

SOCIALIST STRATEGY FOR 1977

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE



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Presented in this bulletin is the Young Socialist Alliance National Executive Committee draft political resolution. The resolution will be considered for adoption at the upcoming Sixteenth YSA National Convention, which will be held in Chicago, Illinois, at the Sheraton-Chicago Hotel from December 31, 1976, to January 2, 1977.

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For years young people have been told that America's prosperity will assure them a decent education, a chance for a good job, and an improving quality of life. Now that future has begun to look increasingly bleak.

Scarce jobs at miserable wages, poor education at exorbitant costs, social inequality, oppression, and injustice—that is the plight facing millions of people. Worst of all, the problems are growing.

This misery and uncertainty about the future isn't just a temporary problem. It's rooted in the social and economic system we live in—the capitalist system.

Capitalism is based on private profit for a tiny minority. This class of millionaires makes up less than 1 percent of the population, yet owns the vast bulk of the country's wealth.

Every institution in society operates according to the needs of this private profit system, ranking human needs at the bottom.

Today the profit system is in a long-term crisis. The depression of 1974-75 threw millions of people out of work.

Even some of the professional propagandists for capitalism began to question the ability of their system to survive.

The much heralded "recovery" of the economy has been no recovery at all for working people. It is a profit recovery for the capitalist class, built on the backs of 2.5 million American workers who, in 1975, joined the more than 23 million others already living below the government's official poverty line.

Capitalism is doomed. It is not capable of meeting the needs of the majority. It must be replaced with a more humane, rational system—socialism. Socialism will mean that the working class, the majority, runs society. This is the only way to construct a world that puts human needs before profits, and can guarantee a decent future.

In this resolution, the Young Socialist Alliance examines the roots of the present capitalist crisis, the ways in which it has affected working people and students, and the strategy needed to fight against the growing attacks on our rights and standard of living.

I. COLLAPSE OF THE AMERICAN CENTURY

The international roots of the crisis of American capitalism stretch back to the world situation that emerged at the end of the Second World War. At the end of the war, the United States was the supreme capitalist military and economic power on a world scale.

U.S. capitalism rebuilt war-ravaged Western Europe and Japan, and spread its investments throughout the world. The economic prosperity of the 1950s was the product of this expansion.

Capitalism's political propagandists predicted a century of absolute American economic and political world domination, guaranteed by the armed might of the U.S. war machine. But by the 1970s, only twenty-five years into the "American Century," capitalism's dream had begun to go sour.

In 1949 the Chinese people carried through a successful revolution, removing one-quarter of humanity from capitalist exploitation. The creation of nationalized economies in Eastern Europe and North Korea and the 1959 Cuban Revolution further restricted Wall Street's field of investment. And for twenty long years, a tiny nation called Vietnam refused to be crushed by U.S. military power and continued its struggle for freedom.

The ability of the Vietnamese people to withstand imperialist attack and a growing international antiwar

movement forced the U.S. warmakers to reconsider their strategy for containing world revolution.

Opposition to imperialism made it more difficult for the United States to launch military invasions such as those carried out in Korea, the Dominican Republic, and Vietnam. The United States was forced to initiate a policy of détente with the Soviet Union and China, combining this with military exercises such as the threatened U.S. intervention into Angola in the spring of 1976.

Highlighted by President Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1972, détente meant that American imperialism would attempt to strike deals with the conservative Stalinist bureaucracies in the workers states, offering trade and diplomatic concessions. In return, Moscow and Peking agreed to help cool down liberation struggles in other parts of the world.

The Stalinists proved more than willing to help Washington contain the growing tide of world revolution. Intent on preserving their own undemocratic rule and privileged bureaucratic positions, the Stalinist leaders in China and the USSR saw the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples as a threat to their own stability. Both Peking and Moscow, for example, pressured the Vietnamese freedom fighters into accepting a cease-fire accord in

1973 that permitted continued U.S. presence in South Vietnam.

Although détente has been a severe obstacle to the development of the world revolution, it has not been able to stop it. The combined pressure of international opposition to U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the continued military struggle of the Vietnamese for liberation resulted in the defeat of the United States imperialist forces in Vietnam in May 1975.

Other anticapitalist struggles have also continued to erupt around the globe:

- The April 1974 military coup in Portugal that ended the forty-eight year Salazarist dictatorship signaled the opening of bold new revolutionary opportunities in Western European countries—some of Washington's closest political allies. Britain, France, and Italy are in turmoil as the combined effects of inflation, unemployment, and political scandals take their toll.

- The death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, who was the fascist dictator of Spain for more than thirty years, has opened up a new period of political struggles by the Spanish workers and farmers unequalled since the end of the Spanish civil war in 1939.

- Last spring the Palestinians living in territories occupied by Israel led the biggest upsurge against the Zionist occupying force in thirty years.

- One of the most significant struggles has broken out in the white racist state of South Africa. Since June of this year, thousands of Africans, Asians, and Coloureds (people of mixed African, Asian, and European descent) have filled the streets of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Soweto, and other cities and townships in a massive

rebellion against apartheid. What began as a student struggle against the imposition of the Afrikaans language in Black schools has evolved into a revolt that challenges the basic racist fabric of South African society.

Washington is placed in a difficult position in regard to these Black revolts. It has a fundamental stake in maintaining the apartheid regime to protect the more than \$1.5 billion in U.S. investments in South Africa. The apartheid system, which provides a massive market of cheap Black labor, is essential to the high profits raked in every year by U.S. corporate interests in South Africa. Without the maintenance of apartheid, the present capitalist economy would crumble in South Africa.

The imperialists have tried to hold back these struggles and others around the world through their standard means: secret negotiations and "shuttle diplomacy," such as that being carried out by Henry Kissinger with the white racist government of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe); threats and CIA intrigues as implemented in Chile—all in the framework of détente. But if all these fail, the Pentagon will opt for new wars.

The antiwar consciousness among Americans that developed during the Vietnam War slows down imperialism's drive toward new wars, but it cannot stop it. The rulers of this system would go so far as the nuclear annihilation of all humanity to avoid losing their grip on the profit system. The only sure guarantee against such a nuclear holocaust is the socialist transformation of society.

In this context, it is clear that what is at stake in the battle between the American working class and the capitalist rulers is nothing less than the future of the human race.

II. THE DECLINE OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

Aided by the McCarthyite anticommunist witch-hunt, the economic boom of the 1950s bred a conservative mood in the United States. American workers assumed that capitalism would continue to provide them with a rising standard of living for the indefinite future.

But by the mid-1960s, the American economy was beginning to feel the effects of inflation. This was largely caused by the government's massive borrowing to finance the war in Southeast Asia. The decline of the dollar as a stable unit of currency helped undermine the entire post-World War II international monetary system.

The Vietnam War also generated an antiwar consciousness at home that was unprecedented in American history. Together with the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement fostered a deep-going distrust of the U.S. government and opened the minds of millions of Americans to radical social and political ideas.

By the early 1970s, the rebuilt economies of West Germany and Japan began to seriously compete with U.S. goods on a world scale. The American ruling class could no longer maintain huge profits while continuing to grant the same rising standard of living to American workers that had been possible during the 1950s.

In this new situation, the American capitalist class was

forced to inaugurate a change in the economic policies followed since 1945.

They opened up an era of cuts in the standard of living of American working people in an effort to shift the burden of their economic problems onto the shoulders of working people. They struck at the economic and social gains won by the most oppressed sections of the working class—Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, other oppressed minorities, and women.

A central aim of the American ruling elite is to improve their competitive position abroad. They can do this only at the expense of the livelihoods of the vast majority of the American people.

To make its program of cutbacks and layoffs palatable to the American people, spokespersons for the capitalist class have embarked on a campaign to convince working people to "lower their expectations."

One aspect of this campaign has been an attempt to tone down expectations of what the government should provide.

Around the country social services such as day care, transportation, medical care, and education are being drastically slashed or eliminated altogether. Yet while these cutbacks are being implemented, allocations for the Pentagon soared this year to more than \$112 billion.

The capitalist rulers *will not* cut the military budget.

They need it to protect their vast investments abroad. They spend billions of dollars every year in military and economic aid for right-wing regimes ranging from the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile to the white minority regimes in southern Africa.

However, they *will* cut social services, because to them, these vital social needs are "frills" to be thrown out when the going gets rough.

Capitalism cannot and will not provide full employment for every member of society. A permanent army of unemployed is essential to the private profit system both as a pool of cheap labor to be used when needed, and as a weapon against those who have jobs, threatening layoffs to dampen workers' demands.

Scapegoats

To prevent the working class from uniting to stop these attacks, the rulers have tried to shift the responsibility for inflation and unemployment away from themselves by creating scapegoats. They tell us that it is the poor, Blacks, other oppressed minorities, and women who are to blame for inflation and high unemployment.

For example, the Democratic and Republican politicians claim that unemployment in the Southwest is caused by "illegal aliens." Many of these "illegal aliens" are *mexicano* workers who, driven by hunger and starvation wages in Mexico, come to the United States looking for work. When cheap labor is needed in this country, especially by U.S. agribusiness, officials encourage undocumented workers to come into this country. These workers are forced into the most menial, degrading jobs at minimal wages. When their services are no longer needed, they are told "go home!" They constantly face the threat of arrest and deportation by agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service—*la migra*.

In recent months, the U.S. government has stepped up its campaign against *mexicanos*, claiming that they are "welfare cheats" who are "stealing jobs from U.S. workers." Yet the government's own facts from the U.S. Department of Labor show that of these *mexicano* workers, less than 4 percent have collected unemployment benefits, and less than .5 percent have ever been on welfare.

In addition, the ruling class propagandists falsely accuse women of creating unemployment by taking jobs away from men. The bosses rationalize their discrimination against women in hiring and on the job by claiming that men with families need jobs more than women, and after all, "a woman's place is in the home" and "women only work for pin money."

Racist attacks

Racism is the centerpiece in the capitalists' drive against the working class' standard of living.

Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other oppressed minorities constitute an easily identifiable layer of the population that can be singled out and blamed for society's problems. Whites are taught that members of oppressed minorities are "lazy and stupid," and therefore don't deserve the same pay and job security as white workers.

Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and other oppressed minorities are the last hired and the first fired. They are pushed into inferior schools and face discrimination in every aspect of life.

The unemployment rate for Black youth jumped from

30.2 percent in 1973 to 40.2 percent in 1976. That's compared to an unemployment rate among white youth of 12.6 percent in 1973 and 17 percent in 1976.

Last year the average Black family earned only about 60 percent as much as the average white family. The number of Black families living below the poverty level is up to 31.3 percent.

Joblessness among the *latino* work force officially rose from 8.2 percent at the end of 1974 to 11.8 percent in the last quarter of 1975. However, these statistics do not include the tens of thousands of *latinos* who are underemployed or work seasonal jobs, or those who have given up looking for work. The real picture begins to emerge by looking at unemployment rates in the *barrios*. Overall unemployment in the Chicano *barrio* of East Los Angeles is estimated to be around 45 percent, and as high as 60 percent among Chicano youth.

Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans are doubly oppressed. They are exploited as workers and discriminated against because of their nationality.

The current economic crisis has further impoverished ghettos and *barrios*. Their schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and recreation facilities have been the most likely to be slashed while unemployment continues to soar. One researcher estimates that between September 1974 and April 1975, Blacks lost jobs at a rate almost twice that of white workers.

Cuts in welfare programs—for many families the only source of subsistence—mean they will sink deeper into poverty. Left in such straits, they are the least able to afford the rising costs of social services, housing, transportation, and food.

Education 'dream freeze'

The increasing contradiction between the needs of the capitalist system and the needs of the majority of Americans is sharply reflected in changes in the public educational system.

Since the end of World War II, America's college student population has increased by more than 600 percent. This boom in education was a result of the post-war economic expansion and the technological advancements that accompanied it. The educational boom reflected the new need of the capitalist class for a more highly skilled and technically qualified work force.

The passage of the GI bills of 1946 and 1952 and the steady increases in financial aid and tuition assistance programs throughout the 1960s made it easier for more young people to attend college. Today there are more than 10 million college students in the United States, compared with 1.6 million in 1940.

During the 1960s, under the impact of the civil rights movement, more and more Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican students began to demand access to higher education. As a result of their struggles, special minority recruitment and admissions programs were instituted in a number of schools.

Now the capitalists' drive to cut back our standard of living makes it necessary for them to attack these gains in education. Over the past few years, instead of expanding, the educational system has begun to contract. Through tuition hikes, increased use of tracking, admission tests, and stricter grading requirements, more and more students have been forced to drop out of college and high school early, cutting short their educational plans.

At the same time, the percentage of students attending two-year colleges increased from 18.7 percent in 1964 to 29.8 percent in 1974, with community college students now numbering more than three million.

Government and business leaders have attempted to portray the shifts in education as beneficial, claiming that they will lead to "career-oriented" education.

Although the community colleges and training programs *do* offer young people the opportunity to learn a trade and develop skills, their main purpose is to meet the needs of big business, not the needs of students or society.

Several years ago, for instance, there was a large demand for computer programmers, so thousands of students were channeled into these courses. At the same time, quotas were imposed on the number of students allowed into many vital programs such as medicine—simply because it was not as profitable to train students to be nurses or medical technicians.

The channeling of minority students into two-year colleges is an attempt to keep them stabilized in the lower-paying job market, with little chance for advancement.

For those students who do receive degrees it's getting tougher and tougher to find jobs in their field. James O'Toole, an assistant professor at the School of Business Administration at the University of Southern California estimates that by 1980 there will be 2.5 college degree holders for every college-level job available.

Many students will be pushed out of school early and will be unable to find *any* jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor statistics, unemployment for sixteen- to twenty-four-year-olds stands at 20 percent and is not expected to improve during the so-called recovery.

Another part of the education cutbacks has been the move by many colleges and high schools to "streamline" and "go back to basics." In effect this means cutting programs such as music, sports, and extracurricular activities. It also means slashing Black, Chicano, women's studies, and other programs.

Through state and local governments' efforts to cut education spending, thousands of teachers have been laid off in high schools and colleges resulting in larger class sizes. Through tuition hikes and cuts in financial aid programs, the rulers are attempting to put more of the financial burden of education onto the backs of working people.

All these steps by the capitalist rulers are intended to significantly limit access to a full education, and to make it better attuned to the capitalists' needs. Although the student population will not drastically diminish in size, the capitalists will continue to tailor the education system to fit their needs of maintaining a skilled, highly specialized work force to run the complex machinery of production.

Education and racism

The educational system also plays an important role in perpetuating racism and inequality. Through tracking, racist "intelligence testing," and other means, Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican youth are forced out of school and onto the streets. More than 40 percent of Chicanos who enter the first grade never graduate from high school. The dropout rate for Black students is 33 percent, while for white students it is 14 percent.

In the 1960s, Black students fought for Black history programs at many universities. Chicano and Puerto Rican

students fought for bilingual-bicultural programs—the simple right to learn in Spanish as well as in English, and to learn about their own histories and cultures. Now, when the economic crunch hits, these programs are the first to be cut.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, under the impact of the developing colonial revolution abroad and conditions here at home, a wave of Black militancy swept over the United States. The capitalists felt compelled to grant some concessions to the Black population. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* that school segregation was illegal. This was an important victory for Black rights. The Supreme Court affirmed what most Black people already knew: that the segregationists' stance of "separate but equal" meant, in fact, "separate but *unequal*."

Standing on the weight of this historic decision, the civil rights movement pushed forward demanding desegregation of school systems throughout the North and South. But the government stalled on fully implementing the *Brown* decision—and still stalls today.

Real, thoroughgoing desegregation could lead to a massive movement of Black people for equality in all fields of life that would be a serious threat to the ruling class. Maintaining racism is essential to the private profit system. A desegregation movement challenging white privilege in housing, employment, and education could also lead to the questioning of *class* inequality.

Today the overwhelming majority of the nation's public schools are still segregated. A 1974 study conducted by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare concluded that eight out of ten minority students in the Northeast and Midwest attended segregated schools. The school systems of the nation's three largest cities—Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago—are almost completely segregated.

Boston, Massachusetts, was the first major city outside the South where federal courts ordered school desegregation. And it is there that white racist opposition to busing has so far been best organized and most determined.

The fight for school desegregation in Boston is central to the battle for Black equality. Both supporters of Black rights and the white racists look to Boston as the place where a major fight is taking place which could lead to either the implementation or overturn of the 1954 *Brown* ruling.

The racist attacks on Black students in Boston have been led by organizations such as Restore Our Alienated Rights (ROAR), which have the support of some of Boston's leading Democratic party politicians.

The federal government's attitude toward busing has been reflected by Ford's refusal to send federal troops to Boston to protect Black students being bused, and by the attitude of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter during the fall 1976 presidential campaign. Both Ford and Carter indicated their opposition to "forced busing." Ford went so far as to indicate that he would support a constitutional amendment prohibiting busing to achieve school desegregation.

Alongside the issue of school desegregation, racist forces have also been massing for an attack on the bilingual-bicultural programs that exist in some public schools and universities.

In 1974 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Lau vs. Nichols*, that to place non-English-speaking students in the same

curriculum with English-speaking students without taking "compensatory measures"—widely interpreted to mean bilingual education—was a denial of equal educational opportunities. The first major test of this ruling came when *Aspira*, a federally funded educational assistance organization for Puerto Rican youth, sued the New York City Board of Education. Although an agreement was reached by both sides that special classes for non-English-speaking students had to be instituted by September 1975, this agreement has not been implemented.

The denial of Chicano and Puerto Rican students' right to learn in Spanish as well as in English is an almost insurmountable barrier to their education. It is the basis for systematic discrimination against them both in school and on the job. Inadequate as the existing bilingual-bicultural programs are, they represent an important gain for the Chicano and Puerto Rican peoples.

The Community Association for Neighborhood Schools (CANS) in Denver, and other racist groups actively opposed these programs. "Do you want your children forced to learn a foreign language?" the racists say. By their suppression of Spanish in the schools, the racists prevent Chicanos and Puerto Rican students from learning in either Spanish or English.

The California Supreme Court also gave backing to the racists' drive on another level when it decided this fall to terminate the University of California's special admissions programs. The justices ruled that these programs, which grant preferential admission to Blacks and Chicanos, and other minorities, were "discriminating" against whites.

Preferential admissions are needed to counteract the decades of racist discrimination against Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano, and other minority students. In the same manner, preferential hiring is needed on the job to prevent discrimination in employment and promotion. Preferential treatment cuts squarely across the government's plans to force *more* Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and women into the ranks of the unemployed.

Polarization

More and more, the economic crisis and the rulers' strategy of attacking the most oppressed sections of the working class have forced people to take sides.

Are you for Black rights, or for white racism? Do you support women's right to abortion, or not? In short, are

you with the oppressed—or with the oppressor?

This polarization has had two effects. On the one hand, it has pushed many working people, particularly women and oppressed minorities, toward seeking more radical solutions. Many are willing to consider socialist ideas.

On the other hand, desperation has created a broader breeding ground for right-wing forces, such as the Boston-based organization ROAR. In Boston, racist scum like the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi party have found a new audience for their racist and anti-Semitic filth. These groups encourage anti-Black terror and violence as a solution to white workers' problems. At this time, however, none of these groups has a wide following.

Racist professors such as Arthur Jensen, William Shockley, and Richard Herrnstein are finding a new response to their reactionary teachings on some campuses. Through their theories of "genetic inferiority," these racists provide a so-called scientific and respectable cover for racism.

The capitalist rulers perpetuate an atmosphere of hate and suspicion by playing on the hopes and fears of the more privileged sections of the working class.

"Look," they tell white workers, "Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans want a bigger slice of the pie. But if they get more, there will be less for you."

The rulers have also encouraged right-wing and racist sentiments in the guise of a "law and order" campaign. Courts have been encouraged to mete out stiffer sentences. The high point in this campaign came in July 1976 with the utterly reactionary, barbaric decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstitute judicial murder in the form of the death penalty. This decision was upheld by the high court in a second ruling in October 1976.

The death penalty is aimed squarely at the most oppressed and exploited sections of the working class. It has no purpose other than to intimidate and terrorize those who rebel against this society.

The capitalists tell us that these law and order measures will help solve the problem of crime. This is a lie. It is the capitalist class that is responsible for crime. Working people and unemployed are forced into crime and drug addiction because of their desperate struggle for survival. As long as poverty remains and as long as the government continues to place private profit above human needs, crime rates will continue to soar.

III. INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS POLITICAL ACTION

The 1976 presidential and vice-presidential debates showed which social groups the various candidates represented. Carter and Ford, Mondale and Dole, spoke before invitation-only audiences on national television. Peter Camejo and Willie Mae Reid, the Socialist Workers party candidates, were excluded from the debates, as were other candidates.

Outside the meeting halls where the debates were held, hundreds of demonstrating supporters of Camejo and Reid demanded that their candidates receive equal media time to present their views. The socialists joined demonstrators

protesting U.S. support to South African apartheid and others demanding that the Democratic and Republican candidates retreat from their anti-abortion stance. Inside, the ruling parties' candidates answered questions from carefully screened journalists.

These debates were one more device to help maintain the grip of wealthy power brokers and corrupt politicians on government. The oppressed and exploited were forced to raise their demands from the outside.

That's how the American political system operates. The Democratic and Republican parties have ruled for more

than a century as the parties of big business. Any disagreements between them reflect different opinions on the best way to strengthen the private profit system.

This past election year the capitalist rulers had a very big problem. As the social crisis continues to deepen, fewer and fewer people maintain much confidence in the government and the two-party system. Ford and Carter were nominated in their respective primaries by a combined vote of only 8 percent of the total voting-age population. During the election campaign the Democratic and Republican parties aimed to win the trust of the disillusioned majority, and bring this majority back into the fold of the two-party system.

Vietnam, Watergate, and the FBI

Much of the distrust for capitalist politics displayed during the elections stems from the combined effects of the economic crisis, the Vietnam War, Watergate, and the continuing revelations of FBI and CIA crimes.

The Vietnam War exposed the hypocrisy and barbarity of U.S. imperialism to millions of Americans. The Vietnamese people's valiant battle to win self-determination won the sympathy and admiration of hundreds of thousands of American youth during the 1960s and 1970s.

Vietnam also revealed that both the Democratic party administrations of Kennedy and Johnson, and the Republican administration of Richard Nixon, were intent on carrying out identical policies of war and destruction in Southeast Asia. Both parties promised to de-escalate the war while moving American involvement to new heights. Both parties were exposed as hypocritical liars.

As Washington continued to pour funds, troops, and bombers into Vietnam, more and more people began to look at the government as a government acting *against* their interests, not *for* them.

The Watergate scandal accelerated the cynicism and mistrust working people were beginning to feel toward capitalist political institutions. As lie after lie of the Nixon administration came to light, many people became convinced that "all politicians are crooks."

Finally, the revelations of FBI and CIA crimes have shown millions of Americans that spying, burglaries, cover-ups, and infiltration of legal political organizations are standard practice in capitalist politics. Many of these crimes have been revealed by the \$40 million lawsuit filed by the Socialist Workers party and Young Socialist Alliance to halt government harassment of our organizations.

Despite the widespread distrust of capitalist politicians, many working people still maintain the illusion that progressive social change can be won through support to the Democratic and Republican parties. Working people do not yet see a powerful alternative to these two parties.

Capitalist politicians try to persuade working people that they are powerless if they act outside the two parties. "Just vote for me," they say, "and I'll solve your problems." They tell people to rely on Democratic and Republican "friends" on Capitol Hill. "That's the *realistic* strategy," they say.

The Democrats and Republicans can't solve the problems working people face, because they create those problems. The strategy of supporting these capitalist politicians to make social change is completely *unrealistic*, as the three following examples make clear.

New York City budget crisis

During the past two years cutbacks have hit high schools and colleges across the country. On September 21, 1976, more than 1,000 students walked out of George Washington High School in San Francisco, protesting a school reorganization plan that removed 250 teachers from classroom assignments in the city's schools. College students in New Jersey held a state-wide demonstration of nearly 10,000 in the spring of 1976 to protest cutbacks. Similar protests have occurred in other parts of the country.

The most massive attack to date, however, has come in New York City.

In mid-1975 the Democratic party administration dropped a bombshell. "The city's broke," they claimed. "We have to economize. Social services have to be cut."

New York City's "budget crisis" is a test case for the ruling class. They have used New York to determine how far they can go in attacking the living standards of workers everywhere. The same methods used in New York will be applied in differing proportions in other cities around the nation. Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Boston are some of the cities where this has already begun.

The majority of city workers in New York—teachers, transit workers, day-care and hospital workers—are organized in unions. Yet these potentially powerful unions failed to stand up to the city administration and protect their membership from the cutbacks. These unions should be leading the fight against cutbacks and layoffs.

The problem is that the leaders of these unions have told workers to rely on their "friends" in the Democratic city administration. Every step of the way they have accepted the demands of the Democratic party politicians for more cutbacks and layoffs. The results have been disastrous.

An estimated 46,000 city workers have been laid off. Subway and bus fares have gone up 43 percent. Hospitals and day-care centers have been closed. Reduced garbage collection has created a health hazard. An Emergency Financial Control Board, made up of Wall Street businessmen and bankers, has been set up with the power to veto union contracts.

From the beginning of the "budget crisis", the ruling class launched a broadside attack against New York City's educational system.

The City University of New York (CUNY), with a student population of 270,000 when the cuts began, had a policy of free tuition from the time the university was established in 1847. In 1970, after a series of campus and community struggles led by Black and Puerto Rican students, an open admissions policy was set up to allow admission to any New York City resident with a high school or equivalency diploma. In the so-called budget crisis, the city administration aimed to eliminate both of these policies.

Student resistance to the proposals to impose tuition and end open admissions was more sustained, and involved larger numbers of people, than the struggles against the other New York cutbacks. At different times, tens of thousands were drawn into mobilizations against the cuts in education.

Black and Puerto Rican students, who were the main target of the cuts, took the lead in the anticutbacks fight. Support to the demands of these students, as well as drawing support from the Black and Puerto Rican

communities, was clearly an important part of a successful strategy to fight back.

This was shown by the struggle to save Hostos College, the only public bilingual college on the East Coast. The New York City Board of Higher Education threatened to close Hostos in the spring of 1976. Several demonstrations, including one of 4,000, were organized by Hostos students and a coalition of community groups, forcing the city to back down and allow Hostos to remain open.

During the struggles against the first round of education cuts, many students mistakenly adopted an attitude of "every school for itself." This attitude helped block support from the majority-white four-year colleges to the largely Black and Puerto Rican community colleges. This weakened the struggle and diffused the potential power that could have been mobilized. Many student government leaders added to the confusion by urging students to lobby their Democratic Party "friends" in the legislature rather than organize protest actions.

The city workers' unions did not throw their support behind the CUNY students. Here, too, the union leadership failed to lead.

By the end of the school year, free tuition and open admissions had been eliminated. More than 35,000 students had been forced out of school. The bankers and businessmen, and their Democratic party servants, had won the first round of the CUNY struggle.

Boston school desegregation

The fight for school desegregation in Boston has come to symbolize all the rights Blacks have fought for during the past twenty years. Recent desegregation orders in Milwaukee, Dayton, Wilmington, Dallas, and other cities add importance to this struggle.

In 1974, Judge W. Arthur Garrity ordered a busing plan to desegregate Boston's schools. Leaders of the all-white, all-Democratic Boston School Committee—which for years had enforced a policy of *de facto* segregation in Boston's school system—immediately began to mobilize a hard core of racist forces in the white community to beat back the busing ruling.

When the first school buses carrying Black students rolled up to the doors of South Boston High School in September 1974, they were greeted by a screaming, rock-throwing mob of white bigots. Since that time, white racist violence against Blacks has continued and spread beyond the schools to other areas.

From the beginning of school desegregation in Boston, the city government refused to enforce the court order and protect Black students. The Ford administration, while maintaining an official policy supporting desegregation, has refused to deploy the necessary force to ensure that Black students are protected.

Late in the fall of 1974, Black leaders in Boston appealed to civil rights leaders around the country to help defend Black students there. In response to their call, a demonstration of nearly 12,000 people was organized in Boston on December 14 to defend the busing order. A second demonstration on May 17, 1975, drew more than 15,000 supporters of Black rights into the streets of Boston. Both of these actions dealt blows to the racists in Boston and helped put the white bigots on the defensive.

When a wave of white racist violence erupted in April 1976, Boston Mayor Kevin H. White sought to blame the violence on both white *and* Black agitators. At the last

minute many Black leaders withdrew their support for a probing demonstration that had been planned for April 24. The Democratic party city administration refused to clamp down on the white racist violence. As this violence escalated, the organizers of April 24 were forced to call off the demonstration.

Today desegregation continues in Boston, but the final outcome of this struggle has not been decided. The Democratic and Republican parties have shown that they will not defend Black rights in Boston, or anywhere else. The only way to stop racist attacks in Boston is to mobilize the Black community and others who support Black rights in defense of school desegregation. What is needed is a massive, nationwide movement, broadly based, and not tied to any political party. Such a movement can educate the majority of American people who are still confused on the issue of busing. It can help to build the Black community's confidence in its *own* independent political power.

Battle for the ERA

For the past year, a movement has been growing for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA, which would outlaw discrimination on the basis of sex, was passed by Congress in 1972 under the pressure of a growing women's liberation movement. So far, thirty-four states have ratified the amendment. Four more need to ratify for the ERA to become law by the 1979 deadline. Ratification, however, has been slowed down by a well-organized right-wing opposition.

This opposition, headed by right-wing figures such as Phyllis Schlafly, head of STOP ERA, has attempted to turn back women's fight for equality by mobilizing and organizing against ratification of the ERA. They correctly see that a defeat for the ERA would be a blow against the entire women's liberation movement.

Until recently, most groups fighting for ratification of the ERA relied on a strategy of electing Democratic or Republican candidates who support the ERA, combined with lobbying state legislatures. Such a strategy has not won ratification. In fact, it has resulted in the defeat of the ERA in some states.

This was seen most clearly in the fall of 1975, when state Equal Rights Amendments appeared on the ballot in New York and New Jersey. Both amendments were defeated at the polls, despite the fact that the *majority* of people in both states support the ERA. In New York, for example, a *Daily News* poll that fall showed that 82 percent of metropolitan New York City residents supported the ERA.

These amendments failed because this majority was not mobilized *in action*. With few exceptions, the major ERA coalitions and women's organizations in New York and New Jersey did little to answer the lies and distortions about the ERA spread by the right-wing opposition.

Because of the anger generated by these defeats and the sentiment for pro-ERA actions, the National Organization for Women (NOW) called a national ERA demonstration. On May 16, 1976, nearly 10,000 women and men marched and rallied for the ERA in Springfield, Illinois. It was the largest women's liberation demonstration since August 26, 1970. It was also the most broadly sponsored women's liberation action held in decades, bringing together Blacks, students, trade unionists, and others. May 16 showed the potential to involve even more groups in future ERA actions.

The May 16 demonstration inspired and excited thousands of women's liberation activists and helped cut across the myth that demonstrations are counterproductive or ineffective. Inspired by May 16, NOW designated August 26 as "ERA Action Day" and endorsed a summer-long ERA picket at the White House. There has also been discussion among ERA activists about future national ERA actions.

Despite the excitement over May 16 and the potential it showed, some leaders of the women's liberation movement turned away from demonstrations during the fall election period to work for pro-ERA Democratic and Republican party candidates, including Jimmy Carter.

Relying on "friends" in the two capitalist parties to ensure passage of the ERA is a losing strategy. Jimmy Carter, for example, says he supports the ERA. Yet Carter's home state, Georgia, is one of the states that has so far refused to ratify the ERA. In fourteen of the sixteen states that have not ratified, the state legislature is controlled by the Democratic party. If the Democratic party were serious about its professed support for equal rights for women, the Democratic legislators in these states would have voted for ratification long ago.

What the New York City "budget crisis" shows, what Boston shows, and what the fight to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment shows is that support to the Democrats and Republicans is a dead end for working people. The potential for social change lies in the independent political action of working people and their allies.

Working class in transition

Six years ago, on May 21, 1970, several New York City unions sponsored a demonstration of 25,000 against the war in Southeast Asia. At the time, this was unprecedented. For the first time in decades, a section of the union movement organized a political mobilization against government policy.

This was one of the first public reflections of the influence of the 1960's student radicalization in the ranks of the labor movement.

Since then, Watergate, the ongoing revelations of FBI and CIA crimes, and increasing economic shocks and dislocations have begun to generate deeper-going changes among working people that point toward a powerful political radicalization of the labor movement.

The first steps in the radicalization of the American working class can be seen, for example, in the campaign being waged in the United Steelworkers union by Steelworkers Fight Back. This movement, which is spearheading the drive to elect Ed Sadlowski as president of the United Steelworkers, is an important development. The Sadlowski campaign reflects a new pressure from the rank-and-file for a democratic, militant steelworkers union.

In speeches to steelworkers around the country, Sadlowski has stressed some of the points that would be part of a class-struggle strategy for the labor movement. He opposes

the "tuxedo unionism" of the conservative AFL-CIO bureaucrats. He opposes all restrictions on workers' right to strike. Sadlowski says that racism and anti-communism have no place in the union movement.

Sادلowski's campaign can have an important impact on the entire union movement as the ideas raised by his campaign influence activists in other unions.

Today the union movement needs a leadership with a class-struggle policy that can champion all the oppressed and exploited in a political showdown with the capitalist class. In the coming years, through trial and error, victories and defeats, the working class will begin to assume a new political role. Developments such as the Sadlowski campaign can be an important part of this transition.

Working people will reject the political leadership of Democratic and Republican party politicians. They will also reject so-called independent politicians like Eugene McCarthy, who are outside the Democratic and Republican parties but remain tied to the private profit system.

Working people will more and more turn to their own action to solve their problems, and they will find new allies among the oppressed.

This means organizing strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, and other forms of mass action, independent of all capitalist parties and institutions.

These actions will provide a challenge to the Democratic and Republican parties. In order to lead the labor movement forward, working people need a political organization that can pose a class alternative to the two capitalist parties—a labor party—that can fight for a workers' government.

Workers need more than a simple vote-catching machine like the Democrats and Republicans. A labor party could be a fighting organization that would challenge the Democrats and Republicans in the elections as well as lead day-to-day struggles of working people and all the oppressed. A labor party could throw a powerful force behind struggles for social change such as the drive for ratification of the ERA or the battle for school desegregation.

Black and Chicano people also have an important stake in breaking from the stranglehold of capitalist two-party politics. The formation of independent political parties based on these oppressed nationalities would be an important political step forward. The Raza Unida parties that exist in many states in the Southwest are an important example in this regard. They show that Chicano political action can only be effective if it is built independent of and in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans.

Mass independent Black and Chicano parties could lead the most oppressed layers of the working class to challenge capitalist rule. They would also spur independent political action by the working class as a whole.

IV. PERSPECTIVES FOR STUDENT ACTION

The Black student rebellions in Soweto this June showed the potential power of the student movement. The struggle by Black students sparked a powerful response by Black workers. During a three-day strike called by the Soweto Students' Representative Council in mid-September 1976 to protest detentions, killings, and harassment by the South African police, as much as 80 percent of Soweto's work force was reported to have stayed home.

The South African events demonstrated the important role students can play in setting the working class and oppressed in motion to change society. It also showed that the working class can be won to support student struggles. The YSA's approach to American politics is based on an understanding of these characteristics of the student movement.

Students tend to reflect the most radical trends in society as a whole. They have the time and resources to study, listen to, and discuss a variety of ideas. Most students do not have the double burden of working full-time and being responsible for a family.

Today the majority of students in college are from working-class backgrounds, and are sensitive to the same social issues as their friends and relatives in the work force. They can serve as a transmission belt to the working class, exchanging radical ideas and attitudes. In times of struggle they can become a catalyst, sparking broader social layers into action.

Communication among both high school and college students is facilitated by their concentration in educational institutions that are often as big as large factories.

The student population today is sizeable relative to the population as a whole. This is particularly true in the United States, which contains the most potentially powerful student population. There are 26 million high school and college students in this country, out of a population of 215 million—more than 10 percent. The objective of the Young Socialist Alliance is to become a mass organization rooted in the high school and college student population.

We aim to organize student struggles around both issues raised in the schools and broader political issues, linking these struggles to those of working people and the oppressed.

This was the key to the success of the anti-Vietnam War movement that forced Washington to withdraw from Southeast Asia. Students organized and mobilized year after year on their campuses. They answered the government's war propaganda and reached out to forces beyond the campus. Students raised demands for an end to the war that were understandable to working people, and helped draw unions and community organizations into antiwar demonstrations. When antiwar sentiment began to take hold among working people and many started to take part in demonstrations, the government beat a retreat.

Today the YSA proposes the same basic strategy for student activists. We seek to turn schools into organizing centers for social change, mobilizing the power of the student movement while reaching out to people in the

workplace and in the communities of the oppressed minorities.

Sometimes it's difficult for students to understand the necessity to link student struggles to the working class. This is particularly true today, when the working class itself is just beginning to develop political and social consciousness and lacks a class-struggle leadership.

The strength of the YSA's political program in the student movement is that we don't see student struggles and issues in isolation from the overall political situation. We try to join the demands of students and workers and help push all of these struggles forward.

YSA and the student movement

There are five main themes that will continue to run through the YSA's campus activity in the coming year.

- The YSA organizes student opposition to U.S. imperialist foreign policy. First and foremost at this time is a campaign against U.S. complicity with the racist regimes in South Africa, South-West Africa (Namibia), and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

- The YSA is in the forefront of the battle for the rights of the most oppressed sections of American society—from the fight for women's rights to the battles for Black and Chicano liberation.

- The YSA is the staunchest defender of the democratic and political rights of all Americans.

- The YSA helps organize students to fight back against economic attacks on the working class and students, particularly against attacks on the right to a decent education.

- The YSA campaigns for socialism. Through our support to Socialist Workers party candidates, sales of the *Young Socialist* and *Militant*, and other educational activities, we aim to help win the majority to socialist ideas.

Program for struggle

Through all these activities the YSA raises the strategy of mass action, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties. As revolutionary socialists, the YSA has the responsibility to become involved in struggles around the most urgent needs and grievances of students.

The most effective way to organize large numbers of people in these struggles is by uniting diverse groups and individuals together in common action. By making decisions democratically in open meetings, a united front-type coalition can draw together the largest possible forces to organize mass actions.

Many of the massive demonstrations against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and early 1970s were organized in this way. Activists with different political affiliations worked together in groups like the Student Mobilization Committee and the National Peace Action Coalition to organize mass actions against the war.

In united-front struggles, slogans and demands should be raised that help aim students' fire most effectively at the capitalist class and its government—the *real* enemies.

Many students will begin to recognize the need for a

socialist revolution through their own experience in actual struggles.

'No' to the U.S. warmakers!

The Young Socialist Alliance is in the front lines of the battle against U.S. imperialism. We say: "No new military adventures abroad!"

All U.S. troops should be brought home from their stations overseas. Not one penny should be spent to prop up right-wing regimes, whether in Chile or South Korea. The peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America have the right to be free of U.S. imperialist domination.

NATO and all other military and diplomatic pacts aimed against liberation struggles of colonial peoples or the workers states in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, North Korea, and Eastern Europe must be disbanded immediately.

The YSA solidarizes fully with the struggle of South African Blacks against the racist and degrading system of apartheid. We must work with other students and organizations, such as the National Student Coalition Against Racism, to organize picket lines, forums, teach-ins, and other activities explaining the role that U.S. imperialism plays in propping up the apartheid regime. We must demand "U.S. out of Africa now! Free all South African political prisoners!"

In particular, the YSA must play an active role in exposing campus complicity with U.S. corporations holding investments in South Africa, and demand "End all campus complicity with South African racism!"

We must help to educate students on the treacherous nature of U.S. diplomacy in southern Africa, exposing Kissinger's present negotiations in Namibia and Zimbabwe as a complete fraud. These negotiations are aimed at preserving the apartheid regime in South Africa, and installing neocolonial regimes in Namibia and Zimbabwe. They have nothing whatsoever to do with the real interests of Black people in southern Africa.

Members of the YSA are also active in the fight for immediate and unconditional independence for the people of Puerto Rico. We demand immediate freedom for the Five Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners who are symbols of the struggle against U.S. colonialism, and we will be participating in demonstrations and other activities organized in their defense.

The YSA supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people for a return to the land that was stolen from them by the racist colonial-settler state of Israel. We support the Palestinians' demand for a democratic secular Palestine, where Palestinians and Jews can live together with full equality.

Over the past year, YSA members in many cities have participated in activities in defense of political prisoners in the Soviet Union, China, and other workers states. We must continue this work and explain to students that these Stalinist regimes have nothing in common with real socialist democracy.

While we defend these workers states against imperialism, the YSA calls for political revolutions to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracies that rule them. We call for the institution of true workers democracy of the type that existed in the Soviet Union in the early days of the Russian Revolution.

Finally, the YSA gives our firm support to the campaigns being waged in defense of political prisoners all

over the world. In particular, we will continue our close collaboration with the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners and the Committee for Intellectual and Artistic Freedom in Iran.

No cutbacks! Jobs for all!

Each year billions upon billions of dollars are poured into the greedy hands of the Pentagon generals to manufacture weapons of destruction. It is symptomatic of the irrational, inhumane character of capitalism that war spending is the government's number one priority.

The Young Socialist Alliance says that we must put human needs before the profits of the capitalist ruling class. We demand that the war budget be cut from \$112 billion to zero. Working people's money should not go to pay for bombers, tanks, and guns to be used against our sisters and brothers struggling for liberation around the world!

Instead the money should go to subsidize a crash program of public works to create millions of useful, productive jobs to help rebuild the cities and clean up the environment. In addition, the workweek should be cut to thirty hours with no reduction in pay. This would reduce unemployment by spreading all the available jobs around. To keep pace with inflation, all union contracts, pensions, and fixed income payments should include automatic cost-of-living escalator clauses.

In many areas, the YSA has been active in strike support work for various unions. Over the next year we will continue this work. In particular, we will continue to build support on the campuses and high schools for the United Farm Workers boycott of scab grapes, lettuce, and wine.

Along with members of the Socialist Workers party, the YSA will be publicizing and building support for the campaign by Steelworkers Fight Back for a militant, democratic steelworkers union.

Education is the right of all members of society, and free education should be made available to all those who want it. Students should receive salaries that include an escalator clause allowing for increases in the cost of living. In addition, students who want to work should be guaranteed jobs.

Over the past several years the YSA has been involved in struggles against cuts in education in many cities. We will continue our participation, explaining to students that the solution to the threat of cutbacks is not to ask the government or campus administration to "cut somewhere else," but to demand *no* cutbacks, and to join with other sectors of the population in a united fight against all cuts.

The fight against racism

Because of the size and overwhelmingly working class composition of the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican population, the struggles of these oppressed national minorities will be central to the socialist revolution. They suffer a dual oppression—both as oppressed national minorities and as part of the working class.

The third American revolution will actually be a combined revolution: a revolution of Blacks and other oppressed national minorities for liberation, together with the struggle of the working class as a whole for socialism.

This makes the struggle against racism and involvement in the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican liberation movements a top priority for the YSA. We want to make a special effort to win new Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican

members and establish the YSA on campuses and in high schools that have a large number of students from these oppressed minorities.

The best way for YSA members to build the anti-racist movement is to join and help build the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR). SCAR grew out of the Boston school desegregation struggle, but has expanded its activity to organize students to fight against every aspect of racism.

For example, in the past year SCAR chapters around the country have been active in the struggle to defend bilingual-bicultural education in Denver schools, the battle against the New York City cutbacks in education and social services, and in support of the fight against the racist apartheid regime in South Africa. SCAR chapters have also participated in the defense of leaders of the American Indian Movement, Stanton Storey, J.B. Johnson, Delbert Tibbs, Joanne Little, and other victims of racist frame-ups.

The YSA agrees with SCAR's action perspective for fighting racism. SCAR demands that the federal government use all necessary force to ensure that court-ordered busing for school desegregation in Boston, Louisville, and other cities is implemented. In these cities, SCAR has been a major force in carrying out the educational campaign needed to win a majority of people to support busing to achieve school desegregation. In this effort, SCAR activists have worked with civil rights groups, student organizations, Black Student Unions, Chicano and Puerto Rican student groups, and others to build broad antiracist actions.

Presently SCAR is planning to increase its activities around South Africa, in support of the Wilmington Ten, and around the case of Gary Tyler.

This last case is of special importance. Gary Tyler is a Black high school student in Louisiana who faces possible execution for a murder he did not commit. Tyler could be one of the youngest victims of the Supreme Court death penalty ruling unless wide support is won for his freedom.

The campaign against the death penalty will be an important part of the YSA's work. The first execution since 1967 was scheduled for October 26, 1976, in Georgia. The victim, Anthony I. Machetti (also known as John Eldon Smith), is a middle-aged white man. Under public pressure, Governor Busbee has stated that he will grant a stay of execution. However, the government will move ahead in its attempts to execute Machetti or someone like him as a precedent for the murder of the hundreds of young Blacks, Chicanos, Native Americans, and Puerto Ricans who now sit on death row.

Together with millions of other Americans, the YSA says "No!" to this barbaric Supreme Court decision. Anthony Machetti must not be executed! The death penalty must be abolished!

Together with organizations and coalitions such as the Georgia Committee Against the Death Penalty and the National Student Coalition Against Racism, the YSA will organize a protest campaign that will continue until the practice of judicial murder is halted.

Undocumented workers are another victim of racist attacks. These workers must be granted the same rights as citizens. One important focus now in the movement to prevent deportations of these workers, is the case of San Antonio activists Mario Cantú and Ignacio Pérez. They were framed-up and found "guilty" of "shielding illegal

aliens."

Support women's liberation

The attacks by right-wing anti-abortion forces and the government on the Supreme Court's 1973 decision legalizing abortion is another part of the general attack on women.

Congress's decision in September 1976 to ban Medicaid payments for abortion was a severe blow to women, especially to women of the oppressed minorities. Each year approximately 300,000 women receive abortions paid for by Medicaid. These women, who are overwhelmingly Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanas, will be pushed into the hands of back-alley, butcher abortionists, or will be forced to bear children against their will.

This measure was taken by Congress despite the fact that polls show that a majority of Americans support a woman's right to abortion and oppose restrictions on that right.

The YSA has an important task ahead of it in helping to mobilize support for the right of women to safe, legal abortions. We should work with other pro-abortion groups to build activities in defense of abortion rights.

In addition, we will continue our participation in the national campaign to win ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. Together with millions of others, we must make our message loud and clear: "200 years of inequality is enough! Ratify the ERA!"

In these campaigns we will want to continue to work with campus and high school women's liberation organizations and other groups such as the National Organization for Women.

Members of the YSA should also participate in these organizations as well as in women's studies courses, where it is possible.

Defend democratic rights!

During the past year the trickle of revelations concerning FBI and CIA crimes has turned into a flood. Despite the efforts of congressional oversight committees to sweep these scandals under the rug, the real story of government spying continues to unfold.

The Young Socialist Alliance, together with the Socialist Workers party, can take much of the credit for this. Our lawsuit against the government has uncovered many of these crimes.

In September 1976, U.S. Attorney General Edward Levi ordered the FBI to halt its thirty-eight year "investigation" of the SWP and its sixteen-year "investigation" of the YSA. But the government's spying and disruption program goes on. Memos sent by FBI Director Clarence Kelley to local FBI offices gave the go-ahead for continued harassment of YSA and SWP members.

In the coming months the YSA will be stepping up its work around the suit. We demand that all secret government files on the SWP, YSA, and other victims of government harassment be opened to the public. We demand the immediate withdrawal of FBI informers from our organization.

All YSA members are plaintiffs in this lawsuit and should help win new support for it. We should get student governments and campus organizations to endorse the suit and help raise funds for the Political Rights Defense Fund. In addition, we should look for opportunities to use the publicity generated by new developments in the suit to get out the YSA's views through increased *Militant* and

Young Socialist sales, campus meetings, and writing articles for the campus media.

The YSA supports the efforts of Michael and Robert Meeropol to reopen the investigation into the frame-up trial of their parents, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed during the 1950s witch-hunt.

We will continue our support to the lawsuit filed against the FBI and the Chicago police force by relatives of Black Panther party leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. Hampton and Clark were murdered in a 1969 police raid on their Chicago apartment.

Recent demonstrations by tens of thousands of gay rights supporters in New York, San Francisco, and other cities have shown the increased support for gay rights. Yet the Supreme Court ruled earlier this year that, in effect, homosexuality is illegal.

The YSA rejects the reactionary notion that gays are "sick." We demand that all antigay legislation be wiped off the books. We demand full human and civil rights for gays! We support the child-custody fights of lesbian mothers such as Mary Jo Risher and Ginny Yaseen.

High schools

The YSA should make a special effort to reach out to high school students and increase our high school membership.

Because of their numbers—more than 15 million—and because of their social composition—overwhelmingly from working class families—high school students can be an important source of student activism.

High school students face a variety of unique problems: their families usually inhibit political activity and they have little freedom of movement within their schools. But their biggest problem is the unending harassment by school administrations against political activities.

Organizing any political activities in high school usually poses the question of student rights. Most high school administrators demand that all students' thoughts and activities be completely under their thumb.

High school students can fight back against this

harassment by organizing students, teachers, parents, and others to come to the defense of their rights.

Through winning such support and waging legal battles, students have established the right to carry out political activities in their schools. But defending that right is a long and uphill battle.

Campaign for socialism

The 1976 Socialist Workers party presidential campaign of Peter Camejo for president and Willie Mae Reid for vice-president reached millions of people with socialist solutions to the economic and social crisis.

During the campaign YSA and SWP members, and hundreds of supporters, distributed nearly one million copies of the Bill of Rights for Working People, the campaign platform. The Camejo-Reid campaign helped the YSA and SWP expand to new cities and win many new members. Camejo and Reid spoke to millions of people through the media and through public meetings all across the country. More than 600,000 registered voters signed petitions to put Camejo and Reid on the ballot in twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia.

Although there will be no national elections in 1977, the YSA can take the same aggressive attitude toward our other resources to campaign for socialism that we took toward the Camejo-Reid campaign.

First, we will support the 1977 local election campaigns of the Socialist Workers party. YSA members in colleges and high schools can help organize speaking engagements, debates, and other activities for the socialist candidates and distribute campaign literature.

The YSA will continue to expand the sales of the socialist newspapers, the *Militant* and the *Young Socialist*. These newspapers are two of our most important tools for explaining socialist ideas to students.

Finally, and most importantly, we must constantly explain to students the importance of joining a socialist organization that can fight for their interests—the Young Socialist Alliance.

V. A FUTURE WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Working people and their allies—divided by race, sex, and job status—live under many different conditions with different problems and experiences. They do not all at once come to the same conclusions about what course to follow toward a better system. Those who first recognize the need for revolutionary action have the responsibility to organize themselves around a correct program to help win the millions of others who will follow.

The Socialist Workers party in this country is the nucleus of the mass revolutionary workers party needed to carry through a successful socialist revolution. The SWP is a party based on the principles of revolutionary socialism elaborated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, and Trotsky, and enriched by the knowledge and lessons accumulated by the world revolutionary movement over the past century. The SWP has a proud record of struggle in defense of the working class that spans almost forty years.

The Young Socialist Alliance is in political solidarity with the SWP. We aim to become a mass organization of young people, providing leadership to struggles on the college and high school campuses.

Forged in the heat of political struggles over the past decade-and-a-half, our political program has enabled us to develop an understanding of where the student movement is going, and what its perspectives should be.

The YSA is a revolutionary socialist organization. We stand unalterably opposed to the inhuman, outmoded, parasitic system of private profit. We believe that to overturn that system a revolution is needed, a revolution involving the support and participation of millions of students together with the vast majority of working people.

The YSA is a democratic organization. The decisions concerning our political program, our organizational structure, and our activities are voted on by the highest

body of the YSA—our national convention. Prior to the convention, a written preconvention discussion is held in which a bulletin is opened for written resolutions or comments by any member. This bulletin is then circulated to the entire membership of the YSA. Based on special chapter meetings where discussions are held and resolutions are voted on, chapters elect delegates to the national convention. At the convention, delegates make the final decisions on national policy and elect a national leadership. Following the convention, the decisions passed by the YSA are carried out by the entire membership.

The YSA is an internationalist organization. We recognize that the struggle for a socialist future cannot be confined within the national boundaries of a single country. The capitalist system has its roots in countries

throughout the world. Hence our struggle against it must be a worldwide struggle. The YSA maintains collaborative relations with sister organizations in countries around the world that support the Fourth International—world party of socialist revolution.

As the economic and social crises caused by capitalism's decline increase in intensity, more and more people will begin to look toward the YSA for answers to their questions.

We know that one individual alone can't bring about fundamental change. The only way to fight back is to unite with other people in a powerful organization. This is the only course that can ensure humanity a meaningful future. Joining the YSA is one of the greatest contributions any one can make toward that future.

APPENDIX

LETTER TO ALL NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

P.O.Box 471 Cooper Station
New York, N.Y. 10003
October 28, 1976

TO ALL NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear Comrades,

At the August 10-11 National Committee meeting in Oberlin, Ohio, the National Committee unanimously adopted the general line of a draft political resolution that had been submitted by the National Executive Committee.

During the discussion many National Committee members and organizers made extensive suggestions for improving the draft. In order to incorporate many of these ideas the NEC has substantially rewritten the original draft resolution.

It is the opinion of the NEC that the new draft reflects the same general line as the original. Because the final draft has not been available to the whole National Committee, the NEC voted to present the final draft as a National Executive Committee draft resolution rather than as a National Committee draft resolution.

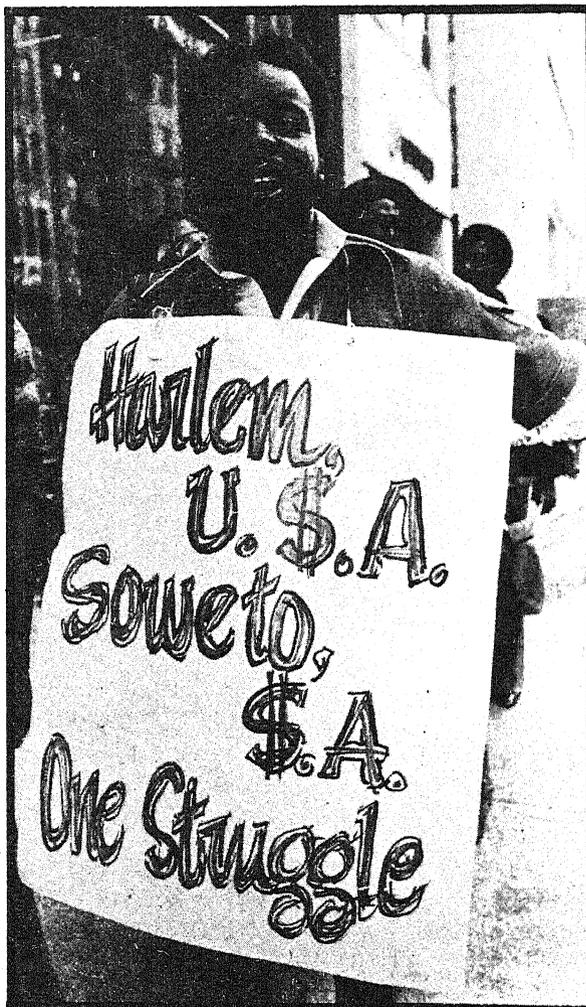
Comradely,
s/Nan Bailey
YSA National Chairperson,
for the National Executive
Committee

Come to the

Young Socialist Alliance National Convention

Dec. 31- Jan. 2
Sheraton-
Chicago Hotel
Chicago, Illinois

For local information:



Reports, Panels, and Workshops on: South Africa, ERA and Abortion Rights, School Desegregation, Chicano Liberation, Death Penalty, Puerto Rican Independence, CIA and FBI Crimes, Anticutbacks Fight, Latin American Political Prisoners, Building the YSA

Classes, Delegated Sessions, Special Presentations, New Year's Eve Party
Registration begins Thursday at 6:00 pm, fee \$5 or \$2.50 for high school students

For more information contact: Young Socialist Alliance, P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10003,
(212) 989-7570 or Young Socialist Alliance, 407 S. Dearborn #1145, Chicago, Ill. 60605, (312) 427-0280