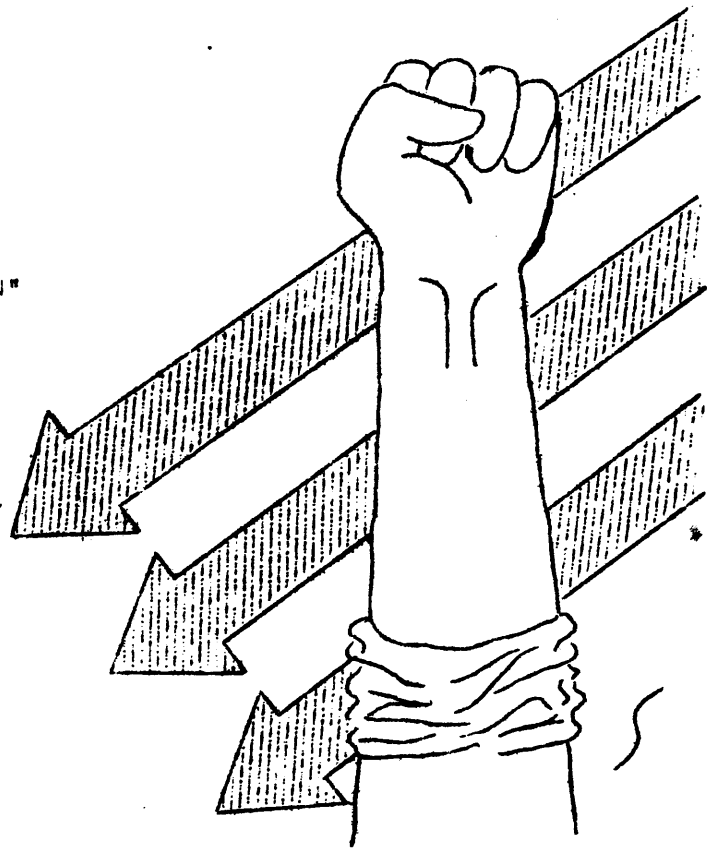


YPSL-SYL JOINT DISCUSSION BULLETIN

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Just a few notes about the last, this, and the next issue--and on the bulletin in general

Copies of the last issue are still available. If you can use extra copies, send your order now.

This issue is made up almost exclusively of discussion articles (the one exception being the REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS). This doesn't surprise us as we expected the bulletin to vary in content from issue to issue. What is surprising is the fact that all of the articles in this issue were, without exception, written in New York. Can it be that our "out-of-town" members and friends have suddenly run out of ink??? It should be kept in mind that the discussions initiated in this bulletin will carry over into the national discussion bulletin of the unified organization without (as far as we can foresee) any transitional break. We can only hope that the plentitude of viewpoints expressed by the articles in this issue will provoke the "silent ones" to put their pens to paper.

The next issue will be a special issue containing the major documents relating to the coming Unity Convention. It will, however, also carry any discussion articles that are received by the time we go to press.

As stated in the last issue, this bulletin is to constitute a forum for the expression of all points of view within the two organizations. It is therefore open to all members of either group who may care to contribute their views. It is hoped that the bulletin will furnish a vehicle for a full, free, and frank discussion between the two memberships on all questions of interest to them. It should be clear that articles signed by individuals are not official statements of the organization they may belong to unless this is clearly stated. In addition, contributions of non-members will be accepted, if of sufficiently high interest. The editors reserve the right to decide in the case of each such article. The Editorial Board, incidentally, is made up of one YPSL and one SYLer--both of whom are responsible to their respective organizations.

Articles may be submitted either through YPSL, 214 Charles Street, N.Y., N.Y., or SYL, third floor, 114 W. 14th Street, N.Y., N.Y.

One last word. It should be understood that the bulletin is not restricted to members of the SYL or YPSL. Though issued primarily for our members it is open to all friends and contacts. Individual members and local groups should make every effort to get copies into the hands of this wider audience. Send in your articles and bundle orders now!

The Editors, Jan 10th, 1954

P. S. AS USUAL, ALL LABOR EXPENDED IN THE PRODUCTION OF THIS BULLETIN WAS DONATED.

REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS

The following is a brief report of some of the more important decisions tentatively arrived at in the Joint YPSL-SYL Negotiating Committee. The committee is composed of three YPSL's designated by the YPSL National Executive Committee and three SYL'ers designated by the SYL National Coordinating Committee. It must be emphasized that the decisions reached by the committee are subject to change by either of the organizations involved, or by the unity convention itself. The purpose of this report is that of demonstrating the progress toward unity that has been made and of acquainting members and friends of both of our organizations with the situation as it now stands and of the nature of the agreement reached.

- 1. Convention: The unity convention is planned to take place in New York City on the weekend of February 12-14, 1954. The representation will be on the basis of one delegate per every five members or major fraction thereof. The next issue of this bulletin will be a convention issue and will include: A) The Convention Call B) Draft Convention Agenda C) Draft Constitution D) Draft Programmatic Statement.
- 2. Name: The proposed name for the unified organization is the Young Socialist League.
- 3. Affiliation: The YSL will be unaffiliated to any adult organization (though its members may hold dual membership in other organizations) until, at least, the second national convention, which is planned for the summer of 1955, at which time the question of affiliation with an adult organization will be open.

The YSL will immediately seek affiliation with the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) as its U.S. section. At present the YPSL is the IUSY's U.S. affiliate.

4. Basis of membership: The YSL will not officially be a Marxist organization as is neither the YPSL or the SYL. It will be a Third Camp Socialist Youth organization, open to those in basic agreement with its program. The YSL will take no "official" position on the general question of pacifism and those socialist youth (again, in basic agreement with the WSL program) who are also pacifists are cordially invited to join.

- 5. Organizational form:
 - A. National Committees: The YSL will have a national committee and a resident committee. The national committee will be called the National Executive Committee and will meet frequently, at least several times per year, and closely supervise the work of the resident committee and the national officers. The resident committee will be called the National Coordinating Committee and will function with more or less the powers of the NEC between meetings of the NEC. Members of the NCC will be chosen from among the N.O. who reside in the vicinity of the National Office. The N.O. will be located in New York City. Present plans are for the NEC to have 14 members: 6 YPSL, 6 SYL, and 2 mutually acceptable "buffer" members. The NCC is to have 7 members: 3 YPSL, 3 SYL and 1 "buffer". There will be 9 alternates to the NEC: 4 YPSL, 4 SYL, and 1 "buffer"; they will also function as alternates to the NCC. Any member of the NEC or NCC who will not be able to attend a meeting will be able to choose one of the alternates to replace him at that meeting. Permanent replacements to the NEC (and

NCC) will be made by a 2/3rds vote of the NEC. A system which will permit co-option by the NEC is being discussed.

B. National Officers: The plan is for 2 national officers: A National Chairman who is the political executive and spokesman, and a National Secretary who is the organizational executive and functionary.

In addition to these "formal" officers, there will be an Editor of the YSL section in LABOR ACTION who will be chosen from among the present members of YPSL and who will be responsible to the NCC and NEC.

6. Publications: In addition to an official discussion bulletin published by the NO and sent to all members, any group within the YSL will be free to publish its own bulletin if it so chooses.

As mentioned above, the YSL will have its own section in LABOR ACTION which will be completely under the control of the YSL. In return for this the YSL will support LA, though not necessarily endorsing or assuming responsibility for any but the material appearing in the YSL section.

7. Dues: There will be national dues of \$5.00 per year per member, which includes a subscription to the national discussion bulletin. Local groups will be empowered to collect additional dues for local use and the NO will be empowered to supplement the minimal national dues by a system of pledges and fund drives.

8. Tour: Present plans are for a major speaking and organizing tour soon after the unity convention. The tour will be made by a YPSL and an SYLer and will initiate an active organizing drive.

Once more. The above is not final or complete. It is a skeletal outline, subject to alteration. Most of the points briefly mentioned above will appear in the next issue of this bulletin. Other points not yet clearly defined or agreed upon will be outlined at that time.

Scott Arden, Acting Secretary
Joint YPSL-SYL Negotiating Committee

CORRECTION. In the last paragraph above the fourth sentence should read:

"Most of the points briefly mentioned above will be spelled out in much greater detail in the draft convention documents which will appear in the next issue of this bulletin."

--The editors

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THE TASKS BEFORE US

The policy adopted at the last meeting of the YPSL National Executive Committee indicates that we are once again on the road to unity. This being the case, it is now necessary to discuss, in some detail, the nature of the organization that we would like to emerge from the coming unity convention. I hope that this article will have the effect of initiating such a discussion. We must, before beginning, offer comrade Ilson our thanks for reminding us so vividly of the pressing need for a discussion of this sort.

On the basis of the decisions tentatively arrived at by the YPSL-SYL Joint Negotiating Committee* it is clear that the unified organization will actually be, in many respects, a new third camp socialist youth organization, different both in organizational detail and in potential from either the present YPSL or SYL. One other thing is clear. Neither the YPSL nor the SYL is being "swallowed" by the other--rather, a serious attempt is underway to combine the best features of both wherever possible, (and to think in flexible terms where this is not. As a result of the work completed we now have at least some picture of the organizational framework which we will have to work. The intention of this article is to fill in areas of this framework with specific proposals, which (though by no means complete) if adopted would, I believe, assure us of a functioning national organization, capable of growth and development. Much of the following is not new, original, or even controversial--and in terms of the purposes of the article this is an asset. An attempt has been made at division into more or less logical sections and subsections, the overlapping and repetition that still remains is largely intentional.

1. NATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND CONFERENCES

Regular national conventions, supplemented by frequent national conferences, are indispensable if we are really to function as an active organization on the national level. There is no other single activity that cements the individual member (and to a lesser extent the local groups) to the national organization as firmly as the knowledge that the organization is not "being run for him" (or worse, that it is running him) but that, instead, he as a member has a voice in deciding the more important political and organizational questions confronting the organization, in a democratic and educational fashion. In addition the convention gives him a chance to review the work of his national committees and officers, which helps to minimize the very real danger of bureaucratism. Assuming that provisions for both referendum and recall will exist --and be used as frequently as required-- these, in addition to frequent conventions and conferences will go a long way toward assuring a democratically controlled organization. Rather than present, at this time, the abundance of other arguments for holding regular conventions and conferences--or discussing the exact powers or functions of either--I prefer to make a general proposal dealing with frequency.

That is: The Young Socialist League (assuming that this will be the name of the unified organization) should hold a national convention

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* See report of the Joint Negotiating Committee on page 2.

once every calendar year. This would mean that the maximum time lapse between conventions would always be less than two years. National conferences should take place between conventions so that roughly every six months there will be either a convention or conference. As much as possible these meetings should be held in varying localities (i.e., not all in New York). Specifically regional conferences (West Coast for example) should be encouraged and should be planned in consultation with the national office.

Here is a proposed tentative schedule for the Young Socialist League's first few years of existence.

- Feb 1954: Unity Convention
- Summer 1954: National Conference--or even, conceivably, a second Convention. This latter could only really be considered seriously if:
 - (a) Our West Coast comrades are unable to attend the Unity Convention and strongly desire a summer convention.
 - (b) Serious political questions are broached at the Unity Convention (or shortly thereafter) which can not be fully acted upon at the time and require a full political discussion and a second convention to decide.
 - (c) The organizing drive following the Unity Convention is outstandingly successful and brings in a substantial number of politically aware people.
- Dec 54-Jan 55: National Conference
- Summer 55: National Convention
- Dec 55-Jan 56: National Conference
- Summer 56: National Convention

2. NATIONAL COMMITTEES

The national committee (the National Executive Committee) and the resident committee (the National Coordinating Committee) must be active functioning committees if the YSL is to be successful. Both the YPSL and the SYL have been weakened at various times by their national committees "dying" and the duties and powers of the committees being dropped into the hands of one or two single individuals with unfortunate results in terms of national functioning. There is no reason that the YSL should risk this contingency--or any of the dozen or so other dangers inherent in "non-functioning" leading committees. A super-abundance of simple safeguards can be introduced but in themselves cannot be effective unless backed by deadly serious resolution.

I would suggest the following attitude as the correct one on this question: We do not put comrades on leading committees who will not maintain a defined minimal activity (and, of course, quality of activity), and we do not hesitate to remove and replace any member of the NEC or NCC** whose activity falls below an acceptable level. An example: Any member of the NCC who persistently--or even frequently--is absent from meetings without good cause should be replaced without delay.

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** The one possible exception that we should allow for is the case of a member representing a certain defined faction or tendency which desires that he remain their rep in spite of his inactivity.

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This approach implies that every comrade in a national post will be there because he is useful--and will be removed as soon as he is not. The alternative is an eventual accumulation of "dead or dying" national "leaders" who eventually may drag the organization to the grave with them. There seems to be an unavoidable tendency for those who continue to hold their posts for no good reason to eventually tend to rationalize their inactivity and demoralization as a necessary (if unfortunate) condition of existence.

National leaders must not be selected (or kept in their posts) on the faulty basis of sentimental or bureaucratic considerations. "Good old comrade X" who was a valuable, active member of national leadership caliber 2 years ago (but who hasn't been active at all for the last 10 months--and shows no promise of a sudden regeneration of life) should more properly be put to pasture than on a national committee.

It isn't difficult to work out the respective roles of the NEC and the NCC. The details will be formulated in the Draft Constitution and confirmed (or altered) in the Constitution which the Unity Convention will adopt. The following set-up seems the most reasonable to me:

A. The NCC should meet quite often
A. The NEC, which is to be elected by the convention, will act as the governing body of the YSL between conventions--though of course its decisions can be altered by membership referendum. The NEC should meet between 2 to 4 times per year** and in addition to its other tasks, closely review the work of the NCC and the National Officers.

B. The NCC should meet quite often (more or less every week) and will function with the powers of the NEC between mtgs of the latter. Detailed minutes of all NCC meetings will be regularly sent to each member of the NEC, and any member of the NEC should be able to call for an NEC referendum--at any time--if he strongly objects to a policy adopted by the NCC. Certain questions (changes in personnel, for example) should automatically be referred to the NEC for a vote. Members of the NCC should be chosen, by the NEC, from among those NEC members residing in (or willing to move to) the vicinity of the National Office--and should be removed or replaced only with the approval of the NEC.

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** A minimal 2 times per year is assured if the YSL holds either a convention or conference every 6 months. The NEC could meet a day or two before (or after) the national gathering and make some inroads into the serious problem posed by the long distances (and heavy expenses) involved in attending an NEC mtg.

3. NATIONAL OFFICERS

The two national officers should be elected by the NEC and be directly responsible to the national committees. I propose the following allocation of tasks and responsibilities:

A. The National Chairman will be the political spokesman and executive of the YSL. He should be chairman of the NEC, and a member of the NCC. His chief duties are of a specifically political character: Speaking for the YSL, handling political correspondence, issuing political statements and resolutions. He should work closely with the NCC and the National Secretary.

B. The National Secretary will be the organizational executive and the functionary of the YSL. He should be chairman of the NCC and in charge of the National Office. He should function as a sort of "national organizer" and handle organizational correspondence and work. He should work closely with the NCC and the National Chairman.

In addition to the National Officers, one member of the NCC will be elected Editor of the YSL section of LABOR ACTION. He will be responsible to the NCC and should work closely with the National Chairman and National Secretary. **

4. LOCAL GROUPS -- AS RELATED TO THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

The organization on the local level can be broken down into three major categories:

A. Units or Circles. Five or more comrades residing in any given locality should organize themselves as a "unit" or "circle" and elect an organizer (or chairman). This officer, in addition to whatever local activity he may engage in--or howsoever his group may define his local duties--should be required (as a condition of his office) to correspond regularly and in detail with the National Office. The N.O. must be kept informed at all times as to the exact condition of the group and its activities membership, perspectives, etc. The N.O. in return must answer all letters promptly. This exchange of information is absolutely crucial--and both the present YPSL and SYL suffer severe handicaps because they lack it on a reasonable scale.

In the case of larger groups (or even in small ones) where one comrade may be excellently suited for local organizational work but for one reason or another will not be able to maintain the necessary level of communication with the N.O. another member of the group should work as his assistant and handle the correspondence. In any case each group must have one comrade responsible for maintaining constant contact with the national organization.

B. Fractions. Three or four comrades existing in the same area should constitute themselves as an "organizing committee" and attempt to recruit and build a unit or circle. On the question of correspondence with the N.O. they should proceed in the same manner as a regular unit or circle.

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** By agreement this editor will be, at least initially, a present member of YPSL.

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C. Members-at-large. In areas where only one or two comrades reside they should function as member-at-large until such a time as a group or Fraction can be formed. Until then they should be expected to be in regular contact with the NO.

5. MEMBERSHIP--CONDITIONS THEREOF

Membership should be open to all youth on the following conditions:

- A. Payment of minimal national (and local, if any) dues.
- B. Basic agreement with the program of the YSL.
- C. Willingness to operate within the framework of the decisions democratically adopted by the YSL.
- D. Involvement in, or orientation toward, youth work.

Condition "D" is the only one of the four that might not be clear in its meaning. It is specifically aimed at those older socialists that the YSL may very well attract. If the YSL is not to degenerate into a dustbin for graying homeless radicals who cannot find a place for themselves in the "adult" socialist organizations this sort of condition is essential. There are a number of older non-affiliated socialists that the YSL should definitely try to recruit--and these are those that those involved in, or orienting toward, youth work.

6. PUBLICATIONS

A. Discussion bulletins. The N.O. should issue a national discussion bulletin as often as possible--which should mean ten issues per year as a lowest estimate. The bulletin will serve as an open forum for all members and factions in which all topics of interest may be candidly discussed. In addition the bulletin will contain Newsletters, Communications, Reports, etc., from the national officers and committees. The national dues will include a subscription to the bulletin and every member will receive a copy without additional charge. Non-members should pay some nominal sum (say 10 or 15 cents, depending on the length of the issue).

In addition to the national bulletin, any group, tendency, or faction within the YSL should be free to publish its own bulletin and disseminate it both inside and outside the organization if it so chooses. (With the condition, of course, that such a bulletin clearly indicate that it is not an official organ of the YSL and does not speak for the organization or its membership as such.)

B. Special publications. The YSL nationally (and perhaps locally) will from time to time issue pamphlets, handbooks and other publications as the need demands, and labor and finances permit.

As an initial project in this area I suggest that the YSL begin work, immediately after the Unity Convention, on a YSL Handbook (similar, more or less, in form to the present YPSL Handbook) to be widely circulated and used for the purposes of education and recruitment--most specifically in
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connection with the organizing drive and tours.

C. "Other" publications. The fact that LABOR ACTION will have a weekly YSL section completely under our control (in some issues running up to as much as half the whole paper) makes it overwhelmingly clear that we must write for, sell, distribute, and give our fullest support to L.A. (The question of ANVIL requires a separate discussion which we don't have room for in this article.)

7. ACTIVITY

This question alone, to be treated adequately, requires a thorough discussion of a length that neither the publication deadline nor my present typewriter ribbon will permit at this time. Let me, for now, outline briefly a few propositions which will be expanded in a future article centered around this question.

Above all other considerations the single main purpose of all our activity (as YSL members) should be that of building the Young Socialist League. That is, to put it in three words, RECRUIT AND EDUCATE. All proposed activity must be considered in terms of these primary aims. Considerations of work in, dominating, or even influencing, other organizations is meaningless outside of the framework of a functioning, national, third camp socialist organization. Our recruitment and educational work in other organizations (to the extent that we engage in it) should be done openly as members of the YSL to the fullest extent conditions allow. This is not an argument against working in other organizations for certain ends, but, rather, against losing both ourselves and our ends.

An extensive tour will take place shortly after the Unity Convention and should mark the opening of a full scale recruitment drive, which should consume most of the energy we can muster for a period of at least several months. It will be disastrous if we permit ourselves to be distracted from the tasks at hand for the sake of a sterile plowing of fields that have already proven themselves arid.

Scott Arden, SYL

ON THE TASKS OF THE NEW SOCIALIST YOUTH ORGANIZATION

It is sometimes necessary to draw the attention of our comrades to certain basics of socialist principles and organization. The discussion around the projected unity convention of the SYL and YPSL sometimes tend to give a nightmarish impression that a reel is being slowly unwound backwards and all the hoary old arguments the movement has suffered through will have to be relived. It is at times like these that the value of organizational conservatism is most forcebly brought to mind. Many of the ideas offered are no doubt excellent--and the reason they were not previously applied (since I do not believe that our predecessors in youth activity were dull witted) is because the arguments against them are even better.

Let me simply state my first assumption: the new socialist youth organization in almost every way that is of any importance will function exactly as the present YPSL and SYL are functioning right now. To be sure combining our forces will give us more efficiency, and more scope, but the things we will be doing (better) will in essence be the same as the things we are now doing. All magic formulas about entering this or that organization (E.g. the Democratic Party) are not worth the paper they are written on for the simple reason--even if socialist principles were insufficient--that we have nothing to gain from engaging in adventures. There are no shortcuts to organizational growth, there are no untapped wells of young socialists that will be discovered with the proper formula, there is no reason to assume that we a socialist youth organization that is limited in its base can do in the union and political field what better and bigger adult organizations have been incapable of doing.

The same applies to our internal organization. Comrade Ilson to the contrary there is no better form of organization. What do we have? A national committee to set general political policies of the organization, a resident committee to function between meetings of the national committee, local organizations to recruit and educate. There is nothing excessive there, and there is nothing dispensable. We have to have a stable national leadership if the organization is to survive in this period because the conditions being what they are we tend to organize from the national center. Our local groups have no value in and of themselves today except as organs of a national organization. The reasons should be obvious. There is no "natural" tendency for socialist organizations to grow locally today, our movement has no real social base, on the campus we do not reflect the policies of an existing mass movement. On the contrary we exist in a political vacuum, where we exist so to speak through an act of will of the organization as such.

We exist today primarily as a vehicle for revolutionary socialist ideas. These ideas unlike catechisms have to continually be tried out, reformulated, added to, etc., this is done only through actual political work. We also attempt to keep a skeleton socialist youth organization alive--so that we may have something to recruit people to if and when conditions change. Again, every historical experience teaches us the need for organization, with a program, with a tradition, and with experience in the arena it operates in. Our ideas are not spread by us as individuals alone, for example when a comrade says that he would like to do some serious writing on "basic" problems instead of the unrewarding day to day work of keeping an organization alive, the first question to ask is "all right, but what will you write for? The socialist publication that we who do the dull hack work keep alive for you?" How will the views be spread? At a cocktail party, through letters to the editor of the Saturday Review? Or through our own press--which needs an organization to survive and spread.

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This gives us some obvious things to do in the youth field. One, keep ANVIL alive--not as a literary publication for the campus intellectual but as a propaganda organ for our general views. Two, our own press, modest mimeographed press perhaps but our own press where we can have national discussions, where we can thrash out arguments and educate the newer members. Three, supporting the friendly press of similar political views--LABOR ACTION for one which we should support and distribute, as well as contribute to. But these things need organization, national organization, to raise money, to push sales, to develop writers, to reach new people. And national organizations in turn need money, stability, and personnel.

Where the real advantages of a unified organization begin to come in is in the combination of our strength. For example, the new organization will probably be able to launch tours, send organizers around, and through a stable National Office maintain the new campus clubs we build. With additional finances we can grow, and by pooling the experienced members we help to build a solid organization.

One of the tendencies that becomes evident in discussion today, as a result of the tactical pre-occupation of our two organizations is that our younger comrades sometimes forget that we are not around for the purpose of entering an ever wider number of groups to control them. A preoccupation with the problem of political power even on a small scale is the result of the normal frustration that develops in a socialist organization functioning in a period where there is no mass political arena for us. But the answer surely is not therefore to jettison whatever principles we have in order to make new political arenas accessible. The S.D.A. student politicals are a good example of what I mean--on campus after campus they "control" the student government machinery. What does this mean politically? Nothing. Nothing either by the way of spreading their ideas (which had to be left behind in any case) or to build S.D.A. itself, because youth does not join for the sake of strengthening an organization but rather tends to join for certain principles and needs.

It is our misfortune as socialists, who look to the working class as the class that is capable of transforming this society democratically that we have no real working-class roots today. But there are some things that we must remember--we are working-class socialists. Our work is oriented around the concept that the role of the socialist movement is to help the working-class achieve its full political consciousness and master its own political and economic destiny--not around the problem of "our" i.e. socialist middle-class intellectuals' achieving more political power, manipulating groups etc. When in the course of the continuing decay of the American economy youth again begins to look for progressive solutions we have to be around, with our program and organization and not as a somewhat soiled hand- maiden of the lib-labs and labor bureaucracy.

Eogdan Denitch, Y.P.S.L.

REMARKS ON THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY ..

In a time in which revolutionary socialist activity is difficult and unrewarding, an introspective mood naturally tends to prevail in radical organizations. Most individuals belonging to such organizations will re-examine in their own minds hitherto accepted assumptions, ideas or policies. As a result, tendencies will arise and propose the revision of one policy or another.

There are two possible reactions to this: one is to reject any proposed change out of hand as "revisionism". This attitude seems inspired by fear of change as such, and by the conviction that it is more important to seem revolutionary than to follow a correct policy. The second attitude concedes that changed conditions impose changed policies. It considers any proposed revisions on their own merits, that is, it tries to assess their meaning and to determine to what extent they meet the demands of the new situation that called them forth. I want to discuss one of these trends towards revision in the light of the latter attitude.

The SYL is a revolutionary socialist organization. Its purpose is to educate as many people as we can reach in the ideas of revolutionary socialism. This we do in several ways: (1) by supporting and distributing our press and the press of the ISL among students; (2) by organizing talks, debates, classes; (3) by our personal example, that is by behaving as revolutionary socialists. The latter function is a crucial one. In this role we organize the resistance to the garrison state: we show people a way to resist after we have convinced them that resistance is necessary. In our function as SYLers we participate in or organize academic freedom committees, Anvil clubs, socialist clubs; we influence the policies of college magazines, student co-ops, pacifist and liberal organizations. As SYLers it is our function to provide politically untrained people with effective methods of struggle, find new opportunities to expose the reactionary pressure and to resist it in an atmosphere of fear and capitulation. All this has to be coordinated and involves a great deal of organizational work.

The trend I want to discuss here involves precisely a campaign against the idea that organizational activity is useful at the present time. This campaign is the expression of a morale problem, but it takes two forms which must be considered separately at first. One is articulate and has to be answered intellectually. It occurs in our periphery. The other form is implicit. It consists in quiet disaffection in several of our units and cannot be "answered". It can, however, be analyzed, isolated and perhaps liquidated.

The articulate campaign is based on an argument which takes the following line: the main function of a revolutionary socialist group today is to maintain theoretical clarity and to spread its ideas by means of its press. Therefore to maintain our press is our most important task by far. We are at present also engaged in organizational work. This takes up a great deal of time and energy and produces little visible results. It would therefore be more fruitful if we concentrated on intellectual activity and on maintaining the press. Consequently, we must cut down substantially our organizational work and convert the organization into a source of articles and other writings. In its extreme form and logical conclusion, this outlook is expressed in Irving Howe's succinct proposals:

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** The article (above) was written some months ago and was intended for publication in a specifically SYL discussion bulletin. We feel, however, that the problems comrade Morales discusses will be of interest and value to members of both the SYL and YPSL, and many of the questions raised in the article may well be (in one form or another) questions that will face the unified youth organization.

--the editors

(a) dissolve the organization as such. (b) devote yourself to writing books and to research. Another proposal originating from our periphery is inspired by the same outlook. It was proposed that Anvil & S.P. be transformed from an approximate quarterly to a semi-yearly, "on a much higher intellectual level", i.e. presenting only thorough, detailed, highly theoretical research material. Clearly this proposal also implies a rejection of organizational activity. Anvil on the proposed basis would be aimed at a very small elite of intellectuals, and would cease to be what it is now, namely a rallying point and an "organizer".

I feel that this orientation rests on a fallacy. It assumes that organizational and intellectual activity are in some sense in opposition, or at least that they are separable. It also assumes that in times of stress one has to be sacrificed for the other, and that it has to be the organizational work in this case. Experience shows that the contrary is true. Today, to the extent that there is creative intellectual life it centers in the places where there is organizational activity, as Comrade Haskell has shown in his report on the national tour. This is natural, since the important issues are raised first in the trade-union local, the CORE branch, the Liberal Party club, the community organization, the co-op and the housing project. These are the issues providing the stimulus necessary for sustained intellectual activity. Inasmuch as they force us to apply our broader theories to concrete situations, they involve a continuous re-thinking of our positions. Even the writing of books is ultimately dependent on our involvement in daily struggles, since the books we should write are weapons that are needed in response to a situation. In a much more direct sense effective propaganda has to rely on concrete experience for correction and supplementation.

Organizational work alone can acquaint our members with the concrete problems of society. These problems are the raw material we have to work with if we want to change the social order. To do this, we must have an intimate, first-hand knowledge of its complexities. Too much of what we know is at best second-hand, and there is too much theorizing about other people's theories. Instead we need a thorough analysis of real problems. We are not connected closely enough with American society, or at least those aspects of society that do not readily present themselves to the middle-class New York student. Organizational activity alone is the link between us and first-hand knowledge of society.

Howe and others who feel that romance has gone out of their relationship with the organization say that its intellectual life is not nearly as active and creative as it should be, that few comrades have "a sense of intellectual discovery". This may be so, but in my opinion for reasons opposite to those outlined by the Howe school of thought. Far from there being too much emphasis on organizational activity, there is too little of it, and that is what reflects on our intellectual life.

The problem of disaffection is a more serious one. It has many reasons, and one of them is an underlying belief in the futility of organizational work. ("What's the use of going through the motions?") To illustrate my case, I shall select two examples of disaffection among those that are better known. In Detroit the SYL obligingly dropped dead as soon as the Trucks Act was on the books. No other radical organization reconciled itself so quickly to capitulation. Why? It was said in justification that the comrades in the shops must not be endangered so that they would be in a position to influence future and more decisive struggles. This argument has little value from the point of view of the organization. The comrades are, by and large, known anyway. They were inactive as socialists insofar as their job was concerned. If they were saving themselves up for the decisive fights, the

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question is which are the decisive fights? They say "When the chips are down, we'll be there." The trouble is that the chips are always down, especially now when socialism is a pedestrian, painstaking, unrewarding business without the benefits of romantic apocalypse. So we "preserve the cadres". And what have we gained? In the meantime, one concession is made after another, one position is surrendered after another, people cease to think in terms of action and the organization becomes ingrown, ineffective and demoralized.

Another example. As a propaganda organization our main function would seem to be to communicate with people who are not SYLers, to attract the attention of these people to ourselves, to be readily accessible. But in Chicago it is impossible to communicate with the organization if one has not previously been in touch with the national office. The same situation exists in another large city. In both places there are -- or were -- headquarters, but there was no way of finding out about them. This in a situation where it is possible to find the Stalinists by looking them up in the phone book under Communist Party, USA. In Chicago it was proposed to install a telephone in the headquarters. This was turned down for lack of funds. Actually money could have been made readily available. It was also proposed to paint the name of the organization on the windows of the headquarters. This was turned down because someone might have smashed the windows in. Eventually the headquarters was dropped because the ISL felt that it wasn't worthwhile maintaining and the SYL felt that it couldn't maintain it by itself. Thus it is now impossible to find the vanguard of international socialism in two of the largest cities in America. These are not minor points. They are symptomatic, they could be multiplied and they could set the tone. On the other hand I know personally people who were recruited to the SWP because it was the only organization listed in the phone book when they were looking for one to find out about socialism.

Perhaps the window of our headquarters in Chicago would have been smashed in if the name of the organization had appeared on it. But these are the risks and obligations every socialist organization has to face at some time or another as a consequence of its activity. There is no question that the more we stick our necks out, the more we risk having them chopped off. But hasn't this always been the case, in all countries? Haven't socialists always accepted this as a part of their lives? Have not socialist organizations always been combat organizations, whatever level the combat may be carried on?

But theories on organization rarely cause disaffection, they only serve sometimes as fig-leaves. Actually people feel that, far from being "dead men on furlough" they have too much to lose; jobs, homes, cars, friends, a way of life. And because they must rationalize, they go out by the back-door, saying; "Pardon me while I preserve the cadres", or "Pardon me while I proceed to a fundamental revision of Marxism."

What they are rejecting, is the personal responsibility for being a socialist. Those of us who feel that socialism is "the content of their moral lives", feel that the socialist struggle is directly relevant to them personally. It affects every aspect of their activities, their ideas, their emotions, even their perceptions. They live in this society, but they are not of it. As a result they are free to act. It is these people that actually carry the organization, the only ones that are really essential to it. Why? Because the personal involvement of our members is the face of the organization to the world, more than our press, more than our meetings. Our personal involvement, our personal sacrifices is what people judge us by. To the extent that they take us seriously, to the extent that they respect us, it is based on their experiences with those comrades who have not hesitated to

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expose themselves to persecution, social ostracism and ridicule. This is the only decisive claim we have to the leadership of future struggles. To be a socialist means little as long as it does not imply this assumption of personal responsibility in the socialist struggle.

For most of us organizational work is the only way in which we can express personal involvement. When we are rejecting organizational work as useless, we are rejecting the responsibility for being a socialist. This is what our liquidationists are really doing, and here is where Howe and his theories join those who have left by the back door. The latter are applying the theories of the former, and the former would not put forward theories on the futility of organization activity if they themselves did not feel incapable of undertaking it.

What must we do? I have no concrete proposals. As President Eisenhower said, bless him, there are no easy solutions. Nevertheless, the problem is a crucial one, and the fact that I have no decisive solutions to offer does not make it any less crucial. However, in the absence of solutions, we can draw certain conclusions. There are certain things we can't do, and there are others we can do. We can't restore hope, courage or enthusiasm to those of us who have lost these things along with a sense of personal stake in the socialist struggle. But we can, by recognizing and analyzing their particular form of demoralization, keep ourselves from accepting ideas that are inspired by it. That much at least seems clear to me: every move away from involvements in organization work and towards exclusive concern with the preservation of theoretical purity will contribute to our further isolation, ineffectiveness and sterility. On the other hand, we will find it easier to maintain ourselves as a movement -- as distinct from a sect -- by encouraging our members to involve themselves more in concrete situations of the type described earlier. Of itself, mechanical execution of organizational activity will not guarantee a healthy organization any more than the mechanical execution of religious exercises guarantees faith. On the other hand, organizational work requires and develops the personal qualities that are conducive to a high morale as they are conducive to wider knowledge and are likely to impose greater respect. In this manner the scope of the organization will encompass a wider field, and our members will become directly acquainted with the operations of a social order we have to change. We shall then be better equipped to think, and in a better position to fight.

Gus Morales, SYL

EFFECTIVE SOCIALIST ACTIVITY

We put basic Socialist ideas in colloquial form, educating ourselves and others. This is correct because we must have the proper foundation before new ideas can flourish.

We yell out, and try to demonstrate, that the world is in the midst of a power struggle--not in a fight of "Good" against "Evil". Because of this, and the "Third Camp" conclusions we draw, we are drawing close to the Pacifist movement.

And we find ourselves drawing closer to the real day-to-day political struggle, as we throw away our backlog of arid Socialist Party separatism.

Finally, we find that we can influence labor and liberal groups to stand firm for progressive reform and traditional American civil-libertarianism. (In New York, we can do this by influencing the Liberal Party, which has a tendency to independent action.)

Therefore, we can boast that we have a cohesive political program to present. It answers deep-felt needs, is simple to present; it can rally young people to us. It also has the virtue that mature pacifists, Christians, and liberals are happy to work with us on such a basis.

It also has shortcomings. To begin with, they do not constitute a Socialist program or a Socialist alternative, despite being derived by us from our Socialist beliefs. Precisely because they could readily be the programmatic base for the Liberals or Pacifists, etc., they can be seen as political holding actions: valid because they help us join in, or initiate, activities with these groups. And yet not sufficiently valid, by themselves, to constitute distinct Socialist alternatives which might pull other groups into thinking more clearly, and acting more radically.

Holding actions have a time span, beyond which they must take second place. The end of the Korean War and the fact of the possibility of mutual destruction, signal the end of the "post-war" period. I do not think that our present program is now sufficient to cope with the problems that will soon be uppermost.

"Third Camp" activity need no longer be debated among Socialists, for it is a going concern, and needs only the dissemination by way of Anvil, by way of cooperation with Pacifist groups, and by way of a simple "final" pamphlet gathering together the various leaflets and resolutions of the last few years.

What type of internal discussion and external action should, then, come to the fore? There are, for instance, some well cherished notions which we have considered to link us with the best Socialist thinking of the past. They have remained in the same form for a long time, dormant, because of our concentration on Third Camp thought

Is it still correct, for instance, to support a Labor Party as the form of independent labor activity? Previously, it had been considered correct to cooperate with PAC and LLPE with special emphasis on the running of a candidate without major party endorsement. Is there no evidence to show that, whatever the probability of success, the best energies in PAC and LLPE are gambling upon the looseness of party control to be able to put militants into Congress? There is such evidence, and evidence of the ability of labor's political arms to become dominant precinct--organizationalwise. Is it not our role now to stay "within the rule-book", and put our energies into making sure that the candidates nominated are ready to submit a militant program, whatever their party label?

Secondly, writing as a pacifist, is it not time to overhaul our thinking about our opposition to Western military buildup? I hasten to add that I am not thinking
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along lines that would make us "compatible" with the Social Democratic Federation. Rather, that Western military build-up is a fact that now emerges out of the post-war period, and the further direction of that build-up, not its existence, is now the dominant political issue. Previously, we have taken the political stand that any military build-up is an actuality oriented against the peoples of the West. It is now, perhaps, our task to take sides on types of military build-up: that which is most readily used against our own population as against types most readily used as an international defense. Here, perhaps, the national argument is already one jump ahead of us, with liberals lined up behind the Oppenheimer-radar-network defense idea, and Operation Cander; while the alternative position appears as support for NATO and bases in Spain.

Somewhat linked to the idea of continental defense is the question of population dispersion and decentralization. The old ideas of Regional Planning, Town-and-City Planning, etc. tend to emerge as plausible military alternatives to destruction in the demands of those who urge population dispersal. Thus these questions become immediate political ones, instead of romantic or aesthetic dreams with a few utilitarian rationalizations thrown in. Actually, planning of this sort is a crucial peacetime social need, and in one form or another was bound to emerge as a political issue in the next few years. Yet, we have not explored the literature or developed our ideas about planning. We are nowhere near able to develop the subject as a political issue; as a concrete radical alternative solution to the problems faced by our cities and states.

The best energies of radicals in the Far West are now involved in the Public Power fight; a fight which has similarities with the problem of decentralization and planning discussed above. The radicals in the Tennessee Valley, joined by many surprised business interests, are already engaged in defending a regional gain: the TVA. They can educate us; we should try to contact such groups for alliances to our mutual benefit.

Finally, I submit that a careful analysis of the fiscal problems plaguing New York City will show that the subway issue; the City vs. State issue; and the Housing issue cannot be understood until one grasps the fact that the usual liberal answer, in terms of increased property taxation, is no longer a practically adequate one. And this should be the heart of our message to the Liberal Party, when and if we are able to suggest the practical social and political alternative. In essence, we must confound the liberal with the slogan of reform--which irresistible slogan must inevitably transform some liberals in a conscious radical direction. In other words, it is tactically incorrect to approach these issue with overtly Socialist slogans until and unless the reaction to our program convinces the "New Deal" type electorate that realistic reform is imminently in conflict with present forms of property ownership.

But to do this we must have proposed and publicised such a realistic reform program. I suggest we get down to work and do this.



APPENDIX THE HOUSING PROBLEM: A REMINDER

It is only in the last twenty years that a Socialist analysis of the Housing problem could suggest a reform program within the present structure of social relationships. Up until the concepts of regional planning could be compared to a real proto-type--that of TVA--we could only indorse slum clearance projects, and point out their inadequacy.

And we are lucky that there are new concepts ready to be molded into reform political programs, because the historic liberal approach to slum clearance is rapidly becoming inadequate. Slums are beginning to encroach far into all major cities.

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What are the consequences of Slums: Slum Clearance projects, when slum clearance is taken to mean the building of subsidized apartments?

The farm ownership system operates to wipe out some farmers at the same time that technological advances make less farmers necessary. They emigrate as unskilled workers to live in city slums. (A slum can be defined as an area where the per room rental is as high as middle class housing, and the per family rental is lower. Viz: The Jones family is middle class. They pay \$100 for 4 rooms per month. The Smith, White, Brown and Green families each pay \$25 per month, for one room each, in a 4 room apartment. The latter four families are slum-dwellers.) Now, liberals and Socialists agree on Slum Clearance, i.e. subsidized apartments of four rooms each for these families, at the \$25 per month that they can pay. OR DO WE??? How many Socialists recognize that Socialists vote for Slum Clearance (as stated) only because that is the only thing they can get liberals to do; and that the time is rapidly approaching when that particular solution will not longer be even faintly adequate or defensible?

For these are the consequences of such a program today:

1. The continuing problem is not abated (i.e. emigration to the slums, and therefore steady pressure toward larger slums.) If more subsidized housing were built than emigration occurred, subsidized housing might be a relatively good solution. Does this happen?

2. Slum clearance programs are not continual. The subsidy involved must come out of city taxes, especially property taxes, and even if there were no tax limits, there is a limit to how far one city can tax above others without consequences (analogous to the run-away shops over labor and other costs in the garment industry.) Small businessmen, on the other hand, cannot move (retail shops, etc.) and will only vote "liberal" until their own tax burden makes them reverse themselves on such issues as slum clearance. So, in order to be continual, slum clearance programs must rely on the vote of the bulk of the workers. Does this happen?

3. The emigrant, unskilled worker (currently the Puerto Rican) undermines the labor market, and is therefore resented by the other workers. And a solution to the emigrant's housing problem which leaves their position as wage-underminers intact is not likely to be the obvious political answer to the other workers.

4. It goes without saying that slum property is immensely valuable, and its owners have an interest in its continuation and expansion. But even if this were not so, there is a natural "negative thermostat" to subsidized housing. Emigrants come to a particular city because the advance tidings have been encouraging. The more Slum Clearance, the better the tidings and more emigrants. The businessman fights the subsidy for that emigration on tax grounds: the worker on wage grounds.

Naturally, there have been counter-arguments that have appealed either to one group or another, and made slum-clearance possible. The difficulty is that this type of slum clearance becomes less and less of a reasonable solution. It becomes more and more "reasonable" to allow New York and other big cities to become slums. Easy transportation allows many to step from under the tax burden and take to suburbs: a form of decentralization that tends to supplant a high wage population with a low wage population, in a progressive demoralization of all city services, and the remaining citizens.

In essence, the early solution, slum clearance by way of housing subsidy, is played out, as an answer to the problem. To return to the problem of a reform program that can replace the present one. I have pointed out that such a program is possible, in my opinion. It involves:

1. Emigration from the cities of "low" as well as "high" wage groups.
2. It involves a wage subsidy. (This, by the way, is the essence of trade-unionism when it is utilized as an alternate solution of social problems, along the lines Samuel Gompers thought of when he said: "A skilled worker is just another name (more)

for an organized worker.")

3. It involves subsidy for new business outside of the city.

4. The above to be self-amortizing (that is, the subsidy has to be in the form that it can be re-paid over a period of years.)

In short, it involves a regional (in this case a State political program) development project which must give incentive to quickly converting "low" wage earners into "high" wage earners by developing a higher rate of business activity outside the city. (In more technical terms, labor power characterized by the term "congealed" is more likely to command a higher order of goods and services. Business, under state subsidy, can be required to act as if the labor power was congealed, thereby hastening the process by which it normally becomes congealed.)

end.

by Bert Herman, YPSL

A CALL FOR A THIRD CAMP ORGANIC UNITY

I believe in a 'plan of action which many people have characterized as perhaps desirable, but "impossible".

I look forward to an alliance of all third camp pacifist and socialist organizations into one organically unified body.

In order for the third camp to grow from its present minute size, it is necessary to achieve this unity. One tiger bite is worse than twenty mosquito bites; even if the mosquitos bite simultaenously. Those people who agree in regard to the necessity of a third camp, but who are of different political and/or moral orientations, CAN AND MUST join together.

Of course no principled person would give up his ideas, just for mere strength. This organization should not attempt to curtail the principles of its members just for power. But more important than the organization's attitude toward the principles of its members, is the individual's attitude toward his own, and towards other peoples' ideas. The true broad minded person not only will TOLERATE other ideas, but will seriously consider their merits.

In this organization there should be both socialist and pacifist study circles. All members should have the right to attend and recruit to either one, or both. Any group should have the right to organize a caucus or put out a magazine or paper. This organization, if possible, should be the only Third Camp organization in the United States. Membership in dual Third Camp organizations can only create dis-unity, strife and splits.

An organization of this type would be a noble experiment in both the socialist and pacifist worlds. If its members can face reality in a spirit of maturity and broad mindedness, and with a minimum of blind sectarianism, it will work.

I feel that the time for bickering is over, and that the time for action has arrived.

An organization as described above, both democratic and "solid" may alter our present political scene.

By - J. M. (Jimmy) Herman

Member Y.P.S.L.

Nor should we absent ourselves even from the Republican Party (!). The Democratic Party enjoys the overwhelming support of the working class, the Republican of the farmers (who at present far exceed the workers in political sophistication) and many white collar, petty-bourgeois, and professional elements. All of these elements must contribute greatly if the revolution is to permanently succeed. They must be reached. And, while they can be reached in a number of different ways, it is surely folly to overlook the political organizations to which they have entrusted so important a part of their future.

The argument will, of course, be advanced firstly that we have not the resources to plunge recklessly into political adventures, and secondly that even if we did, we could surely gain greater advantage by the deployment of all our forces in parties and groups smaller perhaps, but more tolerant of heterodoxy. Advancers of this argument, however, overlook an important point. Built into the new perspective is an effective gauge which will tell us where we can be of greatest service; in fact it will prevent us from acting where we can not be of service. When we participate in any organization, including of course any political organization, we participate as a left opposition. We make no concessions in our beliefs. We present our ideas openly. When we are allowed to stay, we stay. When we are compelled to leave, we leave. And it is no more than logical that we devote our attentions to organizations in the order of their size, strength, and closeness to our point of view.

It will, undoubtedly, be further urged that even if this "gauge" works its results in the concrete applications heretofore suggested can easily be predicted: we will almost certainly be immediately expelled from the Democratic party and we will not even be allowed to enter the Republican party. Therefore why waste our time in proving an inevitable catastrophe? Urgers of this argument, however, appear to overlook several points of great importance. They do not consider that in those groups which will not allow us entry we will still have performed a service. Our mere application for admittance will have aroused those who might never have heard of us otherwise. It - and our being denied admittance - will set some of them thinking. And thinking can be dangerous to the status quo. Urgers of this argument overlook our proposed method of operation. We do not descend uninvited upon the national conventions of these organizations (although this may be our only recourse in extremities) waving placards and passing out throwaways. We are too subtle for that. Rather, we attempt to participate in their day-to-day activities at the local level, that is, at the club level, from which our power, having extended itself, will penetrate upwards to those significant levels which otherwise would be closed to us. Our chances of being allowed to do this, while by no means bright, are better than the argument against them would suggest. In the first place a number of local Democratic clubs are heavily influenced or controlled by union, A.D.A., and/or generally liberal elements. They consider themselves the legitimate heirs of the American radical tradition, and their party potentially a party of farmer-labor unity. We may well be able to exist in such an environment. In the second place a number of Republican clubs (particularly in the Midwest) are influenced or controlled by farmers whose knowledge of political economy, whether formal or instinctive, has been already commented upon and/or professional, petty-bourgeois, and white collar elements many of whom are genuinely alarmed by McCarthyism and the trend toward statism and industrial monopolization in America, who present their genuine opposition to American militarism by opposing U.M.W., whose "isolationism" is a sincere if unsophisticated opposition to American imperialism. They are the heirs of the American radical tradition. We may well flourish in such a surroundings-- if we are flexible.

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And then there are the youth. The movement of conscious revolutionaries has with a few exceptions historically been oriented almost exclusively to two strata of the population: the industrial proletariat and the intellectuals, generally in that order. And even the propaganda it directed specifically to intellectuals has been no more than appeals to them to identify themselves with and/or lead the workers. This sort of thing has been successful among those of the intelligentsia who are foolish enough to think it more romantic to be exploited industrially than to be shamed intellectually. But it has not worked with many others of the intelligentsia. And it has definitely failed to attract any but the people it was specifically designed to attract. The farmers, petty-bourgeoisie, etc., all of whom would profit greatly from a revolution, have in the majority of cases stayed emphatically away from us - even fought against us. It becomes increasingly evident that they are as necessary for our success as we are for theirs. We have seldom met their challenge; the revolution has not succeeded.

Yet theirs is a challenge that can be met. The Anarchists and left Socialists of Spain, for example, worked with all of them, making their appeal to each on the basis of his own interests. And in the Catalonian revolution of 1936 their work was rewarded; the barbers were loyal members of the C.N.T.; the peasants formed collectives farms as soon as they seized land. And until it was betrayed the Spanish revolution proceeded more rapidly and smoothly than perhaps any other genuinely popular revolution in spite of difficulties as great as any other has had to face.

The lesson is plain: to succeed in our important work among such diverse elements we must not bind ourselves dogmatically to one technique, but must work with each in terms each can understand and appreciate.

While we can work in the labor-liberal Democratic clubs in our traditional role of - Luxembourgeois take note - vanguard of the proletariat, in the Republican party and in many Democratic clubs that alone will not (of course) suffice. It is our job there to show such things as the link between the industrial monopolist character of the Eisenhower administration and falling farm prices, the inherent illogic of production restrictions and the destruction of crops and the reasons why such practices can be abolished in a rational society, the connection between the war economy, the garrison state and U.M.W., the danger of the witchhunts to the professionals, the threat to small business which the monopolization inherent in capitalism presents, and, above all, the solidarity among all these groups and between them collectively and the workers and intellectuals which they must recognize to survive now and to creatively transform society later. Other techniques should be proposed and discussed.

It is, of course, in everybody's best interests that the same individual should not work in both major parties.

The general principles discussed in this article can be applied generally; the two organizations were chosen for specific illustration. No organization not part of the war machine should be considered inherently useless to us. We are the seeds of revolution, and where we are planted, we grow.

Robert Ilson, YPSL