

(excerpts from exchange of correspondence)

Dear Carl,

May 14

Enclosed is a copy of a resolution Jim and I have prepared for national discussion among the youth. It is an outgrowth of discussions we are having here in NYC which have shown up some rather divergent points of views. You will soon be receiving other documents and info on a planned plenum of the youth to work out perspectives.

The conceptions formulated in this document are pretty much those we discussed in Chicago. Furthermore you will note that the concrete tasks are aimed at solving the situation on the editorial board which necessitated your letters to me and our recent exchange. I believe that we must clarify the role of the YS so that it will be a spokesman for revolutionary socialism in the regroupment process while keeping an extremely flexible policy towards the IBMs.

To me the present article by Max and Turner (article with Stalinist line on peace - C.F.) demands an editorial stand on electoral action as soon as possible in order to clarify the revolutionary socialist nature of the YS. I would like to know what you think of this and if you have any suggestions or amendments to our document. In any event I am sure a good discussion on our perspectives will do much to develop our youth into a nationally functioning cadre.

fraternally
Tim

(minutes of May 18 not yet received when letter written)

Dear Tim,

May 20, 1958

I have read the recent set of minutes and yours and Berts statements and am concerned about the whole situation which is getting worse. I have written a letter to the PC about my apprehensions, hoping to initiate a discussion on the problems.

You state in your letter that the concepts contained in your resolution "are pretty much those we discussed in Chicago". Most of the points are and you know what I think about the YS and how that paper must continue to represent revolutionary socialist ideas. This is now in question by the present status of the editorial board. However, I think your point five is wrong and not in line with our discussion in Chicago. I am unwilling to agree that the contradictions of the broad clubs will "inevitably" lead to their "disintegration". That is only one variant. The other variants are that this centrist formation will move to the left with our help under the impact of new events and the general progress made in the regroupment field; or that at some future date we can break away with a sizable section over an issue that separates socialists from non-socialists. Possibly there are other variants that are combinations of these. In any event I don't want to pre-judge and say only this one is possible.

The whole regroupment process is one of movements of unification and differentiation. Our role in it is to raise ideas that begin to separate the best elements but not so fast that we cut ourselves off from them and their process of development. This is the part that requires flexibility and know-how. Our youth problem is highly complicated and made more difficult in that we have many inexperienced youth, that we are limited to a certain type of organizational framework and that the Stalinist youth are not so far along as the National Guardian crowd. We therefore have to be careful, but raising certain proposals for action is a way of educating people, through discussions and in the actual action itself with our participation with them. At times we may even raise a divisive issue, maybe a few will leave -- we have to weigh that as against the over-all gain gotten by the introduction of the issue and the developing of people. Sometimes the proposal may not be able to be carried out in practice but will serve as an educational point.

Your concept of a setup for revolutionary socialists in YS committees is sound, but in one form or another they already exist. I presume your wanting to formalize it more is a move to clarify the position of the YS and define where revolutionary socialists stand in relation to the broad club, as a distinct tendency within them. I am in agreement with the idea since I think this point is still unclear, but I want to guard against a setup that looks like a competitive organization to the broad clubs. In N.Y. you have a real problem since the YS has been adopted by the broad club and has to some extent/pawned off as a broad paper.

I agree with the rest of the points in your resolution and so does Peter. However I believe that the resolution should be amended along the lines I have indicated. Possibly then the resolution can be signed by other people to give it greater backing.

Please let me know your thinking and Berts and Jims. My letters should be shown to them. comradely - Carl cc: Tom Kerry

May 24, 1958

Dear Carl,

It was very good to get your letter of May 20. We have been thinking of ways to improve our resolution and thereby get as broad support as possible for it. The original draft was aimed largely at that goal--not as a finished worked out program.

I am convinced that we are in fundamental agreement on youth perspectives and I find little that I would disagree with in your letter. As far as the formulation on point five I think it is largely a matter of schematic formulation on our part that brings up the problems you see. By stating that "the basic contradiction in the nature of the IBM Clubs will lead to their disintegration" we merely meant to point out that they could not stay for ever as they are-- they must evolve-- they must develop.

This development could occur with a simple flying apart of the IBMs in several directions but you are right in stating that this is not the only variant. In fact I would go further and predict that this is least likely of all the variants considering the very considerable weight we have in these clubs plus the all powerful attraction of the YS and any move toward a national youth formation.

As you no doubt already know the basic imminent difficulty which gave added impetus to the youth discussion has been resolved with the resignation of Turner and Max. This move on their part is in reality a conformation of our general approach which pointed to the impossibility of cooperating together with such elements in a joint project of putting out a revolutionary socialist youth paper. What was impossible for us was even more impossible for them as they were not in the majority. We can ask such elements to work jointly in broad club with us but we cannot expect them to help put out a paper with a line that is contrary to their political orientation.

It is extremely important that the youth assimilate the lessons of this experience and that we not let such a situation develop again. For this reason it is still necessary though some of the urgency is removed to formulate a general perspectives document for this period.

Therefore enclosed you will find the amendments we have drawn up for reformulating the resolution. They are meant to take in account the new situation created by the resignation of Max and Turner, the criticism you have raised and to add a clearer formulation of the raising of the slogan of a national youth movement-- an idea arrived at in consultation with the secretariat.

I hope that you and/or Peter will want to sign the resolution as amended. If you have any additional amendments or suggestions please send them along. Thanks again for your help and I hope to hear from you as soon as possible. Give my best to Peter.

Revolutionary greetings.
Tim

May 29, 1958

Dear Carl,

Attached are proposed revisions. Basically they are of three kinds in addition to some slight improvements in formulation or terminology, suggested as a result of discussion here. (1) paragraph 5. rewritten; with the one-sided implications to "disintegration" removed. (2) several more-or-less overt references to the party cut or changed as should have been done in editing the first mimeod draft. (3) the paragraph added after #16. Embodying an idea which M. Stein through out at a discussion between the secreteriat and our Ed B'rd fraction. The proposed line of propoganda met with unanimous agreement.

Although much of the immediate, critical charater to the perspective discussion has been relieved through the Ed B'rd withdrawals an clarification we still need a guiding perspective and we need the discussion itself, out of which our youth will develop operational cohesiveness and not repeat errors.

With comradely regards

Jim Robertson

AMENDMENTS

5. rewritten;

However, in exactly those aspects which are the main strength and appeal of the IBM clubs lies their basic weakness. Fundamentally these clubs are a political and organizational meeting ground for revolutionary socialists and youth who in one fashion or another hold to Stalinist politics. For this reason these clubs are unable to take positions on a host of important class struggle issues, those questions which in general go beyond a consistent and democratic liberal approach. The posing of more militant and strictly socialist issues before these clubs is a powerful way of educating and moving forward their memberships; but to attempt to force the clubs to take stands on such issues would in effect force/exactly those elements we wish to cohabit with at the present time-- and would thus destroy the basic appeal of the IBM clubs. However it is also true that exactly those aspects of the IBM clubs which make them attractive to Stalinist youth make them repugnant to non-Stalinist youth. This factor limits the ability of these clubs to reach out to new, previously uninvolved elements, in any large-scale way. Inevitably this basic contradiction in the nature of the IBM clubs makes them unstable in the long run. The alternatives are several: either the clubs can simple fall apart; or they can move leftward as a whole; or sections of the clubs can move while the club remains static; or some additional possibility or combination of the above will come about. What is important now is to recognize this instability without pre-judging which varient will occur. Since the individual clubs are by no means uniform, there is no certainty that they will all follow the same varient, especially to the extent that over-riding developments external to the clubs are not imposed. In any case for the time being the IBM's play an extremely valuable rôle which far out weighs their weakness.

6. strike out: "and is therefore not an explicitly Trorskyist (SWP) youth publication".
12. in the fourth line of the paragraph substitute "youth" for "caucus"
- 12 b. change fourth sentence to read: "It will provide something to recruit leftward moving elements to instead of obliging them to choose prematurely among organizations in the "adult" field."
13. add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph: "The independence of the YS in relation to clubs is a crucial point. since the functioning of the paper as our voice into the regroupment process is impaired to the extent that the editorial expression of the paper itself becomes a 'regroupment arena'."
15. is now obsolete; to be rewritten in a very positive fashion and in line with the Ed B'rd decisions of May 28.
- new 17. to be inserted between 16 and the paragraph now numbered 17. We should raise as our general propoganda solgan in this period the call for an organized nation-wide youth movement with a genuinely socialist program. on the basis of such advocacy we/will win adherents and involve in the elaboration and discussion of the draft program proposals YS supporters as well as those elements now in the IBM clubs and the like who commit themselves in favor of national organization.
