

Box 471 Cooper Station  
New York, New York 10003

March 6, 1969

To All Organizers, NC Members, and At-Largers

Dear Comrades,

Attached is a report on the SDS Regional Conference at Ohio State University, February 7-9, by Roger Rudenstein, organizer of the Cleveland local. This report is for the information of all YSA members.

Comradely,

*Charlie Bolduc*

Charlie Bolduc  
National Chairman

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REPORT ON SDS REGIONAL CONFERENCE AT OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBUS,  
OHIO, FEB. 7-9, by Roger Rudenstein

SDS held a regional conference in Columbus, Ohio over the February 7-9 weekend. Although there was a bit of a turnover we estimate that 150 to 200 young people participated. Areas represented were Bowling Green, Kent, Ohio State University, Ohio University in Athens, Case-Western Reserve University and Defiance College where SDS has cohesive chapters and schools like Heidleberg, Antioch, Urbana, where it has small chapters or individuals.

The conference started on Friday night with a film and a report on the Guatemala guerrilla movement by an SDSer who had been to Guatemala. His long, rambling talk was sympathetic to the movement. Near the end of this session Dave Prince, our comrade back from Cuba, asked if he could address the conference. He was promptly Trot-baited by an SDSer, Mark Shapiro, who had been in Cuba 3 months. Shapiro, however, said that Dave could attend the Cuba workshop and make his remarks there.

The conference broke into three workshops: Columbia ROTC Proposal, NLF, and Cuba. The Cuba workshop was the best attended and was constantly interrupted by leaders of the other workshops begging for people to attend theirs. Mark Shapiro started out the Cuba workshop with a talk about his experiences there. His view of Cuba is more sympathetic than Oglesby's (in the Life article), also more uncritical. However, he did mention seeing posters reflecting support for the Czechoslovakian workers and students although this was not the official line. He was critical of the artistic freedom that exists in Cuba, saying that art should only reflect the revolution, never anything personal. This view turned some people off to him - but not to the revolution. Dave Prince's remarks were well taken by the workshop. However, in order to comment, he had to undergo the wrath of Shapiro, who kept making faces at being upstaged. Of important note is the fact that the students at the conference were all interested in and in support of the Cuban Revolution. Dave's display of posters from Cuba at our literature table attracted a great deal of comment as did the Che flags and Cuba literature we were selling.

On Saturday, there was a session dealing with Columbia SDS's proposal that SDS focus on eliminating ROTC in the Spring. Much speechifying was made at this session about the nature of the working class, the students, etc. One SDSer said there is an "International Proletariat making a World Revolution." Thus, he opined, the Columbia proposal should be accepted. (?) Another SDSer gave Mandel's analysis of the working class - that students are not middle class - the working class is all those who do not own the means of production and who are not corporation lawyers, doctors, etc. He felt that this proved that SDS should bury itself in a factory somewhere (confused worker-student alliance type). Most of the SDSers said that on their campus they were focusing on this or that issue so they didn't have time to bother with ROTC. The session ended in total confusion with no decisions made.

The afternoon session was on white racism. Featured was a panel of four white people. As a result, about eight Afro-Americans from Kent BSU walked out. Later, a black leader of the Welfare Rights Movement came and asked for support of a welfare mothers march on the governor's office in Columbus, Ohio. The session agreed to this.

At the Saturday session there was also an apology made to Dave Prince for the nasty time Shapiro had given him in the Cuba workshop. Sunday was to have a discussion of regional structure, but we did not stay to hear it.

The whole tone of the conference was one of political confusion. The regional leadership of SDS is very conscious of the necessity to build a large organization in Ohio. What eludes them is exactly what politics to base the group on. Clearly a lot of thinking is going on in SDS on this subject but there is little agreement. In action this means every chapter does its own thing.

The YSA literature table was very well received at the conference; we sold over \$35 worth of literature, Che flags and buttons. Also, we made contacts for Dave's Cuba tour, publicized April 6th, and got 2 pages of names of people interested in the Young Socialist Alliance.