--in this country. But they had to keep things quiet in Vietnam in order to do that. That's why "winding down the war," etc., is stressed.

Now it is clear that to the great distress of U.S. imperialism, due to the historic offensive, the issue of ending the aggression in Indochina has now assumed its rightful place: the very heat of the election debate. The atmosphere that's emerging

is that the candidates that will win, are those who are prepared to move decisively to finally end U.S. aggression in Indochina.

This is why the offensive is so important indeed--historic. This is something to be very positive about. The atmosphere here reflects the greatness of this development.

But also we are positive because we have just gone through several days of mass activities against the war. And there will be continual activities going on--and what is again clear is that the peace movement is not dead, but is growing in its scope--and strength and is more and more representing the majority sentiments it reflects.

What other events have helped to mold our positiveness--. Well, I think that the history-making delegation that I was part of, that has just returned from Vietnam, has given us new opportunities to help influence events not only on the peace front, but on many fronts. This has given us (the League and the Communist Party) a new sense of self-positiveness.

Further, I don't think we can leave out the fact that J. Edgar Hoover the master of reaction, racism, and deceit--is gone--and good riddance.

And to quote Comrade Gus--"(monopoly) has lost a dedicated servant of racism, reaction, and repression" and "no decent American will have cause for sorrow." So, that's why we can say good riddance--J. Edgar Hoover--the man who's done most to destroy the Constitution--the Bill of Rights--who harrassed and destroyed human beings--who destroyed families--who tapped telephones (that super snooper) and tailed little children. Who was the biggest liar of them all--the gunman of monopoly--the arch criminal--we say, that our only regret, is that we didn't totally defeat him politically before he died! And because Hoover was more like an institution itself, his death has important significance.

And we must speak here of the great positive developments around the case of our comrade Angela Davis.

We can say that the work of the League was of great importance in winning the decisive fight for bail for Angela Davis. And of course it is correct to feel a sense of pride about this victory, but we must be careful not to transfer that into a feeling of satisfaction!

We must keep on--keeping on until Angela and all political prisoners are free.

I think another event of great positiveness for us in that many of us come here after or in the midst of the tremendously successful effort to put the Communist Party and League and Party candidates on the ballot. And that we have just added to our growing list--the state of Utah--and 22,000 signatures that have just been turned in in the great industrial state of Michigan. And we can report several successful petition campaigns now in progress, including the campaign going on right here in this most important industrial hub of the nation: the state of Illinois.

And let me say that the positiveness that we feel is based on such a positive response we've been getting from the people: the oppressed, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asians and Indians, and the youth and students.

This is, of course, so positive, for it makes it possible for us to see the great possibilities of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential campaign, but as well that we, the Party and the

League, are winning a new acceptance—a new legitimacy among broad sections of the population.

And as you know, the historic 20th convention of the CPUSA took this into account. The tremendously positive 20th convention adds much to our optimism also.

And for this to be happening here in the bastion of World Imperialism has world significance! It is part of the domestic reflection of the fact that the initiative in the world is clearly in the hands of the 1/3 of the world that is socialist; the over 1/3 national liberation forces; and the developing movements of the workers, youth and students, and oppressed people within the capitalist world.

I'm sure there are other important developments, but I would say that these are the main events that have molded our sense of enthusiasm and optimism that you can feel here in this room this morning.

World Youth

Brothers and sisters, being in the bastion of world imperialism, here in the home pasture of the beast, we must take our international responsibilities with the greatest amount of seriousness.

As a Marxist-Leninist youth organization operating here, we hold a big responsibility to all the oppressed and super-exploited victims of U.S. imperialism in the world. Particularly and concretely our solidarity must be expressed towards the youth of the world. We are the U.S. affiliate of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Representing some 200 million youth throughout the world, the WFDY is the center of the youth sector of the world anti-imperialist front. We are also closely related to the International Union of Students--the biggest student organization in the world. We are without the luxury of speaking abstractly about our internationalism. We are too deeply involved in the activities of world youth for that. We are organizationally and ideologically tied with the democratic, anti-imperialist youth and students of the world. And we have a heavy load to carry: we must mobilize and organize the masses of U.S. youth and students to join them with the working class and oppressed people--with all the peace-loving people--in the U.S. and, in short, to get U.S. imperialism off the backs of the youth of the world. This task is of utmost importance and requires our closest attention.

And you should know that when we attend the many important international youth gatherings, nearly every delegation is eager to meet with us, primarily because the situation in the U.S. affects their struggles, just as the situation in their countries affects our struggle. And they want to know what we are doing to help them in their struggles. And we can't afford the luxury of talkin' loud and doin' nothin'.

World youth have been playing a major role in the struggle against world imperialism. Through the work of the IUS and the Federation, millions of world youth have been propelled into militant action against imperialism. Under the campaign "Youth Accuses Imperialism," the WFDY has been in the forefront of the struggle against U.S. aggression in Indochina. They have mobili-

zed the mass of youth against Israeli aggression and in support of the liberation fighters in Angola, Mozambique, in Guinea Basalt, in Southern Africa, in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), in Bangla Desh, and with the youth of the Sudan.

The youth of the African National Congress, the youth of the USSR, Cuba, Chile, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, youth living under fascism in Spain and Greece--are among the millions united together in solidarity through the WFDY.

And let me say that we know from experience that the initiative has clearly shifted to the forces of national liberation and socialism in this world, because through the WFDY we're in touch with what's happening among youth throughout the world.

We know the deep-going crisis of imperialism as it's reflected here. We know that their system is in a deep state of crisis. We know that economically it's eroding, and politically it's more isolated and steadily losing ground, and we can see it happening here in the U.S. They can't provide a decent education for the youth; they can't provide decent housing, recreation facilities, medical care; and of course they can't supply jobs for people. They have brought a reign of repression down on the people, and murder and assassination--frame-ups--are their daily policies. This country is rocking in a state of crisis because imperialism is in a deep crisis: in it's stage of decay--and U.S. youth especially are resisting.

But U.S. youth should know that in solidarity with youth of the world, we can once and for all get rid of this scourge on humanity--this system that has brought so much suffering to so many, to keep the pockets of so few filled with gold; that together with world youth we can do much to bring an end to the system of world imperialism.

So from our Second Convention we say to the youth of Vietnam and Indochina: we stand with you in demanding: that U.S. imperialism must set the date for the total and complete withdrawal from that area of the world; that they must end all support for the Thieu-Ky puppets and leave the people of Vietnam to determine their own destiny; that they must end their aggression in Laos and Cambodia; that they must end their partnership in aggression with Israeli imperialism; that Israel must withdraw from the occupied territory and must abide by the UN Resolution of November 1968. That the Palestinian people must be given the right to determine their own destiny. And we strongly support the growing movements for peace and justice in Israel as well.

And we strongly support the movements for liberation in Southern Africa, in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, in Guinea Basalt: We stand with you brothers and sisters!

To those youth in South Africa, Sudan, Spain, Greece, we stand with you and will do all we can to aid your struggle.

And let us say to the youth in revolutionary Cuba: we are with you as one. Long live revolutionary Cuba! To the youth of Puerto Rico we say: Viva Puerto Rico Libre!

To the youth of Chile: we stand with you also in your struggle to develop and extend your new Popular Unity Government. We will do all we can to keep the bloody hand of U.S. imperialism out of your affairs.

We want to say to the youth and students of the world that

as far as the YWLL is concerned, we know our responsibilities and we have carried them out and will meet them with even more effectiveness in the present and future.

In order to understand the present relationship of forces in the world, one must see the leading role being played by the youth of the Socialist states, particularly by Soviet youth. We can say that the development and consolidation of the system of Socialist states is the decisive ingredient in the shift of power towards national liberation and socialism. The Soviet Union is the strongest and most capable adversary of imperialism. Its role in the world revolutionary process has been indispensable. In the world youth movement the Soviet youth and students play an invaluable role. We would like now to send our warmest greetings to all the youth of the Socialist world, but particularly to the youth of the 27 million Leninist Komsomol of the USSR.

Comrades: at the founding convention, we spoke of the deep-going crisis confronting our country, and that youth were feeling the sharpest edge of that crisis, particularly Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and specially oppressed youth.

This situation has not improved; in fact it has gotten worse.

Yes, the draft calls have lessened and U.S. fatalities for now are lower; this is due to the withdrawals from Vietnam. (By the way, I don't want you to credit the mad-bomber-Nixon with those withdrawals. It was the united mass actions of the forces for peace that forced the Nixon administration to withdraw those troops. And that should be clearly understood.) But as we know, the most recent plan of this administration is to again increase the U.S. ground troops. We must again bring the proper pressure to bear to curb these new dangers, as the Saigon puppet troops face one wipe-out after another.

U.S. imperialism is in a real bind. They're desperate; and you always must watch out for a cornered cat!

But to continue: the fact is that now youth unemployment is reaching 20%, officially 14%. We can speak of an unemployment rate of at least 40% among Black urban youth, as the official rate is 37.1%. Comrades, what does this mean when it's coupled with the drastic cuts across the board in education (where most city college systems are in crisis), welfare, medical assistance, funds for recreation, job training, summer camps, and free lunch programs?

This means a life of despair, of hopelessness, for millions of U.S. youth, especially youth of el barrios and ghettos. This means hundreds of thousands of college students have an uncertain future, facing unemployment and the lack of meaningful and productive job prospects. This is all a part of the general decay of this system, sharpened and deepened by the cost of aggression in Indochina.

The despair and emptiness of life shows itself, too, Comrades. Did you know that 600,000 U.S. youth--mainly white and middle class--run away from home every year.

And what about the problem of drugs? So many of our generation have met an early grave due to being driven to drugs. And it's this life of despair, Comrades, that's a policy of government, and a result of the decay that has brought us to a situation where the ruling class consciously is pushing drugs among youth--especially Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican youth of the urban centers. Listen: any time you have 40,000 drug addicts in Harlem--one for every 6th person--that ain't no spontaneous development--this is conscious. It's chemical warfare against the youth. It's genocidal when it comes to Black and Brown youth. They're destroying the best of our younger brothers and sisters.

We have said that because youth are just coming into the productive life of society and lack training and skill and are struggling to establish themselves economically and socially, that they become the first victims of the crisis-prone capitalist system. Capitalism--imperialism--eventually turns on its younger generation.

This is the meaning of the present economic and social crisis confronting this generation of youth.

And to prevent total disorder and prevent particularly political rebellion among the youth, they have opted for raw terror and repression. The prisons are filled with youth, particularly Black, Puerto Rican and Chicano youth. To curb rebellion and political struggles, they have opted to throw out the Bill of Rights. Nothing more illustrates this than the case of Angela Davis. The ultimate option is spelled fascism, Comrades, as we know.

The rising degree of racism today aimed at youth is no accident. The new so-called theories of the inherent inferiority of Blacks and poor people that they're peddling on the campuses today--it's ideological preparation for maintaining the status quo; but also for lynching, terror, genocide--**FASCISM.**

Wallace's appeal to white youth is another part of this vicious scheme. He's trying to turn them around; to misdirect their anger and dissatisfaction. This is classic fascist demagoguery.

The task before us as a Marxist-Leninist youth organization is clear, and it needs to ring from the house tops: Unity--Youth Unity--United Front! Youth must unite to fight its way out of the devastation of war, racism, economic crisis. This is the only path.

The aim must be for a massive youth front with working-class and oppressed youth at its head. This lesson has not been drawn by many of the left youth as yet.

At our founding convention we noted the growing crisis of petty-bourgeois capitalism. We strongly asserted ourselves on the scene. We strongly asserted Marxism-Leninism as the only really revolutionary science, and that what was dominating the youth movement was posing as, but was clearly not, Marxism-Leninism, but distortions; in the main, petty-bourgeois anarchistic positions.

We can say today that we have done a great deal to further

isolate such trends. But quite frankly, Comrades, the Trotskyites remain a real factor among left youth, particularly white student youth. And though Maoism is more and more discredited (even the Maoists are discrediting Mao these days), many of its basic distortions still have a hold on a section of youth. And we must mention the small, but insistent anarchist-syndicalist trends represented by the Labor Committee and its split-off.

Among broader sections of radical youth, most of whom have moved away from the most obvious unworkable approaches-- if they haven't dropped out, they are caught up in mysticism-- Zen Buddhism--some have even gone to Jesus.

What we have is the same wrong concepts--you know: subjective idealism, right and left opportunism, petty-bourgeois individualism--emerging in new forms, but with the same basic class content. Gay liberation (basically another white movement) doesn't deal with racism and pushes homosexuality as being revolutionary. Racism sidetracks many of the white radicals. They still don't have a clear class self-interest approach to this question.

Narrow Black nationalism, though waning, still remains a real factor among Black youth. Similarly, many Chicano and Puerto Rican, as well as Asian and Indian radicals, are heavily disoriented by nationalism.

Male supremacy remains a big battle for us--and also feminist trends still hold a big sway among radical women.

All of these ideological problems remain an obstacle to forwarding the fight. All of these trends among radical and broad sectors of U.S. youth are blocks to the development of the Broad Youth Front.

There is serious ideological struggle ahead of us. It is these types of ideological blocks, plus the fact that this generation is not sufficiently organized, that's at the root of the great lulls in the youth movement. The spontaneous character of the U.S. youth movement needs more study so that we understand it in a deeper way, but one thing is clear: we must fight now to build the ideological clarity and organizational means to bring about a mass youth movement--a movement which is consistent--which can continually follow through, which can fight for the salvation of this younger generation.

Vehicles to the Youth Front

Presently we can speak of youth population in the U.S. as being unorganized. For example, a country with such a gigantic student population has no national Student Union. There is really no mass grass-roots, action-oriented national youth organization in this country. This is partly at the root of the spontaneity. U.S. youth don't have anything to join. Even when they do know who to fight, there are no real handles: organizations to fight them.

So we propose that we begin the task of building such forms-- the forms that will lay the foundation for a really broad mass youth front.

What are the key forms?

1. We must begin to build towards a national student union, and a national high school student union (Black students may be grouped separately initially, but we must find methods for unity in action).

2. A real national youth sector of rank-and-file young workers--affiliated, perhaps to TUAD.

3. Build a youth sector to the national defense committee that's planned to emerge out of the Angela Davis and other groups around political prisoners and prisons.

4. Build a national organization aimed at ghetto and barrio youth.

These forms could be a key beginning to laying the basis for bringing the generation together in a powerful Front. This should be our most important goal. Then we can see the basis for a really mass youth movement--with some lasting effect.

Build a Mass League

(For a League of a "New Type")

This is a necessary part of building a mass youth movement.

The development of the League over the past two years has been greatly positive. We have briefly summed this up in the Draft Resolution of the YWLL.

I want only to mention our best effort--that we took on as the League and were clearly identified with the results: and since she's here I must mention it: that's the great initiative of the Boston League, who got some 54,000 votes for Pat Bonner Lyons. But as well, there were the 40,000 signatures in Pennsylvania; I can't name all the great things we've done--when you try to do that, you get in trouble.

But there are many things that block our reaching our full potential. The main problem is sectarianism. Sectarianism blocked our approach to a mass movement--we had a League-only approach. There are many objective reasons for this:

We were a new organization fighting leftist, petty-bougeois trends.

We were just starting to build the organization--there is a need for greater emphasis on self.

The leadership is self-critical: we gave the wrong lead in many cases (for example, even though we doubled our membership, this growth was in new branches, not in mass branches).

At any rate: we were basically building the League like a young CP: in many cases, even narrower than the Party. There were branches that would expell people at the drop of a hat. The slightest breach, and out you go!

Lenin said that each generation comes to socialism in their own way, unlike their parents. What was he talking about? Each generation has its own special character that must be taken into account. It's a question of style in our approach--to understand the events that have molded the thinking and psychology of our generation.

It is also true that youth comes to socialism by different paths. I came through the struggle in the 60's civil rights movement in the Black community. Others will come from the shop struggles; others through cultural activity. Youth will come to socialism necessarily for a multitude of diverse reasons, with diverse levels of consciousness. If we're serving our proper role, we obviously aren't going to recruit full-blown Marxist-Leninists--hardly ever. Youth are going to come in with all kinds of ideological weaknesses.

And we can't run away from that, or reject them if they are willing, for one or two reasons only maybe, to join (assuming, of course, that they are honest and really want to be a part of our organization). In order to build a mass league we've got to be dialectical. We've got to see every new member and potential member as they really are--in a process of development.

Therefore we must open up--broaden out the basis for joining the League to take this into account: Uneven and diverse development in human beings in their thinking and understanding--the process of developing consciousness.

Now do not take this to mean that we will weaken the ideological content of the League. That's not what I'm talking about. We want to broaden out, not wash out!

The very opposite must happen. We must fight for higher and ever higher levels of ideological and educational work within the League, because without that, there's no place for that new member to develop to, and we will lose him, as has happened in the past.

To narrow the problem down: we are really talking about broadening our standards for initial membership in the basic unit: the branch. The standards for branch leadership must be high and develop higher; the standards for section leadership must be high; for the Central Committee, etc.

Popular Meetings

Meetings in our organization are like wakes sometimes. We're a youth organization--let's take a youthful approach. Let's have short meetings (two hours at most) with fully prepared and short reports on activities. Let's show films, have coffee afterwards, etc. Our meetings should be exciting, action-oriented, spirited--not dull and heavy.

Short and Popular Educationals

At branch meetings, let the educationals be on more fundamental questions; for example "Why Unemployment Among Youth," or "Racism." They should be deeply Marxist-Leninist in content, but not the most complex questions right away. We should create other levels for more advanced classes and discussions. Most youth I met out there get snowed with a first class on Historical and Dialectical Materialism. Some don't, but most youth do. They don't have the background to take it all in--I know I didn't--as they develop, then they will move to more advanced educationals.

Social and Cultural Program

Sports programs, picnics, etc., must be a part of our overall work. Youth must find a full life within our organization. We should move to get uniforms for the organization.

Other Blocks to a Mass League

White chauvinism: We will deal with this on many other points, but some branches seem to carry out hardly any struggle against white chauvinism. Don't take nothing for granted -- Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, specially oppressed youth will not stay in an organization that is not engaged in a concrete struggle against racism. We must all see this question in all our work; for example, on the peace question: the most rabid racists are the biggest war freaks -- we must make the tie!

Wallace-- we must launch a mass campaign to demonstrate against this racist wherever he appears, in a United Front with others, through the Youth for Hall-Tyner Committees as one vehicle.

Struggle against racism must be ongoing, constant, and concrete.

If I can quote the Bible: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren (add and sistren) to dwell together in unity." (Psalms 133)

It is beautiful to have an organization like the League with its unity of Black, white, Puerto Rican, Asian, Chicano, and Indian youth. It is pleasant and beautiful especially in this country. But don't be blinded: this is a result of struggle--ideological and practical struggle against white chauvinism. If that struggle ceases--if that "seepage of racism" as Gus says, starts to corrode us--then our unity will cease!

Male supremacy: We have major problems on this question. Some comrades think that because we reject feminism, we don't have to struggle on male supremacy. Our women comrades are political leaders. They are not to be pawed on and crudely approached. They are not sex objects. They are to be treated with comradely respect and dignity. In some areas of the country the majority of our organization are young women, yet they are not considered as leadership, or higher standards are placed on their leadership. This must stop.

These are all blocks to a mass League. The other major block is that we have not had a consistent and concretely defined program. We have been too issue-oriented, and it appears that we are headed nowhere, just going from one hot issue to another. This convention must be concrete in defining our main issues and goals.

I have projected our main goals in the broader youth arena. The main overall youth issues as we see them can be listed as follows:

1. War and militarism
2. Angela Davis--the fight against repression and the danger of fascism
3. Nixonomics--the overall effects of the economic crisis on youth

Where does the issue of veterans come in? Under the first point. Prisons? Under the second point. Rank and file democracy? Under the third point. AND they interconnect. Where does the fight against racism come in? On every point! The '72 elections? That's the main arena of struggle where the battle for ideas and issues will take place.

Vehicles for a Mass League Intermediary Left Youth Forms

There has been some confusion here on what we mean by intermediary forms. Many have confused them with what are broader mass forms--coalitions, etc.

What we are talking about here is left youth forms that are mass in character and are around the orbit of the League: under the League leadership and within the realm of the League's leadership.

1. Take the National Student Union. A good section of that could be under the League's leadership, or in close coalition with the League: this would serve as an intermediary form. Not that this section would be specifically Marxist-Leninist, but that Marxism would be a leading trend within such a grouping. League members and those close to the League would be leaders within it. And when it comes to action and program there is a large student constituency to immediately bring it to, and move it into, action. That's broadening the orbit of the League!

The YCL of France gets the largest vote in the Union of French Students. Its chairman is a communist youth.

2. Our goal should be a Left caucus within the High School Student Union section. Many forms could take place within it.

3. Another goal should be a Rank and File Workers' section under League leadership. This could be formed around Young Worker social clubs.

4. Yet another goal is community centers and movements. We must build a network of left-advanced, democratic, activist organizations in the ghettos and barrios that could be nationally affiliated to the League, based on the concept of the unity of shop and community work. This would be part of industrial

concentration. Again, it would be an organization where Marxism-Leninism would be the leading trend, but the bulk of membership would be primarily activist--favorable and positive towards Marxism, but not Marxist themselves. However, many will obviously come to Marxism--and to the League, and some to the Party.

If we could build such forms, we would have the strongest community base of any youth organization in the country. This is a mass approach!--Like the Young Liberators' forms in the 30's and 40's.

5. We must build organizations of study groups, discussion clubs, sports teams--bowling, baseball, volleyball, basketball teams--and the building of Youth or Young Worker camps across the country.

The YCL of Chile has 57,000 members, but they can move hundreds of thousands of youth, because they have such intermediary forms around them. In France it is the same way: Fania Davis Jordan went to Paris, and 60,000 youth marched for Angela Davis.

So in summing up: what we need to head for is a League with its thinking and its actions firmly planted among the masses of youth, with a clear direction for the overall fight--not just what we want to see, but how to get to that point--the Youth Front! Then we need to build a mass League with an even larger network of people around us. This gives us independence and muscle within the front and in building for the front.

The final form is the associated membership, where an already existing group can have an associated status to the League. It wouldn't be a full-blown branch--nor would it have the responsibility for a full branch--but it would work with us on program: use our literature, hold conferences with us, come to our convention.

Right now I know of perhaps three organizations that would agree to such a relationship with us right away.

I've said what I wanted to say, but our perspective must be one of seeing the long-term nature of the whole new direction we're proposing.