

YSA

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

Vol. 10 No. 6
March 1967

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10 Cents

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE

YSA, BOX 471, COOPER STATION, N.Y., N.Y. 10003

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NEC REPORT ON THE YOUNG SOCIALIST

Presented by Mary-Alice

Approved by the NEC, February 6, 1967

In October of 1967, the Young Socialist will be ten years old. Our ten year record of regular publication marks a considerable achievement for the YSA and makes the YS the oldest socialist youth publication in the United States today. It is also the most widely distributed socialist magazine directed solely at radicalizing youth.

During our ten year history the form and content of the YS has often varied significantly as it reflected different stages in the growth of the revolutionary socialist youth movement in the U.S.

The YS began publication as a newspaper during the regroupment period, 1957-59. In the initial period it strove to be a discussion bulletin for different youth tendencies moving toward Trotskyist answers to the questions posed by the Hungarian revolution and the Khrushchev revelations. The YS was the programmatic organizer around which YS supporter groups coalesced in many cities, becoming the basic units of the YSA which was founded as a national organization in 1960.

From April of 1960 to October of 1964, the YS continued to appear monthly, now as the newspaper of the YSA. It reported on our national activities and campaigns around the Cuban revolution, the Southern civil rights demonstrations and supporter actions in the North, the Student Peace Union, and the defense of our Bloomington comrades. It reflected the growing political clarity of the YSA's program, as well as the numerical growth of the organization on a national scale.

In October, 1964, the YS changed to a magazine format. There had been less activity in the student milieu during the period preceding the change and the YS had begun to carry more articles and material of a theoretical nature. A monthly newspaper became unrealistic because the "news" was already old making it difficult to sell. This was especially true as The Militant had recently expanded to 8 pages. Consequently we projected sales of the weekly 8-page Militant as an integral part of our propaganda activities. With a magazine format we were able to make use of more pictures, of color, and to generally improve the attractiveness of the YS.

Since the October 1964 change in the YS, the YSA has continued to grow and extend its influence in the radical youth movement. Our sustained, two year campaign building the anti-war movement has extended our periphery, brought many new comrades into the YSA and made it extremely difficult - if not impossible - for our opponents to classify us as "irrelevant" or to dismiss us as unimportant. The new upsurge in radical activities on the campuses, particularly the ever growing oppo-

sition to the Vietnam war, has brought about an even greater interest in socialist ideas.

The conjunctural advantage we have over our opponents coupled with the openings created by the antiwar movement make it imperative that we make a concerted effort to reach out more than ever before, winning new people to our ideas and organization. As we become stronger politically and organizationally relative to our opponents we must publicly act as the group determined to gather into its ranks hundreds of new young socialists. In this context, the Young Socialist, the public image of the YSA, assumes an even more important role.

However, there has been a growing gap in the last year between the openings and possibilities for the YSA and the circulation of our magazine. Since the beginning of 1966 there has been a clear and consistent downturn in the number of copies sold of each issue. The February-March 1967 issue will be the lowest in national circulation since the YS became a magazine.

There are basically three reasons for the dropping circulation of the YS:

First is simply a question of consciousness. The magazine has not been used as a regular part of contact and recruitment work as well as it was in the past. Very few locals have regular weekly sales on the campuses and seldom is the point of YS sales on the agenda of local meetings.

Secondly, the YS has tended to overlap other publications put out by the Trotskyist movement.

In addition to the YS, the Trotskyist movement also has a weekly newspaper, The Militant, which we use as a central part of our propaganda and recruiting work; a bi-monthly theoretical journal the ISR; and a weekly printed bulletin of international news and analyses, World Outlook. Many of the articles and stories printed in the YS in the last months could logically have been printed in one or the other of these publications and the role of the YS in relation to these publications has not been clearly defined.

Also antiwar publications used by us, especially the Bring The Troops Home Now Newsletter, selling at a lower price, have cut into YS sales.

Thirdly, the content of the present YS should reflect even more the character of the YSA as an active socialist youth organization fully involved in and often playing a leading role in the activities and discussions of radical youth in the U.S. today. Too many articles of a theoretical nature make the magazine "heavy" giving it a "junior ISR" flavor. The YS has not dealt directly enough with many of the day to day issues

that we argue out with our opponents and contacts in each local area.

To make our press more attractive to the radicalizing youth we are trying to recruit, and to make the YS much more the central part of our propaganda activity, the YS Editorial Board has several proposals.

The first is that we begin publishing the YS on a monthly basis (bi-monthly during the summer), starting with the May issue which will be available for April 15. This would enable us to deal with a broader range of material as well as have more up-to-date coverage of important questions and events. The magazine would probably vary between 16 and 24 pages, depending on material available and finances.

The second proposal is that we lower the price of the YS to 15 cents, the obvious advantage being greater ease in selling the magazine. This would entail a larger subsidy to the YS, but on the basis of our two fund drives and the high level of financial consciousness of YSAers, a larger subsidy is entirely feasible. The amount of the subsidy will diminish, however, as circulation increases.

The third proposal deals with the content of the YS. The Editorial Board feels it is important to now establish a different balance in the YS articles, giving greater weight than we have in the past to discussion of current issues and debates in the anti-war and radical movements and coverage of activities YSAers are involved in. Articles of a general theoretical nature would, of course, not be eliminated. It is particularly important to deal more fully with the questions that come up in the antiwar movement from our point of view as revolutionary socialists.

For example, the February-March issue is an attempt to move in this direction. It contains a reply to the "Honesty Questioned" article that appeared in the January 6 issue of New Left Notes attacking the YSA's position at the Chicago Student Conference. It also has excerpts from a debate at the Militant Labor Forum in New York between Jerry Tenney of SDS and Fred Halstead, dealing with the effectiveness of the antiwar movement, mobilizations, grass root organizing, etc. There is an interview with Pat Griffith on her trip to north Vietnam. The call for the April 8-15 Vietnam Week is reprinted along with a statement outlining the importance of this growing student united front against the war. There is a three page article on the Berkeley SWP election campaign, and an article on Hugo Blanco explaining who he is and why American students should defend him.

The difference between the February-March issue and several previous ones is quite clear. One way of underlining this difference, however, is to compare our coverage of the New York guber-

natorial campaign - 6 paragraphs in the "Notes" - with the coverage of the Berkeley campaign - 3 pages.

We will have to see the next few issues of the magazine as experimental - trying to achieve the necessary balance. In this context, comments and criticisms from YSAers and contacts around the country are very important. In order to encourage more contributions from YS readers as well as discussion on articles printed and other items of interest we plan to initiate a "letters" or discussion page (s).

We also hope to have more variety including articles on music, art, political satire, cartoons, exposes, American history, etc. This will, of course, depend on those comrades with talents in these areas contributing. We have a great deal of talent of many varieties in our organization and YSAers across the country should be thinking of contributions they can make to the magazine. We hope to build up a "bank" of such contributions.

Nationally, putting out a monthly YS will require a significant addition of time and energy by the National Office. Locally, there would be several responsibilities involved if we are to take this step forward.

1. Regular sales must become a regular part of each weeks local activities - at antiwar and radical meetings, demonstrations, on campuses, on literature tables, and wherever else an opportunity to meet radicalizing youth presents itself. Sales of the YS should not be viewed as contradictory to or separate from our antiwar work but rather an integral part of it. With less time to sell each issue, the sales will have to become much better organized and carried out more conscientiously.

2. Additional responsibilities will have to be assumed by the locals in supplying material for each issue. The local executive committees will have to make sure that comrades in each local write articles on political events in their areas such as the Madison confrontation, the Berkeley elections, important antiwar conferences, etc. Interesting and timely forums and debates on topics like student power, the draft, the Red Guards, community organizing, etc. should be taped and sent into the YS. Pictures of local activities and events - particularly photos of YSAers in action - should also be sent to the NO on a regular basis.

3. In general the post of local YS director will become a much bigger job, involving not only the responsibility for increased and regularized sales, but also organizing the sending in of articles, taking of pictures, and communicating regularly with the NO regarding the YS.

Bundle Orders and Total Distribution

	N-D '65	J-F '66	M-A '66	M-JJ '66	A-S '66	O-N '66	D-J '67
Local	200	150	150	125	100	100	100
Twin Cities	---	25	25	10	10	10	10
Antioch	400	200	200	250	300	300	175
Boston	650	490	650	450	350	400	250
New York	200	100	200	125	105	150	100
Cleveland	200	200	125	100	100	300	150
Detroit	150	150	200	100	125	110	50
San Francisco	25	20	30	50	50	25	50
Seattle	150	100	50	25	25	100	50
Ann Arbor	200	125	150	150	150	150	150
Philadelphia	350	200	200	100	150	200	150
Berkeley	300	200	350	150	400	125	125
Chicago	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Madison	---	---	---	---	---	---	10
Milwaukee	---	40	30	30	50	40	40
Washington	250	200	200	100	100	100	50
Los Angeles							
Totals	3175	2300	2660	1865	2115	2210	1560
Total Bundles*	3445	2760	2985	2055	2255	2360	1811
Total Subs (reg.)	300	372	500	475	566	675	941
Intro Subs	---	1550	1110	459	---	---	---
Foreign Distrib.	221	221	182	300	300	300	385
Total Distrib.+	5393 ¹	5203	5177	4089	3921	3635	3437

*- Includes areas not listed on this breakdown by city.

+ - Includes distributors other than locals or co-thinkers who receive bundles.

1. - Washington Convention issue.

For the February-March issue the preliminary estimate for local bundle orders is 1455 for the locals listed above. Other bundle orders come to 246. Total bundles to 1701. Regular Subs are estimated at 1000, special subs will not be shown on this issue. Foreign Distribution est. 390. Total Distribution is estimated at about 3425.

Young Socialist Average Cost and Income May-Dec. 1966

Cost Per Issue

1. Postage	\$ 155.15
2. Photos	26.13
3. Printing	801.68
4. Misc.	31.48

Total \$1014.44

Income Per Issue

1. Subs	\$ 158.82
2. Bundles	445.64
3. Misc.	12.12

Total \$ 616.58

Average Loss Per Issue

Cost	\$1014.44
Income	616.58

\$ 397.86 -Average subsidy per issue

Young Socialist Income and Expenditures May-Dec. 1966

YS Income May-Dec. 1966

1. Subs	\$ 635.30
2. Bundles	1782.58
3. Bound Volumes	32.25
4. Back Issues	7.25
5. Misc.	6.00
6. Donations	3.00

Sub Total 2466.38

7. Subsidy 3000.00

Total \$5466.38

YS Expenditures May-Dec. 1966

1. Postage	\$ 620.60
2. Supplies	2.70
3. Photos	104.50
4. Printing	3206.70
5. Delivery	21.50
6. Dist. N.Y.	25.00
7. Sub Blanks	29.65
8. Envelopes	33.55
9. Service Charge	7.06
10. Debt	6.47

Total \$4057.73

Income May-Dec. \$5466.38

Expenditures May-Dec. 4057.73

Ballance \$1408.65