

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 23, 1971

No. 22

NEC Present: Steve, Dave, Laura, Andy, Cindy, Frank

NEC Excused: Norman, Mirta

NC Present: Byron, Geoff, Terry Ha., John

NC Alt. Present: Delpfine, B.R., Caroline

Guests: Malik, Bob, Louise, Nancy, Leslie, Linda J., Tim, Mark

Convened: 10:15 a.m.

Chairperson: Cindy

- Agenda:
1. Campaign Tour Report
 2. National Office Report
 3. Adolphi and Simpson Appeal Report
 4. International Report
 5. National Financial Report

1. Campaign Tour Report - Linda J.

Informational report on fall campaign speaking tour.

Discussion: John, Cindy, Dave, Caroline, Frank, Dave, Geoff, Steve, Geoff, Frank, John, Cindy, Dave, Cindy, Steve, Linda, Cindy, Frank, Linda, Geoff, Linda, Dave, Linda, Steve, Linda, Cindy, Linda

2. National Office Report - Tim

a. Membership

Motion: To accept the following applications for membership at-large:

1. John D. in Stockton, Calif.
2. Steven A. in Tempe, Az.
3. Gary P. in Athens, O.
4. Paula L. in Athens, O.
5. Allen B. in Columbus, O.
6. Daryl D. in Columbus, O.
7. Lysle G. in Columbus, O.
8. Jeff H. in Columbus, O.

Motion Carried

Motion: To constitute a local of the YSA in Columbus, O.

Motion Carried

3. Adolfi and Simpson Appeal Report - Andy

Motion: To uphold and commend the action of the Boston local in expelling Ken Simpson.

Motion Carried

Motion: To uphold and commend the action of the Cambridge local in expelling Nancy Adolfi.

Motion Carried

Motion: To adopt the "NEC Statement on the Expulsions of Ken Simpson and Nancy Adolfi." (Statement enclosed)

Discussion: Frank, Geoff, Byron, Andy, Frank, Dave, Byron, Andy, Steve, Andy, Geoff, Andy, Caroline, Frank, Andy

Motion Carried

4. International Report - Dave

Informational report on trip to Europe.

Discussion: Geoff, Laura, Frank, Laura

5. National Financial Report -- Terry Ha.

Motion: To approve the report.

Discussion: Caroline, Terry, Byron, Terry

Motion Carried

Adjourned: 2:12 p.m.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT

ON THE EXPULSIONS OF KEN SIMPSON AND NANCY ADOLFI

(adopted November 23, 1971)

I. LOYALTY IS A CONDITION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE YSA

The Young Socialist Alliance is a revolutionary socialist youth organization, dedicated to the building of a revolutionary movement capable of leading the working class and its allies in abolishing capitalism and establishing socialism. To effectively carry out this purpose, the YSA must be a democratic-centralist combat organization, with the fullest democracy in decision-making and with unity in action. The ability of the YSA to function as a democratic-centralist combat organization depends upon the unconditional loyalty of each and every member.

Membership in the YSA is a free decision on the part of each person who wants to join, and is based on willingness to carry out the democratically arrived at decisions of the organization. Our Constitution states that "Membership shall be open to anyone under the age of twenty-nine who accepts the program and agrees to follow the policies of the YSA and engage actively in its work."

Loyalty to the YSA means that our members accept the program of the YSA, that they agree to carry out the decisions of the YSA as decided by democratic vote, and that they believe the fight for socialism can best be carried out by building the YSA.

Full, democratic discussion at the appropriate time is a necessary feature of building the YSA and preserving and developing its revolutionary program. Democratic decision-making lays the basis for unity in action, through the principle of majority rule. Loyal members of the YSA may have disagreements with various aspects of the program, strategy, tactics, or policies of the YSA as adopted by majority vote. Since their purpose is to build the YSA and convince it to carry out the correct program and policies, loyal members who wish to raise disagreements are obliged to: 1) carry out the program and policies that have been democratically decided by the majority of the YSA; and 2) raise their disagreements during the pre-convention discussion, or other appropriate time as decided by the YSA, and attempt to win over the majority to their viewpoint.

Loyalty and discipline do not mean never having disagreements or never challenging the democratically elected leadership. They do not mean that members holding minority viewpoints must give up their ideas or recant. Loyalty and discipline mean accepting the right of the majority of the YSA, as democratically decided by the vote at a national convention, to have its program and policies put into practice by the entire organization.

It is not correct, however, that one can have any political ideas whatsoever and still be a member of the YSA, so long as one refrains

from publicly breaking discipline. There are limits, because we understand that a person can have disagreements with the YSA so basic, so fundamental, that she or he would find it impossible to loyally build the YSA. One cannot be a member of the YSA and **advocate support** for imperialist war. One cannot be a member of the YSA and support racism. One cannot be a member of the YSA and advocate the destruction of the YSA.

II. THE CASES OF NANCY ADOLFI AND KEN SIMPSON

On October 3, 1971, the Boston and Cambridge locals of the YSA participated in a full mobilization for a regional antiwar conference. Nancy Adolfi registered for the conference as a member of the Workers League; Ken Simpson registered as a member of the YSA. Although they had been assigned to attend the women's workshop and the student workshop, respectively, they both attended the labor workshop. The Spartacist League conducted a major intervention in that workshop, counterposing to the substantive proposal that the YSA was supporting, a proposal for altering the single-issue, mass action character of the antiwar movement along the lines of the Spartacist League's sectarian program. At this meeting, a leaflet in the name of the "Communist Tendency" was publicly distributed, attacking the political position of the YSA on the antiwar movement along the same general sectarian lines as the Spartacist League. Adolfi and Simpson, along with other members of the Communist Tendency who were not members of the YSA, voted for the Spartacist League proposal and against the proposal we were supporting. Subsequently, they both voted again with the Spartacist League and other opponent groups and against our fraction on an important procedural question.

The ultraleft, sectarian tendencies today constituted as the Spartacist League and the Workers League were inside the YSA in the early 1960s. Their political ideas were rejected by the majority of the YSA at two conventions, after thorough discussions of their political positions. Over several years they carried out numerous violations of YSA discipline and thoroughly demonstrated their disloyalty and intention to destroy the YSA. Some individual members of these tendencies were expelled on the basis of these acts, and the 1965 convention of the YSA passed a motion that "Membership in, support to, or collaboration with the Spartacist group or the American Committee for the Fourth International forerunner of the Workers League is incompatible with membership in the YSA." Both groups have maintained their position of hostility and opposition to the YSA since then, and continue to insist that the YSA is an obstacle that should be destroyed.

On the basis of her votes at the conference, charges of indiscipline and disloyalty were filed against Adolfi by Don Gurewitz, organizer of the Cambridge local, of which she was a member. The Cambridge local voted to constitute the executive committee as the trial body. At the trial, Adolfi refused to answer any questions asked her by the trial body or cooperate with it in any way. The trial body then decided to add to the charges against her the charge of indiscipline and disloyalty for refusing to comply with the trial body, and further decided to recommend to the local that she be found guilty of all charges and expelled from the YSA.

At its October 17 meeting, the Cambridge local voted overwhelmingly to uphold these recommendations, finding Adolphi guilty of all charges and expelling her from the YSA.

On the basis of his votes at the conference, charges of indiscipline and disloyalty were filed against Simpson by Steve Schmuger, organizer of the Boston local, of which Simpson was a member. The Boston local voted to constitute the executive committee as the trial body. Simpson cooperated fully with the trial procedure. The trial body decided to add to the charges: 1) an additional charge of indiscipline and disloyalty for having distributed a leaflet in the name of the Communist Tendency, which attacked the policies of the YSA, at an October 13 labor antiwar rally; and 2) an additional charge of disloyalty based on his statement to the trial body that he would not submit to YSA discipline and would not actively build and recruit to the YSA on the basis of its present program. The trial body further decided to recommend to the local that Simpson be found guilty of all charges and expelled from the YSA.

At its October 17 meeting, the Boston local voted overwhelmingly to uphold these recommendations, finding Simpson guilty of all charges and expelling him from the YSA.

Adolphi and Simpson have appealed to the National Executive Committee to reverse their expulsions. In the letter setting forth their appeal, they say very little about the charges brought against them or about their trials. They do repeat the distortions and falsifications of the political positions of the YSA given by the Workers League and Spartacist League. They falsely charge the YSA with having Stalinist organizational methods, if not Stalinist politics. They falsely declare that the YSA is not an independent youth organization, but is in fact "controlled" by the Socialist Workers Party. And they demagogically present an outright lie about the expulsion of Eileen Maloney from the Boston YSA. But nowhere do they dispute the accuracy of the charges against them.

They state: "The charges brought against Nancy Adolphi and Ken Simpson bear no more relationship to the real reasons for their trial and the subsequent expulsions than the man in the moon." They assert that they were "summarily booted out of the YSA on trumped up charges of 'indiscipline' and 'disloyalty'". Their trials were a sham, modeled on the bureaucratic [sic] methods of handling political dissent, borrowed from the master himself--Stalin."

They conclude that: "The charges against Nancy Adolphi and Ken Simpson are only a cover for the SWP's need to eliminate all left oppositional groupings. We have demonstrated the falseness of the charges preferred against these two Boston comrades and therefore demand that the expulsion proceedings that took place in Boston on October 17, 1971 be overturned." In fact, not only have they not demonstrated the falseness of the charges, they have not even attempted to do so.

The essence of their appeal is the assertion that they are politically correct and the YSA is politically incorrect, with the implication that therefore they are not subject to YSA discipline and

they are perfectly justified in doing whatever they please--from voting against the YSA at an antiwar conference to refusing to cooperate with a legitimately-constituted trial body of the YSA to handing out leaflets at public rallies attacking the line of the YSA.

The question of loyalty is key. Is there any reason to believe that if Adolphi and Simpson were allowed to remain in the YSA they would cease committing indisciplined acts and participate in building the YSA? An examination of their statements indicates not.

Arguing in his own defense before the Boston local, Simpson explained that he considers the YSA to be "reformist," "a right-centrist organization," in an advanced stage of "organizational decay" and "political decay." [All quotes are transcribed from a tape recording of Simpson's presentations.] In his opinion, "the YSA is not really a democratic centralist organization." He says that "the role the YSA is going to play" is "the same function the Communist Party played in the '30s." In fact, according to Simpson, the "historic mission" of the YSA is "its betrayal of the American working class."

In an incredibly brazen statement of contempt for the YSA and its members, Simpson announced:

"I'm proclaiming my loyalty to the Communist Tendency, simple. Whether I should just simply resign, or whether I should do entry work and keep quiet, lie, sneak around, wait for our next convention, is a tactical--wait for the next YSA convention--is a tactical question. Where can the Communist Tendency make the most organizational gains? Can I make the most organizational gains in my shop operating as a member of the Communist Tendency? Can I make the most organizational gains in the YSA? Or does the Communist Tendency already have comrades in the YSA that are already going to carry out the tasks which I outlined? Who knows, comrades?"

The appeal by Adolphi and Simpson follows the same lines, asserting that ~~the~~ YSA "is incapable of pursuing a revolutionary Marxist policy." They say the YSA consists of "blind pragmatists... who pass themselves off as revolutionary leaders." They say the program of the YSA is "a reactionary chimera."

III. THE CASE OF EILEEN MALONEY

Adolphi and Simpson's appeal states that: "One member of the YSA (Eilene ~~sic~~ Maloney) in Boston has been summarily expelled for being personal friends with the opposition!" This is a lie, and should not be left uncorrected.

At the October 3 antiwar conference, Eileen Maloney attended the labor workshop and refused to vote in favor of the proposal supported by the YSA or against the proposal of our opponents. On the basis of this action, a charge of indiscipline was filed against Maloney by Steve Schmuger. The Boston local, of which Maloney was a member, voted to constitute the executive committee as the

trial body. At the trial, Maloney refused to answer questions asked her by the trial body or cooperate with it in any way. The trial body then decided to add to the charge against her an additional charge of indiscipline and disloyalty for refusing to comply with the trial body, and further decided to recommend to the local that she be found guilty of all charges and expelled from the YSA.

At its October 17 meeting, the Boston local voted overwhelmingly to uphold these recommendations, finding Maloney guilty of all charges and expelling her from the YSA.

IV. THE YSA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

Adolfi and Simpson charge that the real reason for their expulsions was not their indiscipline and disloyalty to the YSA. The real reason, they say, was "that they struggled for Trotskyist politics as members of the Communist Tendency in the SWP, a struggle for which they, and other members of the Communist Tendency were forthwith expelled from the SWP." They charge that their trials were "a sham" because "Both comrades had charges preferred against them by party members and the majority of their trial body [sic] were also members of the Party--people who had previously voted for their expulsion from the SWP!"

Adolfi and Simpson do not believe that the YSA is what it says it is: an independent youth organization. Throughout their appeal they refer to "SWP/YSA," as if to imply that the two are the same thing or interchangeable. They say the leaders of the YSA are "lackeys." They flatly state that "The 'independent' character of the YSA is shown to be a myth."

This section of Adolfi and Simpson's appeal is a false and demagogic attack on the YSA, intended to sow suspicion among YSAers who are not members of the SWP and to avoid the real issue of the charges of Adolfi's and Simpson's indiscipline and disloyalty to the YSA.

In fact, the YSA is and has been since it was founded a completely independent organization. We decide our own political positions at our own conventions; we elect our own leadership; we pay our own way. At the July, 1971, YSA National Committee plenum it was reported that about 27 percent of the members of the YSA were also SWP members, and the percentage has probably decreased since then.

But saying that the YSA is organizationally independent from the SWP is only part of the story.

The Where We Stand declaration adopted by the founding convention of the YSA in April, 1960, stated that:

"The revolutionary socialist youth are well aware that by themselves youth cannot lead the working class to power. That is the historic task of a working class revolutionary party....The YSA recognizes that only the SWP of all existing political parties is

capable of providing the working class with political leadership on class struggle principles. As a result of its three year development the supporters of the Young Socialist have come into basic political solidarity, on the principles of revolutionary socialism, with the SWP."

The YSA is not simply organizationally independent of the SWP-- a basic part of the political program of the Young Socialist Alliance is the necessity for a democratic-centralist revolutionary vanguard party, and the recognition of the Socialist Workers Party as the only revolutionary party in the United States. One of the basic political tasks of the YSA--by our own decision and as part of our own program as a Trotskyist youth organization--is to support and build the SWP.

Our attitude toward the revolutionary vanguard party is not one of suspicion and distrust, but rather one of looking to the party for political leadership. The basic political solidarity and collaboration between the YSA and the SWP is one of the cornerstones on which the YSA was founded and on which it has been built.

The relationship between the YSA and SWP is special and unique. It is a relationship of close political and organizational collaboration--on both the national and local levels--between two Trotskyist organizations.

By selling the press of the revolutionary party, by supporting its election campaigns, by collaborating with it in all areas of our mass work, we are building both the YSA and the Socialist Workers Party. That is the attitude toward the SWP adopted by our founding convention, and it has been reaffirmed by every YSA convention since then.

Adolfi and Simpson point with affected horror to the fact that they both "had charges preferred against them by party members and the majority of their trial body /sic/ were also members of the Party," and it is true that the majority of the members of both the Boston and Cambridge executive committees are SWP members.

During the discussion preceding the November, 1968, YSA convention, a resolution was submitted to the effect that no more than 50 percent of the members of any local executive committee, or of the National Executive Committee, could be SWP members. In an article opposing this resolution, Charlie Bolduc wrote:

"Many leaders of the YSA are also in the SWP. And there is an obvious reason for this....It is natural that many of the most serious and politically experienced YSAers join the SWP...If other YSAers look to these people as leaders it is precisely because they often have the best grasp of the political tasks before us, i.e., they give political leadership....It would be undemocratic, as well as practically foolish, for the YSA to deny itself the right to choose the best possible YSA leadership, just because many of those leaders may be members of the SWP." That statement remains valid today.

What Adolphi and Simpson choose to ignore is that the executive committees of the Boston and Cambridge YSAs were elected--not by the Boston SWP--but by the democratic vote of the members of the Boston and Cambridge YSA locals, the majority of whom are not SWP members.

Needless to say, they also ignore the fact that it was the Boston and Cambridge YSA locals that found them guilty of indiscipline and disloyalty and voted to expel them from the YSA.

We are neither shocked nor surprised to hear from Adolphi and Simpson that SWP members in the YSA function under the discipline of the SWP. The SWP, like the YSA, is organized according to the principles of democratic-centralism. If the SWP were not a disciplined organization, it would not be a revolutionary party. However, precisely because of the close collaborative relationship between the two organizations, SWP members within the YSA do not presently function as a fraction in the YSA.

Adolphi and Simpson's attempt to raise the specter of "domination" or "control" by the "disciplined members" of an "outside organization" only reveals their hostility to both the revolutionary party and the revolutionary youth organization.

They were brought up on charges and expelled from the YSA because they broke the discipline of and were disloyal to the YSA, irrespective of their relation to the SWP.

V. CONCLUSION

The National Executive Committee finds that the trials of Nancy Adolphi and Ken Simpson were conducted in a fair and democratic manner fully consistent with our constitution and norms, and that Adolphi and Simpson are guilty of indiscipline and disloyalty as charged. The acts for which they were charged, their statements before their trial bodies and locals, and their appeal all prove that their only purpose as members of the YSA would be to carry out a factional wrecking operation, and that they have no place in the YSA.

1) At the October 3 antiwar conference they both voted against a proposal supported by the YSA and in full accord with the strategy adopted by YSA conventions since the beginning of the antiwar movement and reaffirmed by our last national convention, and for a Spartacist League proposal which was directly opposed to the political positions of the YSA as decided by the national convention of the YSA. In so voting, they were in addition collaborating with an organization which aims to destroy the YSA.

2) Nancy Adolphi registered for the October 3 antiwar conference as a member of the Workers League, an organization which aims to destroy the YSA.

3) They have thus, in addition, violated the 1965 convention decision that: "Membership in, support to, or collaboration with

the Spartacist group or the American Committee for the Fourth International is incompatible with membership in the YSA."

4) They identify themselves as members of the Communist Tendency, which has put out at least two public leaflets attacking the program and policies of the YSA as democratically decided by YSA national conventions. Ken Simpson publicly distributed at least one such leaflet.

5) Nancy Adolphi refused to cooperate with the trial body constituted by democratic vote of the Cambridge local.

6) Ken Simpson's statements to the trial body and before the Boston local include unambiguous statements that he will not submit to the discipline of the YSA, is not loyal to the YSA, and that he considers conducting a wrecking operation in the YSA to be "a tactical question" for him to decide.

7) Adolphi and Simpson's appeal to the NEC does not refute or defend them from any of the charges against them.

The political positions of Adolphi and Simpson, their belief that the YSA "is incapable of pursuing a revolutionary course," that the program of the YSA is "a reactionary chimera," that the "historic mission" of the YSA is "its betrayal of the American working class," impelled them to violate the discipline of the YSA and made it impossible for them to function as loyal members of the YSA.

The National Executive Committee upholds and commends the action of the Cambridge YSA in expelling Nancy Adolphi, and the action of the Boston YSA in expelling Ken Simpson.