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YSA PLENUM SCHEDULE

Saturday, May 12

10:00-10:30am	Organization of the Plenum (½ hour)
10:30-11:00am	Greetings from the Socialist Workers Party (½ hour)
11:00- 1:30pm	Political Reports: Cathy Sedwick, NEC Reporter (1¼ hours) Roger Horowitz (1¼ hours)
1:30- 3:00pm	Lunch (1½ hours)
3:00- 7:00pm	Discussion (4 hours)
7:00- 8:00pm	Dinner (1 hour)
8:00- 9:30pm	Discussion (1½ hours)
9:30-10:10pm	Summaries: Roger Horowitz (20 minutes) Cathy Sedwick (20 minutes)
10:10-10:30pm	Vote (20 minutes)

Sunday, May 13

9:00-10:00am	Building the 1980 SWP Campaign
10:00- 1:00pm	Discussion (3 hours)
1:00- 2:30pm	Lunch (1½ hours)
2:30- 2:45pm	Summary (¼ hour)
2:45- 3:00pm	Vote (¼ hour)
3:00- 3:45pm	Summer Tasks and Perspectives Report (45 minutes)
3:45- 5:45pm	Discussion (2 hours)
5:45- 6:00pm	Summary (¼ hour)
6:00- 6:15pm	Vote (¼ hour)
6:15- 6:30pm	Election of the National Executive Committee Report (¼ hour)
6:30- 7:00pm	Discussion (½ hour)
7:00- 7:15pm	Vote (¼ hour)

## PROPOSED PLENUM RULES

1. That the presiding committee consist of the following: Berman, Brady, Green, Jayko, Mailhot, Marroquin, Rees, Sedwick, Zarate.
2. To adopt the following agenda:
  - a. Organization of the Plenum.
  - b. Greetings from the Socialist Workers Party.
  - c. Political Reports.
  - d. Building the 1980 SWP Campaign
  - e. Summer Tasks and Perspectives.
  - f. Election of the National Executive Committee
3. To approve the schedule as written.
4. That the following rules govern the plenum:
  - a. In case of procedural disputes, discussion shall be limited to two speakers, one for and one against, each with two minutes.
  - b. Discussion from the floor shall be limited to seven minutes per speaker.
  - c. A speaker may have the floor only once in a given discussion period until all those who wish to speak have had a chance.
  - d. Voting on procedural motions will be done by voice vote, unless a division of the house is called for. Voting on all other motions will be done by a show of cards.
  - e. In all other cases Roberts Rules of Order shall apply.
5. That the plenum guests be chapter organizers, representatives from at-large areas and one at-large member where there are branches of the Socialist Workers Party, with voice and consultative vote.
6. That observers be designated representatives of the Socialist Workers Party, members of organizations of our international cothinkers, and designated members of the YSA.
7. That Bob Miller and Susan Stephens serve as plenum secretaries.

Regular National Committee Members -- Elected January 1, 1979

Susie Berman	Shirley Pena
Ellie Beth Brady	Maura Rodriguez
Carol Burke	Sally Rees
Agnes Chapa	*Bronson Rozier
Doug Cooper	Cathy Sedwick
Vince Eagan	Jo Carol Stallworth
Jeff Elliot	Glova Scott
Steven Fuchs	*John Stiller
Laura Garza	Mike Tabor
Anthony Gonzalez	Peter Thierjung
Eli Green	Brian Williams
Holly Harkness	Miguel Zarate
Matthew Herreshoff	
Jerry Hunnicutt	
Margaret Jayko	
Paul Mailhot	
Hector Marroquin	
Steve Marshall	
Rohima Miah	
Kara Obradovic	

\*Since the 1979 national convention, Joy Becker and Reiko Obata have resigned from the YSA. As first alternate, John Stiller and as second alternate, Bronson Rozier became regular members of the National Committee to fill the vacancies created by the resignations.

Alternate National Committee Members

1. Samara Jarosh
2. Mindy Brudno
3. Michael Chamberlin
4. Lisa Hickler
5. Kathryn Crowder
6. Sue Skinner
7. Nels J'Anthony
8. Roger Horowitz
9. Sylvia Lopez
10. kate Daher
11. Leah Finger
12. Joanne Kuniasky
13. Jamileh Sayrafiezadeh
14. Aaron Hatch
15. Rick Young
16. Susan Apstein
17. Lee Martindale
18. Bob Warren
19. Tuval Foguel
20. Rick Reaves
21. Margo Storsteen
22. Caryn Swann
23. Dywond Bell

YSA MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

There are currently 42 chapters of the YSA; 34 are center chapters (in cities where there are SWP branches); 8 are regional chapters (in cities where there is no SWP). Statistics are based on the total membership in the center areas (chapter and at-large members) and in regional areas (chapters and areas where there are 3 or more members) for January to May of 1979. Previous time periods statistics were based on chapter statistics only.

<u>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</u>	<u>Jan.-Dec.1977</u>	<u>Jan.-May1978</u>	<u>Aug.-Dec.1978</u>	<u>Jan.-May1979</u>
Center	-	378	301	317
Regional	-	74	64	76
At-large	-	49	90	27
TOTAL	<u>608</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>455</u>	<u>420</u>
 <u>RECRUITMENT</u>				
Center	-	96	63	57
Regional	-	27	16	17
TOTAL	<u>272</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>74</u>
 <u>DROPPED FROM MEMBERSHIP</u>				
Center	-	56	61	20
Regional	-	7	7	8
TOTAL	<u>155</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>28</u>
 <u>RELEASED TO SWP</u>	70	38	52	26
 <u>SEX</u>				
Female	42%	42%	39%	37%
Male	58%	58%	61%	63%
 <u>OPPRESSED NAT'L MINORITIES</u>				
Blacks	-(13%)	50(11%)	37(10%)	47(12%)
Chicanos	-(4%)	17(4%)	15(4%)	16(4%)
Puerto Ricans	-(1%)	4(1%)	1(1%)	1(1%)
Asian-Americans	-(1%)	2(1%)	4(2%)	4(2%)
Other	-(1%)	8(2%)	6(2%)	13(3%)
TOTAL	<u>-(19%)</u>	<u>81(18%)</u>	<u>62(17%)</u>	<u>81(21%)</u>
 <u>STUDENT MEMBERS</u>				
College students	-(66%)	266(59%)	165(45%)	197(50%)
High School students	-(8%)	25(6%)	18(5%)	20(5%)
Junior high School students	-	-	-	3(1%)
TOTAL	<u>-(76%)</u>	<u>291(64%)</u>	<u>183(50%)</u>	<u>220(56%)</u>
 <u>TIME IN YSA</u>				
Less than 6 months	27%	27%	22%	27%
6 months to 1 year	17%	14%	16%	16%
1-2 years	19%	17%	14%	19%
2-3 years	13%	16%	15%	14%
3-4 years	7%	9%	13%	12%
Over 4 years	15%	18%	18%	11%

<u>AGE</u>	<u>Jan.-Dec. 1977</u>	<u>Jan.-May1978</u>	<u>Aug.-Dec.1978</u>	<u>Jan.-May1979</u>
Under 15	1.5%	1%	0%	1%
15-17	6%	5%	5%	5%
18-20	25%	19%	19%	19%
21-23	35%	39%	36%	33%
24-26	20%	25%	26%	23%
27-29	6%	8%	9%	8%
Over 29	1.5%	3%	5%	3%

71% of members in centers are also members of the SWP.  
5% of members in regional areas are also members of the SWP.

Of the members recruited in the last year there are:

- 3% Junior high school students
- 8% High school students
- 75% College students
- 18% Full time workers
- 42% Part time workers
- 31% Women
- 22% Black
- 1% Asian American
- 3% Latino

There are currently 96(24%) members working full time and 148(38%) working part time.

There are 41(10%)members in industrial unions:

- 8 Steel
- 2 Rail
- 1 Teamster
- 1 Paper and Printing Workers
- 1 Iron Workers
- 3 International Association of Machinists
- 14 Auto
- 5 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers/United Eletrical Workers/International Union of Electrical Workers
- 3 Communications

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Chicago

4/27/79

To the National Executive Committee.

Dear comrades:

The upcoming YSA National Committee plenum will discuss the most important decision the YSA has had to make in its 20 year history: whether we should shift our orientation from the campuses to the industrial unions. The proposal that will be submitted by the NEC for this turn, correctly or incorrectly, involves a 180% shift in the orientation of the YSA. I urge the NEC, therefore, to employ the plenum to initiate the discussion around this question but to leave a definitive decision for a special convention to be held three months hence, preceded by a period of preconvention discussion. If ever a convention was necessary, this is certainly the time.

My view is based on the reasons why the Trotskyist movement has always placed such emphasis on holding internal discussion and conventions prior to making programmatic or major strategic decisions. It flows from our conception of the need for a democratic centralist organization, and the means for making an organization truly democratic and centralized.

The concept of a democratic centralist organization is based on the view developed by Lenin that only a party with a unified program and a centralized intervention into the class struggle can make a socialist revolution on the national or international level. The need for a centralized organization flows from the need for a common approach by the organization to all political questions; there must be a common analysis and a common program for action by the entire organization in order to raise the consciousness of the working class. The need for internal democracy flows from the need to ensure that the program of the organization corresponds to the collective experience of the entire membership and is supported, or at least understood, by all members. The degree of centralization of the organization can only follow from real political agreement or understanding of the program and orientation of the organization by the entire membership; extensive internal discussion throughout the entire organization by all members prior to decisions being made is the only way to accomplish effective centralization.

In this regard I remind comrades of the debates a few years ago about the degree of centralism in the Fourth International. The SWP leadership has consistently and correctly asserted that a centralized international with a common program and a common position on international questions can only be the result of real political agreement, and will follow from a full discussion of questions within the International. Otherwise, as Jack Barnes has pointed out, the centralism of the international would be in fact artificial, and would result in the imposition of political views on recalcitrant sections from the international center. The actual result would be increasing tensions and decreasing effective centralism.

The applicability of these points for the YSA are evident. Inside the YSA now, because of the radical nature of the NEC proposal, there exists considerable confusion, as well as opposition. 4 comrades in Chicago oppose the proposal as it stands now and there is considerable confusion among 3 or 4 other comrades. Even if there were no opposition to the proposal at the plenum (which will not be the case), it is imperative that a convention be called for precisely those points outlined above.

- 1) To ensure that the decision made by the YSA corresponds to the collective experience of the entire organization.
- 2) To ensure that the decision made is either agreed to or understood by the entire organization.

A plenum of the national committee is completely insufficient for these purposes, precisely because it has not been preceded by publication of a line document and internal discussion in the chapters involving all the membership. Consequently, it will not be possible for the National Committee to communicate the views and experiences of the entire membership in the discussion at the plenum. For that matter, rank and file comrades will not have an opportunity to fully express their views, and ask questions about the proposal until after the plenum after the proposal will have been passed and its implementation started.

If the NEC proceeds as it has planned, the vast majority of comrades will only learn the full contents and details of the proposal by reading a document that will have already been passed. The comrades who may be asked to go into industry will, by and large, learn the details after the plenum approves the turn. Even if this turn were adopted at a convention, I feel there would be damage to the YSA. But to attempt such a radical shift in orientation without a convention is to risk seriously disrupting the functioning of the YSA on a national level. Comrades, who will learn the details of the turn at the same time as they are urged to implement it, will inevitably be disoriented, if not angered, by the National Committee's decision. The result, I fear, will either be effective non-implementation of the plenum's decision or outright resignations. The net effect would in fact be a decline in the degree of centralization of the organization and increasing difficulty in conducting national campaigns around any number of issues.

I do not dispute the formal right of the National Committee to make such a decision--only that it would be a mistake for the NC to decide the matter on its own authority. The form of democratic centralism should not be mistaken for its content. Unanimity on the NC has not been a factor in the past in the calling of conventions. So far as I know, there has been no opposition on the NC for the past 10 years to the proposed political reports of the NEC. Yet, each time the National Committee has called a convention, and correctly so. Surely, if any one of these 10 previous political resolutions required a convention to approve and implement, this report, the most important in the history of the YSA, certainly deserves the convocation of a convention.

If a convention is called, it is entirely appropriate for the National Committee to have a full discussion on the NEC report and to vote on it. It would lay the basis for probably the richest pre-convention discussion in the history of the YSA. As an organization, we would have to come to terms with the previous history of revolutionary youth organizations, evaluate the 20 year history of the YSA, determine the real state of the student movement, and so. The ysa as a whole would be politically armed for whatever decision was reached at the convention.

To make certain this occurs, I urge the NEC to propose to the plenum that a special convention be held as soon as constitutionally possible.

Regardless of whether a special convention is called by the National Committee, there will be extensive discussion at the plenum on ~~the~~ the proposed turn to industry. I am opposed to the proposal as it stands. As an alternate on the National Committee, I request the opportunity to make a counter-report to the plenum on the NEC proposal, of equal length as the time allotted to the NEC reporter. It is the tradition of our movement that viewpoints opposed to that of the leadership be given extra time at both national committee plenums and conventions to be presented. Such was the practice at the December 1978 SWP plenum on the question of the nature of Cuba. Given my detailed and strongly opposed views, it would be impossible for me to explain my full position in the short time allotted each person in the discussion. It would require time for extended comments on my part for my alternative viewpoint to be expressed. I urge the NEC to make such a proposal to the NC.

Additionally, as this letter contains both a proposal to the NC (a special convention) and a proposed change in the NEC proposed agenda (addition of a counterreport to the NEC political report), I request that this letter be distributed to both full and alternate NC members, as well as organizers, prior to their arrival at the plenum. Prior distribution would give comrades a chance to think about my views on the convention, as well as whether to grant me a counterreport, similar to the manner in which they have been able to think about the turn prior to arriving at the plenum. I would be willing to help with any financial problems involved in distribution.

I am submitting this letter to the full NEC and would like it discussed in the NEC. As soon as a decision is reached on my requests, I would appreciate the results being communicated to me. If I am to present a counterreport, I need some time to prepare it. Hope to hear from you soon.

Comradely,

*Roger Horowitz*

Roger Horowitz  
5442 S. Harper Ave #110  
Chicago Ill. 60615

312-684-6898

P.O. Box 471 Cooper Station  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
May 8, 1979

Dear Roger,

We received your letter dated April 27, on May 3. Our attendance at the SWP plenum, and preparations for the May 6 anti-nuke action prevented us from sending you a reply sooner. We discussed your letter in the recent NEC and wanted to give you some of our thinking on the points you raised.

Cathy (Sedwick) told you in your phone conversation that the proposed plenum agenda will include a report by you of equal time with the NEC reporter on the NEC proposal for a turn to industry by the YSA. As Cathy explained, your report would best help the discussion by taking up your political disagreements with the NEC proposal. There will be a separate report on the plenum agenda on our summer tasks which will include a discussion on the idea of a special convention.

In your letter you urge the NEC to initiate the discussion on the turn proposal at the plenum but postpone making a definite decision until after a special convention is held. Your motivation for this procedure is that the NEC proposal is so important and so radical that a plenum can't decide the question. You also state that it would cause political confusion and violate the spirit, though not the letter, of norms of democratic centralist functioning.

Your letter raises important and basic questions about democratic centralism, and the role of leadership in a Leninist organization. In discussing your letter in the NEC, we differed with your understanding of these questions. We feel the decision of whether or not to have a special convention flows from the results of the political discussions and decisions at the plenum. If the national committee discussion achieves political clarity and agreement on the next steps forward for the YSA, then it is the responsibility of the national committee to go back to the chapters and explain those decisions and lead in carrying them out. This is based on our conception of leadership in the YSA. Our formal leadership bodies are chosen in such a way so that they will have the fullest confidence of the membership, precisely so that they can lead on all questions. We feel the NC elected by our convention is an accurate reflection of the YSA membership as a whole.

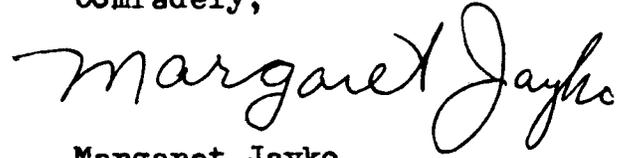
From our discussions around the country with comrades about the turn proposal, it seems that there are a lot of questions, ideas and good discussions going on. Comrades are deepening their understanding of the working class radicalization that the YSA has been discussing since 1975, and thinking out what it means for our organization. We

feel this is a positive thing and will enhance the deliberations at the plenum.

We feel that the most important thing to do now is to have a thorough and democratic discussion at the plenum. Once this takes place, we are confident that we will arrive at the best decisions to move the whole YSA forward.

As you requested your letter, and this reply, will be included in the packets for all NC members and guests at the plenum.

Comradely,



Margaret Jayko  
for the National Executive  
Committee