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the organizer
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**PLENUM
REPORTS**

- **Organization**
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Organization Report

Editor's Note: We are reprinting in this issue edited versions of the Organization Report and the Financial Report, which were unanimously approved by the recent National Committee plenum of the YSA, held in New York City, June 15-18.

These changes are part of an on-going process of experimentation in the YSA. One of the things we want to do here is pool the ideas and experiences of the national leadership as to how best to carry this out.

CAMPUS WORK

Today the YSA is the most influential and well-organized radical group in the student movement on a national scale.

Through the years we have been right in the center of campus upsurges, from the upsurge sparked by the French events in 1968, to the May 1970 upsurge in response to the invasion of Cambodia and Laos, to the most recent upsurge following the bombings of Hanoi and Haiphong and the mining of the harbors.

Moreover, our role has not been limited to particular struggles in which we have been directly involved. The influence of our ideas is widespread in the radical student milieu. The concept of the antiwar university, for example, has been picked up by large numbers of students during periods of increased antiwar activity. The same is true of the demand for "Out Now!" that we fought for since the birth of the antiwar movement and that is now a household work with the vast majority of young antiwar activists.

The YSA has understood since its inception the important role that students can play in the unfolding of the revolutionary process. In fact, it has been this understanding that has laid the basis for our growth and current position vis a vis other political tendencies in the student movement.

Our experience over the last few years has proven conclusively that the place where the greatest potential for recruitment exists is on the high school and college campuses, because it is in the high schools and on the college campuses that the radicalization now finds its most consistently active expression. While the level of activity on the campuses goes through certain ebbs and flows, it is clear that the general trend is for the radicalization to deepen.

That is why we think it is important that the YSA not only be active in the student movement, but eventually become *the* radical youth organization. Our goal is not merely to become a large and influential youth organization among many. Our goal is to gain hegemony in a key sector of the radicalization at this point: the student movement.

For that reason, it is important to understand what stage we are now at in the process of developing high school and college fractions, and establishing the YSA on campus.

I want to review briefly the progress made by the YSA in its campus work in the last few months.

This spring the YSA nationally carried out a wider range of activities on a larger number of high school and college campuses than ever before. We participated in more student government elections. There were YSAers running in elections in more than seven high schools and 37 colleges all around the country. At least 18 YSAers hold student government office. One other statistic we got from the organizers' report forms is that the YSA participated in at least 31 Choice '72 polls last spring by helping to organize the voting and getting referenda on the war and on abortion law repeal on the ballot.

At the same time the number of students in the YSA when compared to our overall membership is still small. While we now have begun to develop a number of well-functioning campus-based locals, high school and college fractions in the center locals are one of the YSA's major weaknesses.

Our goal is to become the significant force on every major campus and numerous high schools where thousands upon thousands of students are radicalizing. Of course, this is a long term project. We know there are no gimmicks

or "get-rich-quick" schemes to gaining hegemony in the student movement or any other movement, despite the fantasies of our opponents that have tried it in the past. But we have to approach this new phase of our growth with audacity and confidence in our long range goals.

While it is true that the YSA is an organization that speaks to the needs of radicalizing students, we cannot assume that a student becoming interested in political activity will automatically turn to the YSA. When students begin to radicalize, they look around, often not beyond the limits of their own immediate surroundings, and most commonly do one of two things. They either gravitate toward an organization they agree with that seems to be most active and prominent or, in the absence of something they feel they can become a part of, they become disillusioned and turn away from activism in an organization.

So, while we often seem to be the only organized political group on any given campus, that is only half the battle to becoming a significant force on that campus. During the upsurge this spring we found that it was much harder to help give leadership that could build the protests in an upsurge situation, or even to have a significant influence, in places where the YSA was not previously organized and had a certain degree of political authority, and where YSAers were not familiar with the campus. This upsurge confirmed once again the need to strengthen the campus base of the YSA.

This means that we must be conscious of centering the activities of the YSA on the campuses and high schools. The main concern of the YSA in defending the Vietnamese revolution, for example, should be to help build a mass student organization—the SMC—that can, as it has so far, help lead the antiwar movement. And the same is generally true of the other movements we are involved in.

SALES OF THE MILITANT

The Militant serves many functions that are indispensable to establishing a campus base. It educates students about our program, carrying polemics on all sorts of issues that young people are thinking about; it explains how to organize around those issues that concern them; and its pages project an organization that they can join to become an effective part of the movement to change society.

The Militant does all that, and, while not everyone that reads our press automatically joins the YSA, *The Militant* creates a pool of potential supporters, a periphery of people that are better educated about the basic concepts of the struggle for social change.

Sales of *The Militant* on campus are not nearly what they should be. We found from the organizers' report forms that a total of 1,014 *Militants*, approximately, are sold nationally each week on the campuses, or about one *Militant* per YSAer per week. Our goal should not be merely to increase that, but to multiply it many times. The trick is to organize the work of the local so that a certain part of the time of each member is simply set aside to sell *Militants* on a specific campus that is politically important.

We should approach *Militant* sales with the attitude of using *Militant* sales to build the YSA by organizing most of the local's sales at the high schools and colleges we want to concentrate on.

A serious weakness in our participation in the upsurge this spring was that *Militant* sales actually dropped rather than increased during the weeks of heightened activity. Yet it is precisely during times of increased political activity when students are thinking most about political questions that *The Militant* should get into the hands of as many of those students as we can possibly reach.

This fall, along with the final push to gain support for the campaign and build the YSA

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In preparing this report I listened to the reports given at a plenum of the YSA in July of 1968. I want to spend a few minutes going over the discussion that took place at that plenum because I think some valuable lessons can be learned from our experiences during that period.

There are several similarities between 1968 and 1972, since 1968 was an election year during which McCarthy played a similar role—although not nearly on the same scale—to that of McGovern among youth. It saw a significant upsurge on the campuses in response to the May-June 1968 events in France; and for us, it represented a new stage in the development of the YSA.

It is interesting to note how the YSA responded to this new situation. Our approach was to recognize that period as one in which the YSA had to become much more open and in which the task of the day was to get the program of the YSA out to the largest possible number of people. It was a period of reevaluation of many of the practices and procedures of the YSA, so that the YSA could best take advantage of the new opportunities.

As we have done at this plenum, the plenum in 1968 projected the YSA convention as the culmination of the intensive fall campaign activity. For the first time, it was decided to put out large quantities of convention-building materials. A full-scale mobilization to make the most out of the Halstead-Boutelle campaign and to recruit the maximum number of Young Socialists for Halstead and Boutelle was launched leading up to the convention.

There is, however, one fundamental difference between 1968 and the current election year. That difference is that today more people are radicalized, more have gone through some degree of political experience, and more are open to our ideas. This is reflected by the response the Jenness-Pulley campaign has gotten so far. In general, we are in a position of greater strength among radicalizing sectors of the American population and last, but by no means unimportant, is the fact that we are now about four times the size that we were at approximately the same time in 1968.

What we want to project at this plenum then, is an approach that is in line with our current position of strength and the favorable objective situation.

There are now over 11,000 endorsers of the Jenness-Pulley campaign. If we understand the significance of those endorsers as a source of potential recruitment for our movement, then it becomes clear that the YSA is faced with a real challenge. It requires that we take a new look at every aspect of our functioning; that we review everything—from our publications, to our convention, to our organizational procedures—from the point of view of maximizing recruitment.

What we have to do right now is make sure that the YSA is turned outward, that it is an organization that is easy to join and attractive to the broadest layer of youth possible. We want to continue to experiment with new ways to do this.

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convention, we can expect that an ambitious *Militant* subscription drive will again be undertaken. We will want to concentrate more than ever on selling those subscriptions on the campuses that are politically important in each area.

CAMPUS LITERATURE TABLES

In addition to sales of our press, one good way to make our presence felt on a campus is to set up literature tables regularly. Most campus fractions at this time do not organize frequent literature sales on campus. While this task seems time consuming and not as pressing as other work we do, it is one of the important tasks for YSAers on campus.

A literature table provides a place where students can go to engage in political discussion and find literature that answers the questions they have. Most importantly, it projects the YSA to the public. It speaks for the YSA as an organization that is not only participating in other movements, but that also is clearly visible and helping to build other movements, integrated into the life of the campus, and carrying out activities in its own name.

This fall we want to integrate literature sales into the whole campaign to publicize and get endorsers for the election campaign, talk to people about the YSA convention, and build a periphery of people that agree with our politics and that we want to involve in some level of political activity. It will also be a good opportunity to explain the importance of joining an on-going organization that will continue to play the role the Jenness-Pulley campaign played during the election year.

We also want to hold more classes and forums on campus sponsored by the YSA. These should be aimed at reaching the students that are active politically and should cover the topics and questions that serious, radicalizing students have.

These are some of the steps that should become standard procedure for every YSA local, whether it is based on one campus or organized in a larger city with several major campuses.

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

One means we have used successfully to put forward the program of the YSA and to publicize the Jenness-Pulley campaign are student government elections. There is no time in this report to go into detail about tactical questions and the strategy for running the most effective campaign. YSAers can reread the article in the March 3, 1972 *YS Organizer* on campus election campaigns for a set of useful guidelines for conducting such campaigns.

Most colleges and high schools have student governments, in which case at least the semblance of open elections usually takes place. We want to participate aggressively in these elections, not only to explain our program, but also to tie it in with local campus issues that can mobilize students on that campus. At Boston University this spring, for example, YSAers involved in a struggle over whether student fees should become voluntary as opposed to mandatory as they had been, made that a central issue in their campaign.

Thousands of students across the country got a chance to learn about the Jenness-Pulley campaign for the first time through the YSJP candidates on their campuses. Many of these campaigns included independent YSJPers who, in the course of running with us, decided to join the YSA.

USING CAMPUS FACILITIES

Students on most campuses collectively contribute thousands of dollars each year that are earmarked for student activities. But because the administrative bodies that control the allocation of these funds are, as a rule, not interested in, and often hostile to radical politics, those funds never benefit the bulk of the students' interests. The small sums that do trickle down to the student body generally come in the form of entertainment projects or minor student power reforms.

The YSA, as an established and integral part of campus activity, should be entitled to access to a share of the funds and facilities provided by the university. It is useful, if possible, to have an office on campus out of which to function, including if possible, mimeograph machines, office supplies, rooms to hold meetings in, etc. Such facilities enhance our effectiveness.

DEFENSE

School administrations have, and will continue



to attempt to roll back the gains made by the student movement through struggle, like those resulting from May 1970. We have a responsibility to help mobilize the student body so that ~~this does not happen. And of course, we are~~ just about the only ones that can do so because of our understanding of and experience with the basic concepts of defense.

The YSA has a history of waging defense struggles, from cases like the Lieberman case in Tallahassee, where it is obvious that the right of free speech is at stake, to much less prominent but nevertheless important fights around the right to sell *Militants* on campus, set up literature tables, or publicize our campaigns. At the root of this latter type case is the fundamental right of students to hear political ideas and of organizations like the YSA to express them.

These cases are important, particularly because of the precedent they set. Each victory we win is a victory for the entire student movement and a set-back for the administrations, which function as agents for the ruling class and whose purpose is to try to hold back, as much as they can, the growing radicalization.

In many instances, defense cases have helped to build the YSA, and bring new people around our politics. This was true with several defense cases we were involved in this spring. The Lubbock, Texas, YSA, for example, was formed as a result of a campaign by a handful of at-large YSA members to have the YSA recognized as a campus organization, in the course of which several other students decided to join.

We recognize our responsibility to respond whenever students are victimized and are prepared to contribute our knowledge and experience on matters of defense, whether or not YSAers or the YSA are specifically implicated.

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I have outlined several things so far that we want to keep in mind as schools reopen in the fall and upon which the success of our fall efforts are contingent.

That is, however, not all there is to making the YSA a campus based organization.

To implement these projections, YSAers should know their way around campus and should know the campus' political life. In addition, YSA meetings could be held on campus where it is feasible, as they are in campus based locals, to facili-

tate the attendance of students that are interested in the YSA's politics. YSA educationals and classes could also be held on campus, even if they are primarily internal functions. Particularly campus fraction meetings should be held on the campus so that students that are interested in the YSA can be invited to get a first hand view of how we organize to be active on campus.

This is not, of course, a panacea for a shortage of forces to carry out campus work, nor is it a hard and fast rule. We want to be flexible with such measures, depending on the situation in each particular local. In general, our guideline should be to take every necessary step to turn the attention of the local toward the campus. Functioning on the campus physically is one of these first big steps.

Through the national organization tours this spring we learned that large, regional center locals began taking a number of steps to increase collaboration between the leadership and the campus fractions, such as having more frequent reports to the executive committees and locals and having organizers sit in on campus fraction meetings. We want to continue this trend and increase the involvement of the leadership of each local in this work. But above all, we want to move away from the concept of campus work as an area of work separate from the rest of the work of the local.

HIGH SCHOOL WORK

Many of the things outlined so far are applicable to the high schools and college campuses alike. The response the SWP candidates have gotten in the high schools is one indication of the radicalization there.

However, there are some important differences between the high school and college campuses. The high school report to last year's plenum pointed this out. I want to quote something from that report that is just as appropriate today. It said:

"There are . . . certain objective problems that high school comrades face in carrying out our work, which we should be aware of. First is simply the extremely repressive situation that exists in the high schools, making it far more difficult to carry out the range of activities that we do on the campuses. Second is the isolation of many high school comrades, especially when they are the only YSAer in a particular school. Third is the fact that most high school students live with their parents and are economically depen-

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dent upon them, which poses problems for some comrades in terms of level of activity.

"What these problems pose for the YSA is not a decrease in our activity in the high schools, but rather serious and consistent attention paid to high school activity by the local leadership. We want to develop solid high school fractions . . . which can carry out [our] campaigns . . . in the high schools. High schools fractions can discuss and plan out how they will build the SMC, the abortion campaign, the sub drive, sales, recruitment, etc. While we want to assign leading comrades in the local to work with the high school fractions, these fractions should develop their own leadership."

This spring a number of locals carried out more consistent high school work than ever before, and began to develop viable high school fractions.

This report cannot attempt to deal adequately with the many questions confronting us in this area of work. Finding solutions to the problems, expanding our knowledge of the high school movement, and developing a more concise approach to it require further discussion and an exchange of ideas and experiences on our past high school work. This takes time. The high school reports to the last plenum and convention were only the beginning of that process. We plan to organize a more thorough discussion of high school work at the Oberlin conference.

RECRUITMENT

The recent antiwar upsurge showed us two things: the correctness of our program and the limitations of our relatively small size. What immediately became clear to us was the difference we could have made, had we been a larger organization.

The process of large-scale expansion of the YSA began with the 1968 convention following the Halstead-Boutelle campaign, which was marked by a doubling of our membership.

Again in 1969, we took another significant step outward into the public eye. Our convention that year was opened to the press for the first time. In the organization report, Nelson Blackstock told the convention that a reporter had just called up to say that he was flying to our convention and had added: "It is now clear that you are bigger than SDS, and we want to know why."

In 1970, at the August plenum of the National Committee, the national expansion of the YSA demanded that we take up the question of organizing the YSA along regional lines, and the organization report at that plenum dealt extensively with the division of the regions and a proposal for initiating regional work in an organized and systematic way.

Over the last two years since that plenum, the YSA has not grown significantly in total numbers. But at the same time, this has been a period of consolidation of cadre and of strengthening the Trotskyist movement as a whole.

One statistic that confirms this is that since 1969, the SWP has doubled in size. The bulk of that new membership has come from the YSA. The majority of the present membership of the SWP are YSA graduates. Secondly, it is confirmed by the fact that we are now *doing* more than ever before.

We have undergone a transition of leadership at an increasingly rapid pace. This is currently reflected in the average age of the National Committee. It is also reflected in the age and length of time in the movement of the vast majority of organizers and that layer of members in the leadership nationally.

There are other manifestations of this qualitative growth. Through the financial tours we learned that local finances are now more stable and professionalized. Perhaps the best example of the caliber of our cadre was the swift and effective way we were able to conduct our intervention into the recent upsurge.

As I mentioned earlier, the YSA has remained at approximately the same size—give or take 100—since our August 1970 plenum, although the movement as a whole has grown and the YSA has recruited a large number of people. During 1971, for instance, we took 900 new members into the YSA.

In analyzing membership figures, we should take into account several important factors. One, that for a long period of time the percentage of graduations of the YSA members into the SWP has been very high. Since January alone, 105 YSAers have graduated that we have records for. Since August 1971, well over 200 YSAers

have graduated to become active in the SWP.

Another factor considerably affecting the present size of our membership is the fairly high turnover rate, which has always characterized the YSA as a youth group. Coupled with the graduations, the large number of people recruited was absorbed by a substantial number of members also being dropped.

Earlier this year, it became clear to us in following these membership figures that a lot more attention had to be paid to recruitment. At the beginning of the year the National Office began to take a series of steps to initiate a discussion of this question in the YSA and the organization nationally in thinking out ways of improving recruitment work.

One person from the National Office was put in charge of this work. A series of articles appeared in the *YS Organizer* taking up the relation of recruitment to the rest of our work and reporting on experiences in recruitment from various YSA locals. During the May 21 antiwar demonstrations in Washington D. C., a four-day movement center was set up by the National Office and the Washington D. C. YSA.

In locals around the country a higher consciousness about recruitment began developing during the spring, and many more organized, well-thought out activities began to be carried out. Locals organized recruitment committees composed of the leadership of the local; experimented with classes on campus; and held special discussions during the antiwar upsurge from the point of view of how best to recruit this new layer of activists. In response to the developments at that time the NEC also published a statement in *The Militant* analyzing the upsurge and urging people to join the YSA. That statement was reprinted by a number of locals in leaflet form.

A large number of locals also mapped out a systematic and concerted effort to use their spring socialist educational weekend primarily as a recruitment tool and some of the recruitment figures as a direct result of those events proved them successful. Those areas that organized recruitment in the spring did gain an impressive number of new members over the spring. The three New York City locals, for example, recruited over 50 people. The College Park YSA, which started out with six or seven members, grew to 16. The Bloomington local recently doubled its membership. They went from five to 10 members. The Philadelphia local recruited over 17 people since the YSA convention.

Recruiting people to the YSA needs to be a central aspect of all the work that we do. That means throwing the entire resources of our movement—comrade power, time, team leadership, discussions and projections—into the perspective of recruiting. It is particularly important to have a full discussion of this question in the YSA right now because of the recruitment opportunities opened up to us by the election campaign.

Many more people are radicalizing today than are joining the YSA. In fact, many more people know about and have endorsed and support the SWP election campaign than have joined the YSA. As we said from the beginning, not all will join because that category of people is much broader than our own potential membership. But a significant percentage of them can be recruited if we recognize that they are there, and if we take the necessary steps to bring them into the YSA.

It is in line with this objective situation that we are projecting at this plenum a campaign to make the YSA more visible and more attractive than ever before.

We recruit people to the YSA on the basis of their agreement with our program. But in order to join, they have to know about our program; they have to read it in the pages of *The Militant*; they have to hear our candidates and other public spokespersons for our movement; they have to have discussions with YSA members individually; and most importantly, they have to know that an organization exists that is open for them to join, even if they have not reached a 100 percent understanding of every single aspect of our program. They have to know that if they agree to be active, they can learn from being *in* the organization and not by standing on the sidelines trying to figure out what we are all about.

EDUCATION AND INTEGRATION

Coupled with our changing approach to the YSA's recruitment, it is essential that we focus our attention on the education and integration of this new membership.

Learning about our politics is part of a long transition young people go through from the moment they sign an endorser card or buy a

Militant subscription. It is an on-going process, not something that happens automatically the moment they join, or develops, necessarily, according to the length of time or nature of assignment a person has in our movement.

Naturally, the kind of experience YSAers acquire while politically active plays an important role. In many ways, the people that join today are more politically prepared through their experience in the independent movements than the membership of several years ago. But this experience has to be coupled with conscious direction on the part of the leadership to ensure that our membership is also learning about politics from a Marxist point of view. We should organize education as professionally as all our other tasks.

The success of every campaign projected at this plenum, for example, hinges on the understanding in our ranks of what it is we are doing and why it is so important. It is no coincidence that the YSA is the most stable and cohesive youth organization on the American left. For example, we take a fundamentally different approach to developing new members—all our members—than the Communist Party and the Young Workers Liberation League. The YSA is out to train and develop leaders. The YWLL is out to train followers—people that will do what they are told and follow all the zig-zags of the line without thinking or questioning. The same is true of the Workers League. Their approach to reaching political homogeneity is to simply threaten their members with expulsion unless they adhere to the line. We function very differently.

We should always be alert to not falling into the trap of pushing education aside because it does not seem as pressing a task as others, or because there is no deadline to meet or action to culminate it. We can be sure that the level of activity of our movement will not decrease at some imaginary future time (as we used to think of summer periods). If anything, it will only increase as we grow and plunge ourselves into new arenas of work. That is why we have to integrate education into the overall work of the YSA at each step, even when we are in the midst of intense activity.

Not everyone that joins our organization will remain in it. That's alright. The YSA does not aspire to be a "pure" organization that can only be joined by those that are ready to commit their lives to the revolutionary movement. On the contrary, our aim is to reach all those young people who agree with the basic aspects of our program so that many will join the YSA, and then learn more about our program through participating with us in the activities of the YSA.

Some may decide that they are not ready for this step and will eventually drift away. But many of them will choose to stay. Educating those young people about what we stand for, what we are fighting for, and why it is necessary to belong to a revolutionary socialist youth organization—in short, helping them to absorb the program of the YSA and learn to apply it—will have a lot to do with the decision they make.

As more and more new people come into the YSA we should be particularly alert to seeing that vehicles exist in each local for them to absorb our basic program as soon as they join. For example, we should have an on-going new members class whenever new people join, even if other educational activities are organized by the local. We also want to ensure that YSAers that are already acquainted with the fundamental aspects of our program have a chance to develop beyond that by organizing more advanced class series.

This is the context in which we should look at the summer school. The summer schools will play a vital role in shaping the political development of our membership and strengthening our ranks for the fall campaign. They will also furnish YSAers with essential background for the lectures and discussions to take place in Oberlin.

The Oberlin conference will be the culmination of an intensive educational program that will fit all we have learned over the summer into an international perspective. While this conference will be a good chance to consolidate perspective members that attend it, it will also be an indispensable part of developing a well-rounded cadre.

REGIONAL WORK

Along with greater opportunities confronting every YSA local, corresponding opportunities exist in every YSA region. The potential for recruiting new at-large members and locals of the YSA outside the regional centers as a result of the election campaign has already been demon-

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strated during this spring. A number of new locals have already been formed that resulted from visits by SWP candidates and the YSJP teams to those areas. A good example is the Midwest region, where several new locals were formed as a result of Andrew Pulley's tour there.

On the other hand, the experience of a great many locals was that, while the campaign brought around a number of potential members throughout the regions, a large percentage could not be followed up for lack of funds and personnel.

This fall, having an adequate regional apparatus will be crucial to consolidating the gains made by the campaign. For that reason, this report has to take up two closely related aspects of regional work.

The first has already been covered by the election campaign report. It involves using campaign and YSA convention-building activities—including the summer and fall candidates' tours, the regional conferences, and the national and regional YSJP/convention-building teams—to make inroads into areas where we have not yet taken the campaign and firming up campaign supporters we already have in outlying areas.

The fact that the campaign has access to funds separate from those of the YSA makes this projection realistic. That is, combining this aspect of regional work with the work of the campaign and the financial resources of the campaign, can be used to make it feasible for the YSA to help carry it out.

This collaboration between the campaign, the SWP, and the YSA is particularly applicable to the regional YSJP teams that have been proposed. In other words, each center local should discuss with the party and the campaign committee over the summer how these teams will be funded, and arrive at a decision that is agreed to well in advance of the opening of schools.

The YSAers that are selected for these teams need not be the most experienced people in our movement. Many can be newer members, who can sell *Militants*, hand out leaflets, and ask people to sign an endorser card. Some can be people that have not yet joined the YSA but that support the campaign and are willing to work with the teams. This is a good way to ensure that they do not remain out of the YSA for long.

We should aim to get as many campaign supporters as we can to carry out campaign ac-

tivity and to attend the YSA convention that will culminate the fall's activity.

The second aspect of regional work is that of beginning to consolidate campaign supporters in the region into YSA locals and at-large members. This task will be of paramount importance to our work after the campaign and the YSA convention end.

Nevertheless, we should not view these as two separate and unrelated tasks. The only way to carry out this consolidation is to involve people that are interested in our movement in activity. The campaign provides a perfect vehicle for doing that.

That does not mean that the campaign is responsible for the follow-up work that will lead to the creation of new locals and the general expansion and numerical growth of the YSA. The elections will be over only two months after the reopening of schools. The extent to which we are able to make long range gains from the campaign depends on the ability of the YSA to take organizational responsibility for campaign endorsers and supporters. Our job is to convert them into active YSAers and well-functioning

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locals.

One of the first goals we want to set is having a full-time regional organizer in every center. As reported in the organizers' report forms, there are now five regional organizers in the whole country.

A regional organizer should be a person whose primary assignment is to help coordinate the work of every local and at-large member in a given region; who collaborates with the leadership of each local; who helps to make decisions that affect the whole region; and who can give advice and direction to the outlying locals and at-large members when it is needed. For that reason, it should be someone that is capable of being a leader on a regional scale. The regional organizer should spend as much time as possible in the region visiting locals and at-large members.

Our experience has been that the closer the collaboration that exists between a regional local and the regional center, the better the chances are that the small local will blossom and its members develop. Contact with more experienced YSAers and a larger, established unit of the YSA can make a big difference in getting a new local off the ground. It is the only way for new members and locals in the region to learn our politics and organizational norms.

Our goal is to establish the regional centers that now exist as real, functioning centers that regularly have people on the road, with a financially self-supporting regional apparatus, and that are capable of carrying out regional tasks like regional conferences.

In addition, the regional locals themselves should strive to become stable units of the YSA that collaborate closely with the regional center and are in touch with the rest of the region. Such locals cannot develop in a vacuum, but are dependent on the strength of the regional center.

The major obstacle encountered by regional centers this spring was finances, and we can expect this problem will not be solved, in most cases, by the fall. One thing we learned, however, is that the Speakers Bureaus can play a very important function in strengthening regional finances. Those areas that planned ahead and were able to assign adequate personnel to them did make substantial sums of money. The financial report will take up this question in much more detail. But because we do not have all the answers, we want to get the fullest possible discussion and exchange of ideas from YSAers around the country about financing this important area of our work.

What we are doing right now is laying the groundwork for a greatly expanded YSA that functions on many campuses around the country, not just in the regional centers. This is the long term perspective that should be kept in mind this summer as each regional center local makes projections for its work in the fall.

YSA CONVENTION

All our efforts this fall will culminate with what, I think we all agree, will be the biggest convention the YSA has ever held.

The convention comes at a time when thousands of young people that threw their energies into the elections in 1972 will be standing around looking for a place to go. We want all of them — including young McGovern supporters — to attend; and we want most of all to draw the thousands and thousands of YSJPers, endorsers, and campaign supporters to it. It will be at the convention that they can learn about our program and be convinced that joining the YSA is the next logical step for them to take.

We should make it clear to every single person we can reach in the course of our campaign activity, that this convention is the convention of all supporters of Jenness and Pulley in '72, and the place where YSAers will discuss how to implement the program that Jenness and Pulley stood for in the course of their campaign.

In line with this perspective, we want to carefully organize this convention to appeal to a broad layer of people and give them an opportunity to be part of the convention, rather than just observers. We will want to schedule some workshops, for example, in which everyone present can participate. We are also inviting YSJP chapters where there is no YSA local to send delegates.

The YSA convention is an important activity on which our work this summer and fall is focused. Building it must be an integral part of



everything we do from this point on.

Convention-building materials will be put out from the National Office before the end of the summer so that the YSJP/convention-building teams can begin to distribute them as soon as schools open. The resolutions will also be out before the end of the summer to allow ample time for preconvention discussion.

Along with building the convention and integral to it, the National Office plans to publish, as soon as possible, some materials about the YSA aimed at YSJPers and other potential YSAers, such as a pamphlet or brochure explaining why people should join the YSA.

These are just some initial projections that flow from our understanding of the changing character of the YSA and the role it will play when the campaign is over. But it is only the beginning of a series of discussions that can focus more sharply on the adjustments and innovations that go along with a growing organization.

Part of this whole expansion campaign will be to review once again all of our publications. This spring we initiated a discussion about *The Young Socialist Organizer* and some of the changes we felt it needed to undergo. But in the course of these discussions it became clear to us that the present needs of the YSA involved a discussion of all our publications — the *YSO*, *The Militant*, and the *ISR*. We hope, through collective discussion, to come up with definite proposals later this summer about changes in the *YS Organizer* and any other materials we decide to publish from the National Office, as well as changes that will need to be made in other organs, such as *The Militant*, to implement the decisions we have made at this plenum.

* * *

Finally, the last national convention passed the following motion in regard to the gay liberation movement:

1) To reaffirm the YSA's position of unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for full democratic rights, including full civil and human rights, and against all the forms of discrimination and oppression gays suffer under capitalism.

2) To end the information gathering probe of the gay liberation movement.

3) To empower the incoming National Committee to determine the best procedure for the YSA to decide the tactical question of what our relationship to the gay liberation movement is.

The Socialist Workers Party National Committee plenum last month opened a literary discussion in the SWP on the gay liberation movement. The SWP bulletins will be available for YSA members to read. The first of these is already out.

The NEC proposes that the YSA not organize a special literary discussion on this question, but, since our preconvention discussion will be opening in about two months, incorporate any discussion on the gay liberation movement into the regular preconvention discussion.

* * *

What we are doing at this plenum is laying out a concrete plan to make the most of these last few months of an election year that have opened up a whole new arsenal of potential new members.

In approving this report, the leadership of the YSA is deciding to launch a campaign, over a relatively short period of time, to increase and broaden the scope of our influence and size. It means that there is agreement among us on the objective situation and that we are confident that it can be done. We should consider that the biggest accomplishment of this plenum.

MIRTA VIDAL
YSA National Secretary

Financial Report

In assessing the current financial situation of the YSA, it is necessary to step back and look at our finances in a long term perspective. It is especially important to get an accurate evaluation at this plenum because many of the tasks we have outlined and voted to carry out hinge on our financial ability to proceed. The financial side of our work becomes more complex with each new projection we make.

Two years ago, in the spring of 1970, the YSA successfully completed a national fund drive of \$28,000. This was correctly considered a big victory for our organization. For those who were in the YSA, it seemed as if we had reached the apex of our ability to raise funds. Nevertheless, the following fall the fund drive goal was set at \$36,000 and we came very close to meeting it. In the spring of 1971, again the fund drive goal increased, this time to \$43,000 and the YSA surpassed this figure. This past fall, we came close to meeting the \$45,000 quota and this spring we aimed for \$46,000. It is clear that we did not reach our spring fund drive goal. We raised \$39,000. The actual amount of money raised for national fund drives in the last two years has increased by \$10,000. This has been achieved during a time when the YSA membership has remained about the same size it was two years ago, and during which all the YSA's activities have expanded.

It was in the spring of 1970, when the YSA, supporting other forces in the antiwar movement, began helping in the construction of a new national antiwar coalition. In the past year the YSA took responsibility for helping to initiate and build a nationwide abortion campaign. Also, during this time YSAers participated in huge subscription drives for *The Militant* and for the *International Socialist Review*, requiring great energy. Last fall, the YSA pledged its active support to building the largest socialist election campaign in recent history. The campaign report pointed out the size and scope of the SWP campaign, and the high degree of activity the YSA has put into this endeavor.

Also, it has been during the last two years that the YSA has undertaken a whole new area of organization—regional work. This has involved full-time regional organizers and, in many cases, full-time regional travelers. As part of this expansion of the YSA numerous regional meetings, educational conferences, and socialist summer schools have been organized.

In addition, locals have tuned up their operations to include full-time organizers, new and expanded headquarters, large stocks of attractive literature and many other valuable organizational tools. The list of accomplishments goes on. Moreover, we have traveled long distances to attend national educational conferences, antiwar conventions, Black and Raza conferences, and YSA conventions.

Each of these activities has been an expensive proposition for our movement, requiring a new degree of organization and allocation of finances. How have we been financially able to carry out all this activity? The answer is more a political evaluation than a financial one. As a result of the growing radicalization, the YSA has faced new opportunities to have an impact on American politics and to grow. To be able to take advantage of this situation, we have had to shift financial gears, devoting more of our resources to regional organization, campaign activities, and local expenses. This shift has been to a large extent responsible for our ability to respond to these opportunities as they have presented themselves. While we have been increasing our financial base, we have also allocated increased resources to each of these areas of activity.

It is clear from the experience of the last two years that favorable objective opportunities to expand the YSA and its activities have developed much faster than have our financial resources. The '72 campaign in particular brings this point home. The receptivity to the socialist campaign runs much deeper than our means of airing what our candidates represent. Just imagine the response we could get were we able to finance teams to every campus in the country, or give away the truth kits free to every young person we meet, or go on national T.V. for an hour or so. And we can say the same for our activity in the region, our forums, —virtually all our activities can have a broader influence if we have greater resources.

This will always be the case for our movement. We will very likely never have a financial base equal to our political opportunities. Our task is to equalize the two as much as possible. We are experienced in doing this, as the past two years verify. We are becoming conscious of raising additional funds from this broadened sphere of political influence. As the ideas of the YSA have reached well beyond the immediate membership, so have our sources of income. The two go hand-in-hand. The increased receptivity to socialism enables us to increase our financial base; at the same time, greater funding enables us to reach out to more people. This report is centered on assessing how we can sharpen our understanding of this process, and where we stand at this point.

We have taken the first basic steps by venturing into the sphere of "external fund raising." The primary work in this area of finances has been by trial and error. We have been experimenting with fund raising and have realized considerable financial success in the process, and now have the experience to begin to clarify how external fund raising should proceed.

A note of caution should be interjected before we begin to draw some conclusions. First, it is important to note that there is no schema for external fund raising that can be applied to each area of the country. Just as experiences vary from region to region, so will the successes. Flexibility and imagination are needed in applying any conclusions we may arrive at. Also, we should be aware that fund-raising ability, like any other aptitude, takes time to develop. We have just finished a preliminary stage of experimentation and are at the outset of a long process of meeting the financial needs of our movement. The gains that have been made so far are significant seen in this context.

EXTERNAL FUND RAISING

Let's take a closer look at what we have learned about external fund raising during this time.

● *Financial Consciousness*—The YSA must have an understanding of the part all areas of finances plays in our organization. This education is fundamental to our ability to maintain the financing of the YSA. Without this understanding, we could not have accomplished as much as we have over the last two years. And without continuing the educational process, stabilizing any phase of finances will be difficult.

We have seen substantial progress in this educational process during the two years since our financial campaign was initiated, and particularly this spring. The fact that well over one-half of the spring fund drive income came from our pledges is testimony to this fact. The YSA has always had a high financial consciousness. Part of being in the YSA is paying dues and making additional financial donations. We know that financial contributions are a result of our political understanding and perspectives. It is these contributions that enable the YSA to carry out the activities it projects. We want to continue this education as the basis for the YSA's financial development.

● *Types of Activities*—In our experience with external fund raising, essentially two types of projects have emerged. Some take a great deal of time and a larger number of members in order to net a relatively small income. These are activities such as button sales and brownie sales. The other type of activity requires fewer YSAers to organize and carry out, if it is organized in advance, and is generally more productive. The most obvious of this type of activity is the speakers bureau.

Each local can best judge the advisability of proposing one project over another, but we should keep in mind that our forces will have to be efficiently used in the fall to carry out the tasks we have decided on at this plenum. Dividing the fund-raising activities into these two categories can help to clarify where we should allocate our energies in terms of fund raising.

● *How We View Fund-raising Activities*—All activities that raise money for the YSA are political. Yet it is true that some projects are more obviously tied with the political life of the local than others. Almost all fund raising has the potential of being directly related to recruitment activity if it is given the proper direction. Several locals have found that by carrying *The Militant*, Pathfinder Press materials, and truth kits, book

sale tables on campuses can become a pole of attraction for meeting people and recruiting to the YSA. Other locals have found that fund-raising dinners before and after forums are also a good opportunity to talk to people about joining the YSA. By seeing recruitment activity as part of our financial activity, the YSA will receive more gains from both. In this sense, the speakers bureau is the project that is number one in desirability. As more people become interested in the YSA and its ideas, YSA members will have frequent opportunities to receive honoraria for speaking engagements. Not only does this help the YSA financially, but it enables us to present our ideas to more people and aids in recruitment to the YSA.

● *Making Realistic Projections*—Through our experiences with fund raising we have become more scientific in estimating what financial and political returns can be realized from each project. These criteria should help us begin to pinpoint the activities that should be projected by YSA locals. In order to avoid duplicating some of the trial and error that each local goes through, we will need to collaborate with each other to a much greater degree than we have in the past. Already we have noticed several instances in which one local will decide to give up efforts on a particular project that does not seem to be working, while another local has found an imaginative way to implement the same project, and the National Office has been able to pass on the helpful information. We need to continue this in the fall.

Based on these general evaluations, we see that two endeavors stand out particularly—the speakers bureaus and student government budgets. These projects have been singled out in financial reports in the past because of their potential for helping to finance campus activities. At this point, the major reason for discussing these, aside from other projects, is a political reason—that of becoming more a part of campus life.

We have made limited gains in applying these projects in their initial stages.

Speakers Bureaus

The main stumbling block for the speakers bureaus in most regions has been the inability to assign someone to this work full time. Nevertheless, we must begin to establish the speakers bureaus as a year-round and permanent endeavor.

What we have learned so far is a new concept of obtaining speaking engagements. One person in an office on the phone with the sole responsibility of setting up speaking engagements is not necessarily the best method. Instead, we are beginning to see a greater success by this person involving many more people in arranging speaking engagements.

It would be impossible to go into the details and technicalities of organizing a speakers bureau in this report. The most important point is that success in obtaining speaking engagements depends heavily on its relation to regional work. An experienced YSAer, whether assigned to regional organizing or to the speakers bureau, can do both. Rather than one individual being responsible for setting up engagements, this person can work with every YSAer on campus and in the region and every Young Socialist for Jenness and Pulley.

We view the speakers bureaus as a permanent project that will take time to establish. Rather than proceeding in starts and fits every six months, as is done now in many areas, it should be planned out months in advance of when we expect to get the actual speaking engagements. Over the course of time, we hope to see this project develop into a well-known agency to which campuses turn for radical speakers.

Finances and the Campus

The subject of finances is a part of our discussion of strengthening the campus base of the YSA. Such fund-raising activities as book sales and collections at forums have increased our ability to be active on campus. As an aspect of our overall strategy for becoming a real part of the life of each campus, student YSAers should submit budgets to their student governments and apply for office space and supplies. Most schools have channels for making such requests. We

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should find out what these procedures entail and follow them, although they may seem complex. By applying at the proper time and in the correct manner, campus YSAs may obtain facilities that can greatly aid organizing on campus.

An important aspect of the YSA receiving facilities, supplies, and budget allocations is the reasonableness of such requests. They should be in line with allocations that are granted to other student organizations. Some research into the size of the student governments' budgets and how they are distributed may be necessary. The amount of time and energy spent in research and application should be integrated into the YSA's strategy for the campus this fall.

Donations

Another area of income needs to be singled out for discussion, not so much because of special success we have had, but because of its future importance. That area is donations. As the YSA becomes a more influential organization in the student movement, it is developing a milieu of its own. This process has been greatly accelerated by the '72 socialist election campaign. In the wake of all our activity, we will attract more people to the YSA. Many of these may not necessarily want to join a revolutionary vanguard party, but do agree with the need for an organization of youth interested in effecting social change. We want to begin now to work with these people more closely. Students, young people with jobs, and young professors who agree with all or part of our program, should be encouraged to contribute to the projects of the YSA.

By doing this, it is not intended that campaign contributions should go to the YSA instead, although when the campaign is over this may be the case. What we are talking about is *additional* contributions to the YSA. The relatively small income we have received from donations indicates that we have not yet devoted enough attention to this source.

LOCAL FINANCES

Over the past years we have been carrying out a great deal of activity through YSA locals across the country. However, it has not been until this spring that we have begun to get an accurate ~~evaluation of the increase in local expenses in~~ this period of activity.

The YSA local is the basic unit of our organization. The more solid footing the finances of a local are on, the more effectively our activities can be carried out. Smooth functioning locals, unmenaced by periodic lack of funds, are crucial to the growth of the YSA. It is safe to assume that until locals have attained a certain degree of financial stability, efforts to put regional and national finances on firm ground will be handicapped. It is for these reasons that we can say the gains we have made this spring in local finances are a fundamental and important accomplishment.

Let's look more closely at what is meant by putting local finances on sound footing. This spring many locals have been current, or very close to meeting local expenses as they fell due. This was achieved while the expenses involved in organizing a local have increased. Only by this process of keeping current have locals been able to come up with exact figures for the costs involved in building a YSA local. This may sound elementary. However, before this spring, there were many normal expenses that YSA locals were consistently falling behind on, or unable to pay at all. The result was an underestimation of the amount of money needed for the local to carry out its activity. The fact that some locals with rather large fund drive pledges lowered their quotas this spring reflected in part a more balanced approach to local and national finances. Keeping records of income and expenses and paying close attention to budgets has helped and will continue to help in assessing local and national, as well as regional finances.

The combined experience with fund raising and with local expenses puts the YSA in a very solid position of being able to plan local finances. This is a crucial step toward aiding the progress of regional and national finances. One suggestion is for locals to divide their budgets for the summer and fall into two parts, separating local expenses and income from fund raising and payments toward the drive.

There are two outstanding factors that should be noted in discussing the progress we have made this spring. YSA locals as a whole have been more involved in financial planning. The level of discussion within local executive committees

and at business meetings, the frequency with which reports are given, and the discussion around voting on budgets indicate the degree to which the YSA is aware of its financial activity. This trend is decisive as we move into an even higher level of financial organization, consistent with the higher level of activity projected. Secondly, all our financial progress has been achieved against a background of raising tens of thousands of dollars for the SWP '72 election campaign. Our movement as a whole has raised more money this spring than in any equivalent period.

NATIONAL FINANCES

There are two major reasons that we fell short of the spring fund drive goal. The first we have already discussed in this report. The realization of what local expenses are and how much money can actually be raised at this point caused several locals with high quotas to correctly reassess their quotas, and caused other locals to fall a little short. This ability to determine what is realistic should be seen as a positive experience in our learning how to handle and evaluate finances.

The second reason is also important. In many areas, campaign finances had not been clearly laid out at the beginning of the fund drive. The effect of campaign fund raising on YSA finances turned out to be greater than we first realized. This situation pointed out the need for more pre-planning of financial activity on a movement-wide basis and for increased collaboration with campaign committees. We have learned a great deal from, and should continue to be aware of, the methods used by the campaign for raising money, such as obtaining donations and honoraria for speaking engagements. Many of these avenues will be open to the YSA after the campaign is over, and we will want to be prepared to immediately adopt some of these for use by the YSA.

There are other factors that affected the spring fund drive. In some areas, the recent antiwar upsurge, in which we were so actively involved, threw fund-raising activities off schedule. An evaluation of how fund raising, as well as other areas of the YSA's activities, can be integrated into such a situation without cutting into our ~~overall activity will be an interesting and instructive~~ discussion. Also, it is true that many areas got off to a late start in organizing their spring finances. Budget projections and assignments were not laid out and discussed thoroughly even as we began the spring fund drive period. Locals cannot afford the mistake this fall of going through any period of time without a budget.

All fund drives are based on two things: what is necessary for the YSA to implement the projections which come out of YSA conventions and plenums, and what locals and at-large members can realistically contribute to the fund drive. The two must balance out as nearly as possible in projecting national fund drives. Many locals are going through a reassessment of their budget projections to include such activities as regional work. The National Office budget is undergoing the same process. Therefore, the National Executive Committee is not proposing a fund drive figure at this point. We should be able to do this by the end of the summer. In the meantime, locals should be preparing local budgets, discussing what quota is possible and planning out how it can be met. These discussions will be important background for determining the national fund drive goal of the YSA. At this point, it does not seem likely that a larger fund drive will be projected.

In the plenum packets is a chart comparing national expenses and income over the last twelve

months. The graph points out some serious problems we face in regard to the functioning of the National Office. The most obvious is that, with the exception of the national convention, expenses are fairly constant. At the same time, the fund drive, which is about 60 percent of the income, is received in lump sums. The major portion of fund drive payments comes in during four months of the twelve month period, the last months of the spring and fall fund drives.

The other problem is that other sources of income for the National Office, all of which come from locals, are low and erratic. National membership dues fall in this category of income. Over the last five months we launched a campaign for 100 percent payment of dues. Since January, however, the National Office has been receiving dues for an average of 700 members each month. Locals should be careful to see that the membership dues are forwarded to the National Office.

Initiation fees, also in this category, are just that—initiation fees. No one becomes a member of the YSA until these fees are paid. This is a fee provided for in the YSA constitution as a prerequisite for membership in the national organization. It is not money to be locally used.

YSA National Office literature sales to locals is another major source of income. We have been receiving about half as much as was projected for both current sales and debt repayment. Locals should give more attention to keeping up with literature bills as the materials are received.

It should be pointed out that all these categories—national membership dues, initiation fees and costs of materials—should not be lumped into fund drive payments. Both the fund drive and these other sources of income are budgeted and necessary to national finances. Putting them all together, under the assumption that it all goes to the National Office anyway, is misleading. Regular payment on these obligations is an indicator of how successfully local finances are progressing. Moreover, both areas of income are a necessity for the continued functioning of our National Office.

PROJECTIONS

Although this report points out the most important problems the National Office faces in terms of the imbalance in the schedule of income and expenses, there is no perspective for changing how we conduct national fund drives. However, it will be important for locals to try to make early fund drive payments over the summer. Many campuses have significant summer school enrollment that enables fund-raising activities to be carried out. It is clear that a large portion of the fund drive is met by the YSA membership, many of whom will be getting jobs over the summer and who may make and meet early pledges. Every effort should be made to continue summer fund-raising projects. Several locals have indicated that they have already mapped out these projects and have begun to implement them. Summer fund raising is a step that we will want to take in regularizing our finances, and one that is necessary to our national functioning.

At this point local budgets should be prepared through December. Many of the figures will change, of course, but the scope of our finances requires this advance preparation. Constructing a budget is the most organized and scientific method of approaching the activity before us.

There has been a special emphasis on our next convention. Because it comes early this year and because it is of particular importance to our movement, we will need to collect convention assessments in advance to be able to finance the convention. The National Executive Committee will set an assessment figure in the near future so that everyone can budget it into her or his personal finances and so that locals can organize their collection.

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There have been a number of tasks projected at this plenum that will require specific financing. It is important to briefly reiterate what financial steps can be taken to meet these tasks.

1. Locals should continue to be current on local expenses. Income from sustainers and some amount of fund raising will be needed for this purpose.

2. Fund drive payments should be scheduled, including the summer months. Contributions that members may give and fund-raising projects will be important in meeting fund drive quotas.

3. We have projected carrying out more consistent regional organizing financed partially by

income from locals and at-large members. An important way of financing regional activity is through honoraria for speaking engagements for the regional organizer.

4. Teams of Young Socialists for Jenness and Pulley are a special project that will require special fund-raising activities to encourage donations from campaign supporters and income from team sales in the field.

There will be variations in how each of these activities will be financed that we will discover as we go along. This is merely a general outline, a basic perspective for meeting the needs of the YSA.

young socialist the organizer

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