

**Communism and  
Revolution**

**Vs.**

**Revisionism and  
Reformism**

**In the Struggle to Build the  
Revolutionary Communist  
Youth Brigade**

**by the  
Revolutionary Communist Party, USA**

**\$.50**



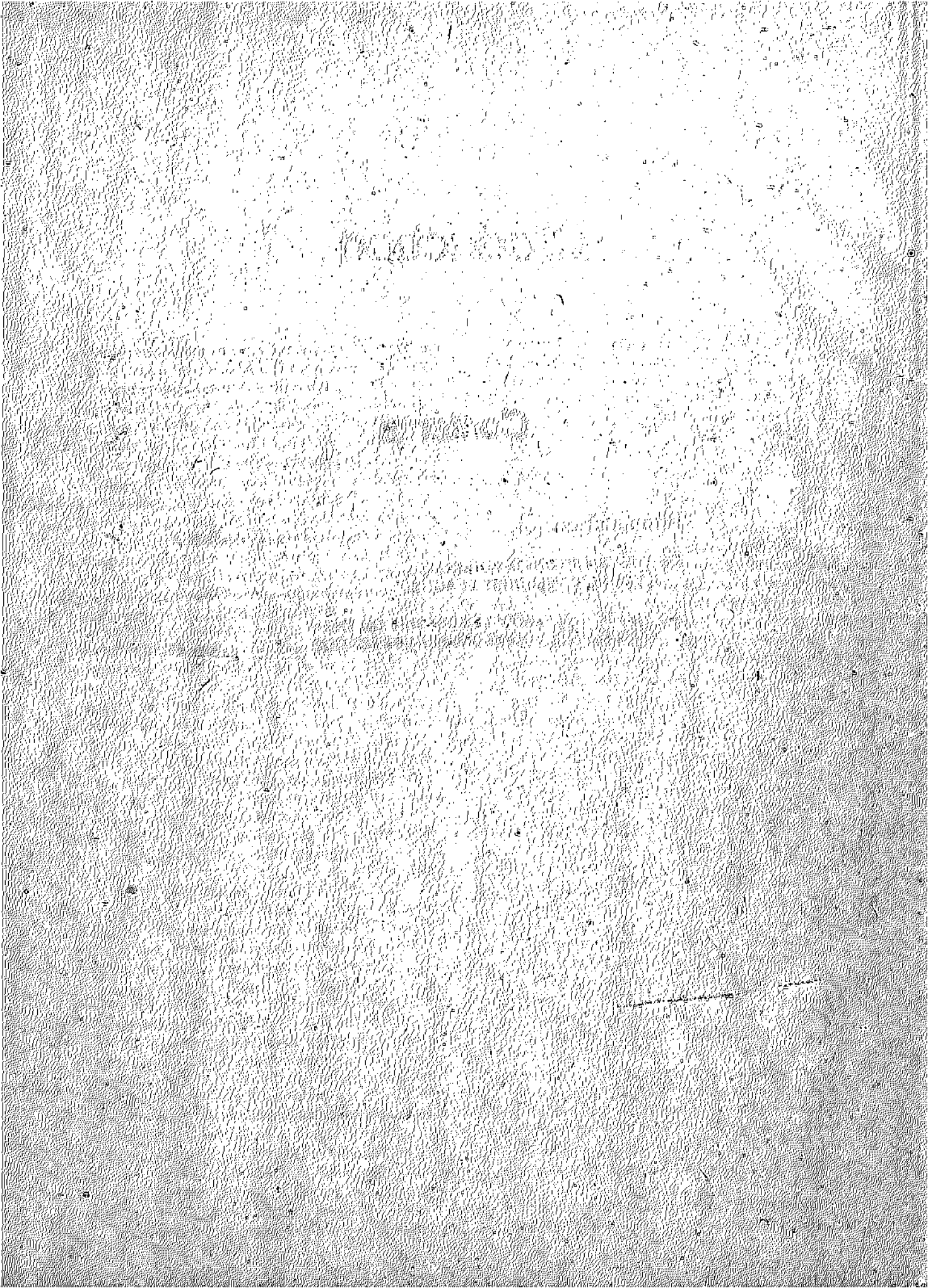
**Published and Distributed by**  
**RCP Publications**  
**P.O. Box 3486 Merchandise Mart**  
**Chicago Illinois 60654**  
**Bulk Rates Available**  
**Please Prepay all orders to RCP Publications**

**© RCP Publications**  
**1978**



# Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	Page 3
ON THE QUESTION OF BUILDING A YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE .....	Page 5
APPEAL TO THE PARTY LEADERSHIP ON THE NAME OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE .....	Page 21





# Introduction

In November 1977, the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, the youth organization of the Revolutionary Communist Party, was founded. But this victory was not achieved without struggle—not only mass struggle, but also struggle within the Revolutionary Communist Party between two sharply opposed lines.

The struggle focused on the name of this organization, with a number of leading comrades in youth and student work, together with some others, opposing the Party's line of having the word "*Communist*" in the name of the organization. As has now become clear, these comrades had been organized as part of a revisionist headquarters within the RCP, headed by former members of the old CP, who, while joining the RCP (and the Revolutionary Union before it) and playing a positive role to an extent and on that basis becoming leading members, never made a thorough-going rupture with revisionism. This headquarters engaged in factional opposition to the central leadership of the Party on the question of the communist youth organization as well as many other questions. Of course not everyone who took this position was part of this revisionist headquarters and many have since repudiated this line.

The struggle over the name for the youth organization was actually over far more than that: it represented two lines over the character and purpose of this organization. The correct line of the Party is based on the basic view of the Party's *Programme* that "there is only one path that offers youth a genuine opportunity to put to use its enthusiasm, its innovativeness, its daring and its determination to change the world—proletarian revolution."

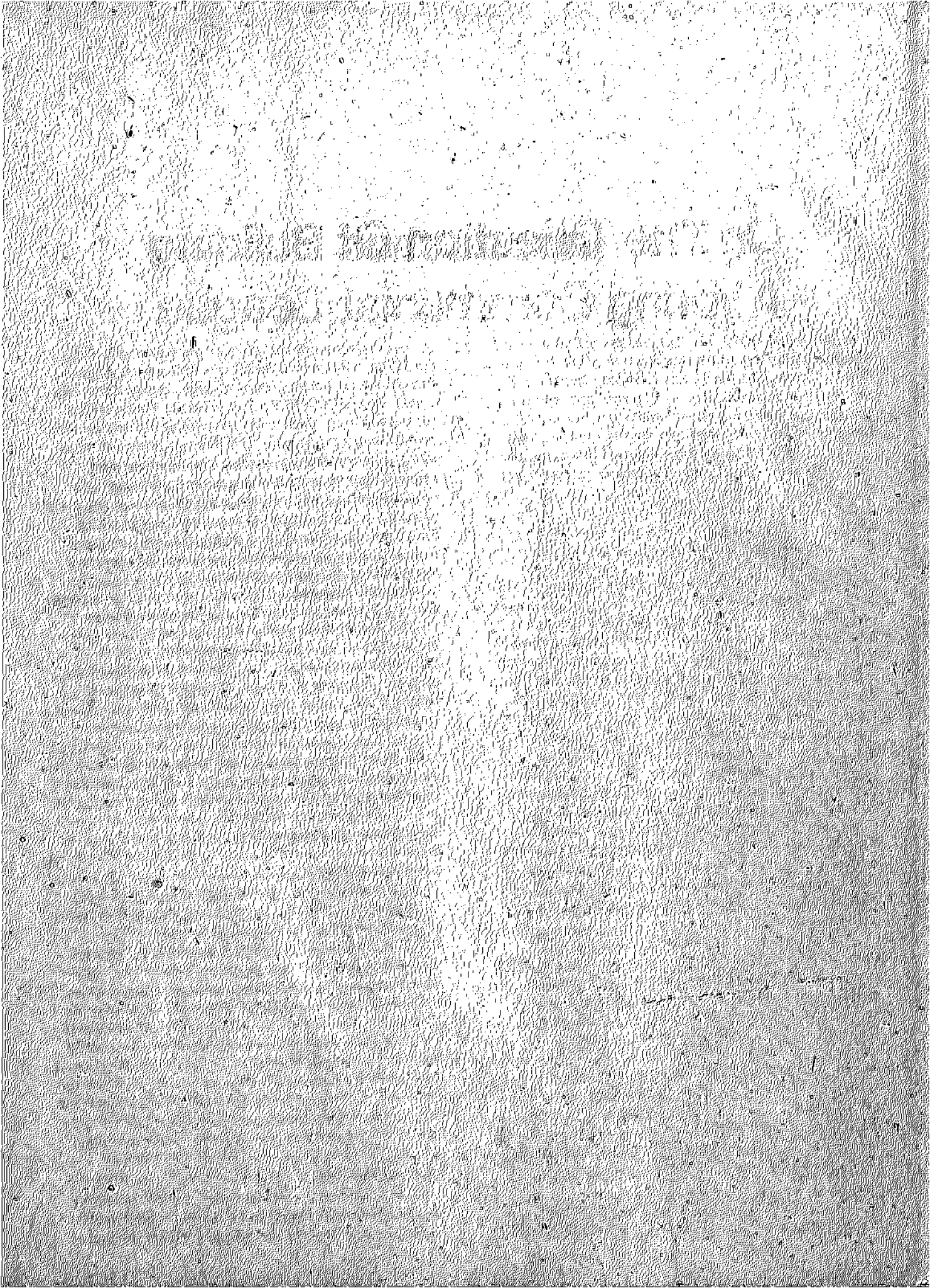
To chart this path requires the leadership of the Party of the working class, its line and outlook of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, and an organization that carries out all three tasks with regard to the masses of youth as laid out by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the RCP, in his speech to the founding convention of the RCYB: first, leading the masses of youth in struggling against the attacks and abuses they face; second, fighting at the side of the working class under the leadership of its Party in the overall struggle against the imperialists and for revolution; and third, broadly and boldly propagating communism among the masses, and especially youth.

The opposing line, while opposing "*Communist*" in the name, opposed far more. It watered down and

narrowed the nature and tasks of the youth organization. The result would have been a reformist, if sometimes militant, youth group—not the *communist* youth organization of the RCP. This is hardly the bold step needed today by the broad masses of youth and by the revolutionary proletariat. This line was reformist, revisionist—not communist—in that, among other things, it negated the real revolutionary potential of youth, the need to exert a steady *communist* influence on the masses of youth and train youth in Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought while leading them in struggle on many fronts. It is revisionist in that it negated the necessary leadership of the working class and its Party to fully develop this tremendous potential of youth into a powerful force in the struggle for proletarian revolution.

This line was defeated within the Party in the period leading up to the founding convention. Based on this, the advances of the founding convention were achieved. But since that time, a number of those who held this line, rather than building off these advances and changing their views, have persisted in their revisionism and gone still further. A small but arrogant little clique of these people have made a futile effort to use their leading positions in the RCYB to turn this organization into a pawn in a struggle against the Party and its line—marching further into the swamp of opposing communism and opposing the Party, and trying to impose their revisionist line on the RCYB and drag it along with them.

Such reactionary puffed-up but puny efforts are being clearly repudiated by the Party and by the masses of members of the RCYB around the country, and the RCYB is growing far stronger in the process. To assist the Brigade members and others in developing the struggle—strengthening their understanding of the two lines and deepening their grasp of Marxism in opposition to revisionism, the RCP is publishing these two documents, representing the two lines on this question. One (printed second) is an appeal written to the Party Center by some leading people in the youth and student work. The other is the line of the Party, written in opposition to this, which was circulated to the whole Party just before the founding convention. Based on this line, the founding of the RCYB as the communist youth organization of the RCP was achieved, and based on this line the RCYB can and will move forward in today's struggles and in the struggle for proletarian revolution and the ultimate goal of communism.



# On The Question Of Building A Young Communist League

Comrades—we are approaching the threshold of forming a very important organization—a YCL. In order to carry out this task, it is necessary to go into some very important line questions and unite firmly around a correct line and approach. This is the only way to make the founding convention a success—in building for it in this last stage and to also have a convention that will put our YCL on the firmest ground possible. These line questions also have significance in and of themselves and have a bearing on other vital questions facing the Party.

To put it pretty bluntly—there has been some pretty sharp line struggle in some parts of the Party over this YCL, especially with a number of comrades in this area of work. Line struggle which focuses on what this organization should be called, but is based on differences as to what the character and purpose of such an organization should be. There has been more than a little bit of activity that could be termed factional in character (but not necessarily in purpose). This will be gone into later in this report, but mentioned here so that comrades will get the point that the following is the *line* of our Party on the question and that this document should be studied as the line of our Party on the question—to be deepened through discussion and implementation. This paper is *not* being distributed to open the question for “free debate” in any Party unit.

In going into the line questions, this paper will quote liberally from a written appeal to leadership over the “name question”—an appeal that argued for the name of the YCL to be Revolutionary Youth Brigade (RYB). An appeal that basically boiled down to saying that the word “Communist” in the name of the YCL would make it impossible for a YCL to fulfill its functions and would reduce it to a Trotskyite sect. The Center is using this appeal as a focus because, from its investigation and discussions, particularly with people doing this work, this appeal does in fact represent a concentration of the arguments of those who are opposed to having “Communist” in the name of the YCL.

After studying and discussing the appeal at length, leadership rejected it and felt that the name of the

YCL should be Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade (RCYB). This is slightly different than the name put forward in National Bulletin, Vol. X, No. X (the name put forward there was Revolutionary Communist Youth). Brigade was thought to be a positive addition because it served to make it seem more like an organization and also it would build off the positive reputation of the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB) on many campuses. Not only did leadership feel that the name RCYB would be much better (which we'll go into in depth later in the paper—see especially the section, “What's in a Name—and Why Communist in the Name Is Better”), but that the appeal's arguments for not wanting communism in the name reflected an incorrect view of why we build a separate communist organization among youth, what are the key tasks of a YCL and what type of revolutionary work *can* and *must* be done in this period. These are the central points we will focus on in this paper.

## The Importance and Need for a YCL

In various documents—from the Party's *Programme*, the Main Political Report of the Founding Congress (MPR) [internal document only], the Central Committee Report [from the latter part of 1976, excerpts available in *Revolution*, Vol. 2, Nos. 8 & 9], and National Bulletin, Vol. X, No. X, the general characteristics of youth, the problems they face and the proletariat's purpose in forming a YCL have been gone into:

“One of the Party's most important areas of work is developing struggle and revolutionary organization among youth, and students. As our Party's *Programme* states, ‘The problems of youth, however, are growing. Not only is it harder to get into and stay in school, but with or without a high school or college diploma, jobs are hard to find. The unemployment rate for young people is several times the general rate, and is even higher among Black and Latin youth. In addition, young people face legal inequality, police harassment, and the threat of having to be cannon fodder in an imperialist war. But the most basic problem the masses



of young people face is the fact that imperialism is unable to offer them a life with a purpose . . . *There is only one path that offers youth a genuine opportunity to put to use its enthusiasm, its innovativeness, its daring and determination to change the world—proletarian revolution. Here and only here will they genuinely find a life with a purpose.*” (MPR, emphasis added) and:

“ . . . we must take into account the special characteristics of youth—both the positive aspect of daring, determination to make change, to refuse to accept things the way they are, etc. and, secondarily, the negative aspect that they have not yet developed the discipline and experience that the proletariat gains in production and class struggle. To deal with this correctly, we must develop a communist youth organization that is separate from, but under the leadership of the Party and will—as the Party’s arm among youth—enable more and more young people to fight for the working class in a *thoroughgoing way* and to find a ‘life with a purpose’, while enabling the Party to work with them in a systematic way, help even the more advanced to become more steeled in struggle, and recruit the most dedicated and disciplined into the Party.” (MPR, emphasis added)

and the later CC Report on the YCL:

“It [YCL] must have a life of its own and at the same time take its lead from the Party. The main glue holding it together must be its communist character, not some particular struggles of youth. At the same time the kind of organization it is must be determined by the particular qualities of youth . . . [in above quote] . . . This means that the YCL must not be mainly a ‘needs of youth’ group, but a revolutionary communist, turn-the-world-upside-down group.” (CC Report, Discussions and Decisions)

The above is the heart of our basic line around the YCL. Some comrades might be asking, “What’s new, we’re all starting from that premise, why repeat it here, in another document?” The reason is that while not explicitly saying so, the appeal written reflects some basic disagreements with the line outlined above—and this has also been reflected to some degree in our practice around youth and student work in the past period.

To paraphrase, what the quotations indicate above is that we must build a YCL to tap youth’s potential enthusiasm for socialism and because we can train many as communists who won’t qualify for membership in the Party till they are more steeled in struggle and understanding. Of course, the first reason is more important, but both aspects are fundamental to why we need a YCL—a YCL that will go broadly out among the masses of youth and students and link up with and build struggle around their immediate concerns, to mobilize them into political and even revolutionary struggle, to propagate Marxism-Leninism among youth broadly and to continually recruit more to its own ranks and eventually as many as possible into the ranks of the Party.

The authors of the appeal disagree with this under the banner that the YCL is an “advanced mass” organization; they say that this and other formulations of theirs represent “deepening” of our Party’s line on youth. Here are some examples how:

“Now, why do we form organizations like this [YCLs] among the strata of youth. This is a question that is often asked and while we’ve hammered this out at a number of meetings—it’s never been fully summed up why YCLs are a strategically important weapon for the working class victory in the class war.

“It’s not simply because it’s a good ‘idea’ to have one and that they’ve been built since the turn of the century. Not simply because large, quick doses of Marxism are needed to consolidate advanced youth . . .

“No, for with all the varying degree of merit to these points, they miss the mark as to what’s the basis for forming them. The basis, of course, is the material contradictions that the broad millions of youth face which create the necessity for an organization that is ‘advanced mass.’ Contradictions that provide the basis and necessity for an organization that will not only take up and lead the many immediate battles of youth but also offer another road and future for youth to take up as they face a certain crossroad of their life. And contradictions that demand that an organization for youth provide a vehicle and opportunity for youth to serve the proletariat—*using their skills and energy* for the class war—and not what the schools and society generally do—train them to be the slaves and servants of the bourgeoisie.” (appeal, emphasis added)

“The *Programme* also speaks to this point in the section under youth starting, ‘But the most basic problem the masses of young people face is the fact that imperialism is unable to offer them a life with a purpose.’ The youth need an organization that will not only lead them in fighting around different issues—but takes up this question which is the sharpest one of all that youth face.

“This is the fundamental reason why young communist leagues have been developed throughout the 20th century and why we must be ‘advanced mass’ to openly lead and develop the struggles of youth, to help create another pole—another road and future for the broad millions of youth, and give the youth a chance while they’re checking out what the hell they’re going to do with their lives—to take up Marxism-Leninism and give them a vehicle to use *their energy and skills and ability to serve the working class.*” (appeal, emphasis added)

On the surface these might seem like a true “deepening” of our line—but they are not. The “daring, determination to make change, to refuse to accept the way things are” etc. have slipped away somehow. In fact, that’s first alluded to on page 13 of their single spaced paper:

“One last point while we’re talking about the nature of the organization. We’ve all been through the various material and social reasons why youth are rebellious, tend to take things up quick and more boisterously than others, capable of making quicker leaps, etc. The

task of the YCL as the mass organization to lead the youth is to openly tap that quality ... " (appeal).

While youth's rebelliousness is put out as almost an afterthought, there are numerous rehashings of the authors' paragraphs that "deepen our understanding of the strategic importance of a YCL." Each one tends to reduce "life with a purpose" to a question of "where am I going to find my niche." In speaking to the YCL's task of being a center to "learn communism" they define this as "Providing a vehicle for young people—who are looking for a place to use and develop their skills, lead productive lives, contribute to society etc.—to do just that by learning Marxism and fighting for the working class."

While this contradiction—youth growing up and finding no decent place for themselves in society—is a real and important contradiction, it in and of itself does not define "life with a purpose." As kids grow up, it gets clearer and clearer that things really stink in this society. As the Party's *Programme* outlines well:

"But the most basic problem the masses of young people face is the fact that imperialism is unable to offer them a life with a purpose. Years in a factory or some other job making some capitalist richer, or devoting their life only to raising a family and keeping house, fighting to stay ahead of debt and with nothing to offer their own children except life in a system based on exploitation and oppression . . . It is no wonder that many young people fall prey to the corruption pushed by the bourgeoisie—seeking answers in mystic faiths or escape in drugs and cynicism."

The authors are treading on very dangerous water with their "deepening." The question of "finding a place to use their skills" is repeated almost a half dozen times in every similar description of why we need a YCL and its purpose. This smacks of the proletariat supposedly competing with the bourgeoisie as a place where youth can use their skills for a useful purpose. While students and a certain strata of working class youth do have that concern (and the authors do say later that work they're familiar with has attracted mainly upwardly mobile working class youths and that this has to be summed up—which it must) and it is also true that the working class will utilize various skills on the YCL (especially before the seizure of state power)—a YCL is not a place for youth to find their niche in "the service of the proletariat." A YCL is what you join to fight and learn about tearing the M-F up to build a new world, standing with the proletariat in this country and the worldwide revolutionary struggle.

This isn't nit-picking—failure to put youth's daring and refusal to accept things the way they are in any proper perspective coupled with repeated emphasis of finding a place to use their "skills" takes the real revolutionary heart out of the organization, despite militant struggles it might be involved in. This is so because it fails to make a radical rupture, just as the Panthers did with their "serve the people" programs (despite their

tremendous militance and revolutionary stance on other questions).

Just to illustrate where not making a radical rupture could lead is the Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL), the youth organization of the revisionist CP. "Using your skills to serve the people and the working class" is an integral part of their line—and is their *come-on* to attract working class youth and especially Black youth. Aside from the fact that they've channeled almost all the students they've worked with into the petty bourgeoisie (and a small number into the skilled trades), during the Cambodia-Kent-Jackson State strikes in 1970 on a number of campuses the YWLL played the role of calling for the end of the strikes so that people could get back to classes so they could learn their skills "to serve the revolution."

Obviously nobody in the Party doing youth and student work is running this revisionist crap and this "skills" stuff probably has not been an integral part of our line—but it is clearly in the appeal, because, we believe, the authors have "revised" the Party's line on the YCL more to go along with their arguments later in their paper that there is no qualitative leap for a youth to join the YCL. But any adoption of the authors' "deepening" would surely lead us down a very dangerous path.

"Advanced Mass Organization"?

All this redefinition of our purpose and importance of a YCL come under the heading of why a YCL must be an "advanced mass" or "mass communist" organization and not a "junior party." Despite the fact that in not one major Party document up to and including National Bulletin, Vol. X, No. X is there any mention of this formulation, according to the appeal, this "advanced mass" character is our Party's line on the YCL and that is what has been implemented, at least in RSB work.

To bolster their argument for how the YCL should be an "advanced mass" organization, the authors of the appeal say that this line was "developed by the Comintern in the late '20s and early '30s" and they recite a number of quotes from the 1920s which "are six quotes out of many hundreds that could be picked out of YCL or individual YCL's materials that go into this point." With one main thrust of these quotes we agree. It is that the YCLs must not be "little debating clubs" (as one quote puts it) and must go out broadly among the masses of youth, that they must take "an active part in the daily struggles" of working class youth and "exert a steady influence on the broad mass" of working class youth "who for some reason or other we don't get into our ranks" (from the same quote). All of this is correct and does certainly apply to the YCL we are now building.

But some of the formulations in these quotes are either ambiguous or just incorrect. For example phrases like "class conscious or partially class conscious" are used to describe those working class youth

who should be in the YCL. And in one quote it is stated that working class youth should be in the YCL "class conscious and not." With this latter statement, especially, we do not at all agree. It is clear that the direction from the Comintern at that time (1928) was to "bend the stick" in YCL work towards breaking them out of isolation, and in this context it was even felt necessary to stress that the YCL must wage "the struggle for the bettering of the economic conditions of the youth." It is perhaps for this reason that the quote goes so far as to say that working class youth who are not class conscious should be in the YCL. But whatever the reasons (and we won't attempt here to go more fully into an analysis of the reasons) the statement taken as such does not lead in the correct direction, unless it means only that youth who have not yet *been trained* in communism should be brought into the YCL and trained there. But that would seem to be stretching the quote a bit, and we will stand with the position that it is simply wrong.

And the fact that the authors of the appeal choose to use quotes like this indicates what kind of YCL they have in mind to build and indicates that, despite their protestations (or even intentions) to the contrary, the "advanced mass" character they promote will lead them to make "mass" the principal aspect and to gear the organization to those youth who are not class conscious. This goes right along with a main argument of theirs—that there is no qualitative leap (in consciousness) for youth in joining the YCL, that such a leap comes only later—which, again, would mean that the authors would end up building an organization whose essence is not determined by its communist character, and this would be especially so the more they recruited many "not" class conscious youth into the YCL (more on this soon).

"Advanced mass" wouldn't be such a bad description for a YCL if the "mass" in the formulation was meant to indicate that because of the particular qualities of youth, the YCL would have a broader, more mass character than the Party itself and that it had the task of doing its political activity (including building struggle) among the broad masses of youth. But that's not what the authors mean. They say:

"What do we mean by an advanced mass organization or a communist mass organization? We mean that the YCL stands for socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, links this up to many struggles it builds, openly applies M-L to the struggle and takes up the study of Marxism. It stands with and supports the RCP—who politically leads it. These are the characteristics that define its communist character and are the principal aspect of its political and organizational existence, mark its difference with other mass organizations the Party builds and mark similarities to the Party. On the other hand, the YCL is the main form of organization which is to lead the struggles of youth (though it will certainly form fronts and mass organizations from time to time, mainly around particular battles), and it is the organization that we call on ad-

vanced people to immediately join—open to all who want to work with it, generally agree with its program, pay dues, carry out consistent work, etc. It is an organization where the new advanced come in to 'learn communism' and most are not even communist when they join. Both these aspects differ from those of the Party—the main form to lead the mass struggle, the main form to bring in new forces into, and the level of their political development upon joining, this defines its mass character." (appeal)

Despite many declarations to the opposite, the authors in essence do make the mass character principal of their YCL. Their "advanced" aspect is its stand, which it links up with many struggles, while its mass character is that it is the main *form* of organization that will lead the *struggle of youth*. By definition the pull will be toward being "mass" as the main thing.

But let's look at this definition (and the authors' deepening of it throughout their paper). While it is important to play a leading and central role in the struggle of youth—the YCL's advanced (that is, *communist*) character cannot be sacrificed in the name of being the *main mass form* of organization to lead the struggle of youth. And while it's very important to recruit youth broadly into its ranks, its advanced character cannot be sacrificed so that it will be the *main form* of organization for the "new advanced" to join (defined by our authors as youths who know "little or nothing about communism"). Because despite how much our authors try to deny it, there is a qualitative leap involved between answering the question of "life with a purpose" and acting on that understanding (building for socialist revolution etc.) and the fight around particular attacks and problems of youth. While going out broadly to mobilize youth around their particular contradictions with the bourgeoisie, the RCYB's *activities* among the masses and its outlook have to go beyond that, and the RCYB is not involved in battles *because* of the particular problems of youth, but to help make proletarian revolution. Yes, a YCL is possible and necessary because of the particular qualities of youth outlined in the earlier quotes from the MPR and CC report, but there is a qualitative leap involved between the problems and outlook of youth "en masse" (in their masses) and of a YCL. The RCYB, while applying the mass line and speaking to the contradictions youth face, must strive *not* to look at the world through the "eyes of youth"—but from the point of view of *proletarian revolution and proletarian ideology*. *Only in this way can a YCL apply the mass line, exert a steady influence on the broad masses of youth and persevere through the high points and ebbs in mass struggle.*

As a communist youth organization, the RCYB's tasks will be to train and recruit communists and to exert a great deal of influence among the broad masses of youth. In terms of the mass work, there are three distinct tasks—to go out and lead the struggles of youth, to mobilize youth in broader struggles at the side of the proletariat, and to do practical work on



the ideological front (to propagate proletarian ideology and oppose and expose bourgeois ideology among the masses) not simply among YCL members, but among youth broadly. The second mass task is underplayed in the paper, although spoken to somewhat. But the third mass task—practical work in the ideological sphere—is spoken to mainly in a negative light. Yes, the authors speak time and again about unfolding Marxism in the course of taking up a battle, but doing mass work in the ideological front becomes “being like a Trotskyite sect,” putting out its “pure line.” In fact, it’s hard to see how the authors’ YCL would be much different than a YIA [Youth in Action—the name of a number of mass (not communist) youth groups which existed before the RCYB’s founding—Ed.]. Party members and other advanced persons would be unfolding Marxism-Leninism in the course of a battle if they worked in a YIA. Party members would lead the YIA members in a manner to “bring light” to a struggle through agitation, etc. Doing practical ideological work among the masses is one of the key things a communist form can do that a “mass” form cannot. At this time, any mass form would be limited in doing ideological work in its own right—since you would need unity around proletarian ideology to do so.

The authors of the appeal make a huge cry against potential rightism and the diminishing significance of the YCL if Communist were in the YCL’s name, which would make it a “junior party” (in their paper—“junior parties refusing to go out and lead the struggle of youth, and demanding people be full-blown communists to be in.” That’s a strange definition of a party—“refusing to go out and lead the struggle.” One has to wonder which party these comrades have been in!).

Their cry:

“... For when comrades have raised how the name RCY will be a fetter on our ability to openly lead struggle, popularize socialism, etc. we suddenly get told of the wonders of second level organizations, mass committees and coalitions ... and how these forms of organization will be much more “in” during the future and the importance of the YCL openly leading struggle is downplayed. Despite this defying any experience on the campuses and neighborhoods over the last couple of years, we ask the center—who is to speak to the major contradiction that youth face—what the hell are they going to do with their life and what the future holds if we don’t strive for the YCL to do this. Who the hell are we supposed to be raising socialism to—the people in the mass committee. Is someone seriously going to suggest we can do this mainly through propaganda while we do our work through second level organizations. How is this turning the broad millions of people’s views around about socialism and communism. Why not strive to make the YCL the main form of organization to lead struggle among the youth? Why leave the major contradiction that the millions of youth face out there only for the bourgeoisie to speak to?” (appeal)

There is so much wrong with this that it’s pretty

hard to unravel. Aside from the smackings of dishonesty (all of a sudden we’ve had an open communist organization in the neighborhoods for two years) it is only in the heads of the authors (and others that hold this line) that the utilization of mass forms means all the other crap they run down, including downplaying the importance of the YCL leading struggle. One does have to ask again, what party our comrades have been in. Yes, “two level work” was criticized in the Revolutionary Union (RU) [an organization which played a major role in the formation of the RCP—Ed.] some four or five years ago—it was some formula in the Brigade which meant mass forms with no political content and the RSB [Revolutionary Student Brigade, which became the communist student organization of the RCP shortly after its founding—Ed.] acting pretty closeted on some campuses. But the rightism was not inherent in the existence of mass forms (although the Brigade not being directly involved in struggles, and always looking for a “front” reflected this same rightism).

In fact, the MPR, which did some overall summation of our Brigade work and why a YCL was called for in summing up how students were getting stuck at some “vague revolutionary” level and at “anti-imperialism,” also summed up ... “At the same time, the RSB, as it has been in the past, has had difficulty in uniting with broad masses of students in struggle, partly due to the errors of the RSB and communist cadre playing the leading role within it, but also partly due to the fact that the RSB represented a very advanced level on the one hand—“revolution,” vaguely defined—but on the other hand tried to keep itself ‘open-ended’ and serve as the mass organization for students who became active in struggle.” (MPR, emphasis added) The MPR goes on and talks about the RSB as a communist student organization and states very clearly that:

“In order to carry this out [doing painstaking work among the broad masses of students and raising their consciousness] this communist student organization must work to develop other, broader mass organizations among students. The life and form of these mass organizations will depend on the development of both the particular struggles among students and of the student movement, as part of the overall revolutionary movement, as a whole. The Party, and its cadre among students, must guard against mechanical tendencies in developing this—and specifically against the tendency to sum up from the particular experience of the RSB in the recent past that it is impossible to develop mass organization that unites students in fighting around particular questions and, through this organization, linking these fights and directing the spearhead against the enemy.” (MPR, emphasis added)

The MPR even goes on further about how these mass forms might not always be just single issues. But enough has been brought out to show that maybe some of these comrades haven’t looked in the MPR since the Party was formed. Yes, comrades, summing up practice is important, but it shouldn’t be distorted, and

the major summations that have helped further develop our line should not be ignored. If the authors think the MPR is wrong on this—which the Center does not—they should say so, and why.

It's totally idealist and also reflects the walling off of youth into the world of youth, that the YCL will only build struggle in its own name—or that other forms might be necessary, but they are basically poison. Many battles, particularly on the political front (such as African Liberation Day) will be in coalitions—even many of those around the questions of jobs and unemployment will be done in conjunction with the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (where leaflets can be signed by UWOC and RCYB). Of course, there will be battles like Wall Street and also on the local level where the YCL will be not only the leading, but the main force (in terms of organizational forms). And the more battles can be taken up this way, and the larger they are, the better. But it would be totally incorrect to think that even every local battle can be taken up with only the organization form of the YCL—no matter what its name is!

For example, the police murder a youth—family, friends, the whole neighborhood is outraged and a large number of people want to do something about it. The YCL approaches the family and others (just as the Party has done in similar instances) and says let's make a fight—this is an outrage and—it's linked with a thousand other abuses and we've got to stand up and fight it, etc. etc. (of course while doing broader exposure with these forces). Now will these people, even the youth, be ready to join the YCL (regardless of its name) in order to have some organizational form to sustain this struggle? Most likely not. Or is the YCL going to tell these folks—just give us the pertinent information—we'll write up a leaflet and call a demonstration in our name alone—you should help us leaflet and organize for the demo, but we don't need any kind of mass organization, because you have the YCL?!

Of course there is no rule that with every police murder, a mass formation must be built. The YCL may do a leaflet exposing such an outrage and calling on people to take up the fight and may also call for some action—but if the battle truly takes on a broad mass character, more likely than not a broad mass form will be called for, or the YCL could limit the participation of broader forces and miss the opportunity to train and school masses—including masses of youth—in struggle. Not building mass forms when necessary would be "left" in form, but right in essence, not only because it would hold back the participation and development of broader masses, but because it would pull the YCL to the right and even in a short-term sense, make it harder to play any kind of advanced role since it would be fulfilling the function of a mass form in a broad mass struggle.

But even in a situation where a mass form is called for (or coalition activity, etc.) the YCL should do as much independent work, mass work as possible. This is extremely important, because the RCYB will not be the only organized political force in these neighbor-

hoods—especially in the minority communities—and these forces will be working overtime to sum up the particular battles *beyond* the terms of the immediate battle, in a bourgeois direction. Besides doing propaganda work with the most advanced who come forward, and selling the *Young Red* [name for a communist newspaper for youth—Ed.] at mass rallies, giving speeches, etc., it very likely could be possible to put out a special leaflet—addressed particularly to the youth in the community, that would bring more light into the particular battle, bring out the broader aims of our movement, and call on youth not only to participate in this particular struggle, but to get active in the struggle to turn the whole thing around, etc.

### The Question of Composition

The authors argue strongly that having "Communist" in the name could not only limit the YCL's participation in mass struggle, but also would severely cut down its membership by "hundreds." Throughout their paper there are little tidbits like members need to "know little or nothing about communism" and that a good (successful) chapter of the RSB has 30% of its membership that do not consider themselves communists (or, we gather, not aspiring communists). But somehow this is a communist organization, that studies and applies Marxism and stands with proletarian revolution—but about a third of the organization does not want to work under the banner of "red" (or "Communist" to be specific).

### What Unites Working Class Youth and Students

Despite some common characteristics of youth from various class backgrounds and especially with different potential in class aspirations—i.e., youth from the petty bourgeoisie can "make it" a bit "higher"—there are some pretty sharp class differences (that's *one* of the reasons the "skills" line is dangerous) and basically there is no basis to unite them in an advanced organization (that does not mean there will not be common struggle they might be involved in—particularly around political issues) unless the basis is communism—proletarian revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat, the eventual elimination of classes, etc. Of course a YCL will have its more advanced members and less advanced. Of course there will be members who are mainly learning—are in training, etc. (in fact, the "in training" aspect is a key part of the YCL overall). But how many working class youth are going to join a "communist" organization—no matter what its name is—unless they are communists or aspiring to be.

The authors of the appeal continue to state that there is no leap in consciousness to join the YCL—that members are in a "quantitative move toward Marxism," the leap should come after six weeks to two months of membership. We suppose that with all the anti-communism around (which is the authors' key argument and will be gone into later) somebody is going

to join a communist organization when they are not even aspiring to be one to some degree—"know nothing about communism."

Frankly, this line of thinking could guarantee the social base to continue to be mainly students—or at least allow considerable more erosion in a petty bourgeois direction. Our authors think differently—in fact they think the opposite, because they continually state that communism in the name will drive away the working class youth, but keep in more students—this is very, very short-term thinking.

The university "atmosphere" as a "clearing house of ideas" does not have the same kind of open anti-communism as society as a whole (the anti-communism there is usually much more insidious). To this day large numbers of profs consider themselves to be socialist or whatever. Frankly, the RYB line on membership leaves an opening for petty bourgeois intellectuals to join, who dig some of the work the RYB does but who aren't particularly sure about the dictatorship of the proletariat (although they might support workers struggles) or maybe they have a "revolutionary" line that "maybe us enlightened and benevolent intellectuals could take the reins of society" or new working class stuff, or maybe revolution means mainly national liberation (that could happen off campus as well). Any of these are possibilities—and while communists must work with these types of people, it would be absurd to combine them with proletarian revolutionary youth. Yes, some student members may have some lingerings of some of these lines, because of a lack of a deep grasp of Marxism, but having petty bourgeois intellectuals coming into an organization off of a major struggle or two (as our authors continually emphasize) who do not consider themselves to be reds or aspiring reds in the fullest sense of the word (dictatorship of the proletariat, elimination of classes, etc.) has the potential to pollute the YCL—and guarantee an incorrect balance toward students—that could eventually destroy its character.

Why do the appeal authors come up with the opposite conclusion? Because at *this* time more RSBers are ready to be called communists and work under that banner—and they won't get attacked quite in the same forms as in the neighborhoods for doing so. But we have been doing open red work for years on many of these campuses—that does make a difference—and on many campuses today the RSB is the only militant, visible force—and we've barely begun any of that type of work in the neighborhoods. But does this add up to students embracing the dictatorship of the proletariat more than working class youths—in anything but the shortest term sense, of course not!

In the main, once they start to grasp that society needs radical changes, working class youth will more readily and quickly grasp that proletarian revolution is what's needed (although of course, this does not happen spontaneously!) while a youth from the petty bourgeoisie will entertain utopian socialist views (some kind of revolution necessary, not sure about dictator-

ship of the proletariat, etc.) for a while—sometimes, quite a while! This also goes on among working class youth to some degree but it is much more pronounced among p.b. youth exactly because of their class basis.

Lenin wrote an entire polemic on why there had to be a clear communist pole among the students, *On the Tasks of Revolutionary Youth, Collected Works, Vol. 7*. And if a YCL is going to have a "life of its own," and not be pulled by the nose instead of being led politically by Party members, then people have to know and yes, be (at least in training) what the organization states it is! (We'll get into the communist character in terms of membership a little more in the next section.) The communist "level" of the YCL is communists in training, i.e., the level of ideological training and understanding is not as great as Party members in general. But they are training to be communists—which entails at least a minimum grasp of what communism and proletarian ideology is about and a dedication to being a part of and *propagating* the cause of *proletarian* revolution.

#### The "Bourgeoisification of the Working Class" or Raising the CC Report to Defeat the CC Report

The authors of the appeal, and maybe some of the others who've held similar lines, might say that they agree with some of the points above, and the appeal might have been off a bit on some point—that really "we meant what we said about advanced being principle—only RYB should still be the name of the YCL because of the main argument of our paper—the working class has been without socialism in this country for 20-30 years, and while the youth can play some what of a vanguard role, you can't separate them that much from society as a whole; the word communist means negative things—causes a lot of controversy (which is good even according to our authors) but the contradictions among the people on this question are too great and having 'C' in the name will cause an antagonistic contradiction with building struggle and gaining new membership. Yes, we want to raise socialism and communism among the youth, but having 'Communist' in the name will not allow us to get to first base, and then we never will be able to unfold socialism and communism in the course of struggle"—so the argument might go.

As the authors said:

"How does it gone [sic] when communism becomes the immediate terms of the battle? Has this been the best way that we've started to popularize socialism. Certainly the Party Center must sum this up in developing its overall line and please while taking into account the qualities of youth, let's not isolate them from society as a whole. We say this makes all the difference in the world as to whether the YCL will be able to carry out its tasks—and develop into the youth arm of the party, or become a small, isolated, almost trotskyite sect. Putting out its pure line, unable to unite or lead struggle, only hoping for the day when objective conditions are



'right' and people will see that we've been correct. Not at all the way to build the YCL." (appeal)

This quote reflects the cornerstone of the authors' line. And they base their suppositions totally on the fact that the working class has been without a Party for 20-30 years. There can be no doubt about it. They allude to the fact that the proletariat in the U.S. has been without a Party or "socialism and communism" for 20-30 years more than 13 times in their paper—along with raising numerous quotes from the CC report about current conditions and insisting that they be taken into account. For example, they write: "The point is to grasp the *overall period*. Bourgeoisification beginning to break down. A period of growing but scattered struggle—and confusion. And most importantly—particularly in terms of developing a young communist organization—the working class is entering this period having been without socialism for 20 or 30 years." (authors' emphasis)

and:

"For the past 20 to 30 years the bourgeoisie, off its material base as top capitalist power, has been beating the shit out of socialism and communism. It has been aided in this process by the degeneration and fascist activity of the Soviet Union and the lack of a proletarian party and class conscious section of workers. There has been no need for our bourgeoisie to rule or lead the people through any other parties other than the 2 clear cut bourgeois parties. This of course is a marked difference from most capitalist countries—where the working class is more class conscious and has a long history of independent political movements, and various sorts of socialists and communists leading them." (appeal)

The main argument here boils down to not a concrete analysis of concrete conditions, but a theory of stages when it comes to the question of raising communism among youth and recruiting youth to communism. According to the authors, because it is the beginning of a new spiral, we are in a period where raising communism directly, as in the name of a YCL, and requiring that youth have a decent grasp of what communism is about when they join the YCL will only defeat the red flag. Introducing this section of their paper they give an example from China about how the YCL there had its name changed in 1935 to the New Democratic Youth Corps—the authors say this was probably as a product of the struggle against three left lines in the Party's previous history—and was changed back to Communist Youth League when they seized state power in 1949. There is definitely some dishonesty here on the part of the authors—since they seem to try and plead ignorance as to the reason the Chinese did this and make 1949 appear to be only the question of the seizure of state power—when these comrades must know that the distinct stage of revolution changed from a new democratic character to socialist in character with the seizure of state power in 1949!

A bad choice of example or linked with the line tendencies throughout their paper? We believe the second. Because in carefully outlining the conditions and quot-

ing from the CC report, our comrades leave out what the heart of the CC report was about.

First, their preoccupation with the 20-30 years without a Party stuff is basically a crock of shit. Yes, we have to recognize the bourgeoisification of the working class, but not to tail behind it and definitely not to exaggerate "how bad it is out there." From reading their paper, except for the actual year span they keep mentioning, you'd think it was 1959 and that the bourgeoisie had just reached its pinnacle of worldwide domination and had successfully crushed the communist forces in the U.S. (through McCarthyism and the degeneration of the CPUSA). You'd have no idea that there had been a whole period of upheaval—Black liberation, student movement, the bourgeoisie's crushing defeat in Vietnam (yes, some people do remember, and some youth might even know that fighting communism was the excuse for the imperialists' aggression). And most significantly, you would get no idea that there had been somewhat conscious forces out there in the working class for almost ten years and that a formation of a proletarian vanguard had taken place two years ago. These omissions are not incidentals that have no relationship to things, including this new spiral.

As the CC report states ("Some Points . . ."):

"This is a difficult period—for the masses, and for the Party. It is not a period like the '60s and early '70s, a period of high tide of struggle, mainly based among non-proletarian forces . . . This is not to negate the real advances made in that period. Without that development, things would not be where they are now—for example our Party has its roots in that period, though it represents a qualitative leap beyond it. And where things are now is an advance, because it is the spiral that will lead to a major change in the relation of forces and will lead to the real prospect of proletarian revolution in this country as well as others.

"But it is the beginning of this new spiral—and so the fact that it is an advance is not always immediately so evident." (emphasis added)

This is a point our authors don't seem to grasp at all. The CC report's main emphasis was that we have to take conditions into account, but we have to have a dialectical materialist grasp of those conditions—where things are going—and, *what as communists are we preparing ourselves and the masses for in the coming period*, why it is of the utmost importance that we do revolutionary work in this non-revolutionary period, while sinking roots in the masses' struggles and leading these struggles.

Yes, many of the contradictions the authors speak about are real—it is no breeze to do open communist work—it causes great controversy at times (which even the authors don't say is a bad thing). But it isn't 1959—and while the mood of the masses is not yet embracing Marxism because it's finally come home to roost again, things are very different from 1959, because of objective conditions (crisis intensifying, the upheaval of the '60s and '70s) and because of the activities of the conscious forces. What about May Day? After the triumph

of the bourgeoisie over "socialism and communism" in this country was there anything more communistic and "anti-American" than May Day—or is it insignificant that it has been reborn again in dozens of cities around the country, even though participation is modest in most cities? Do the comrades know that in most plants, it's a small number of workers who throw back the May Day leaflets we pass out to them and say, "Get out of here you dirty reds." Maybe they didn't know that the mass leafletting around Mao's death in the Party's name went well in most of the places where it was done. And what about July 4th? While it was correct to have UWOC and Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) initiate it, it was also just as correct for the Party's name to appear on the literature about the event—and that the Chair of the Party's speech was probably the best received speech there. And how about the *Worker*? Is the point of the "Who We Are" statement to hope that people don't read it when we take it to them in struggle? Is it key to grab a hold of the few workers who didn't notice its open communist affiliation or is it more to sum up and discuss the red question with those who did notice it—some who will say get lost and some who will work and talk and struggle with us—probably with a lot of initial trepidations. The authors, who keep pleading not to separate youth too much from the rest of society, should do the same themselves. Much more ideological work can and must be done in the working class overall than what the authors indicate—and not just by "bringing light into particular battles"—but as a task in and of itself. And our approach among youth, while not out to lunch, can be less conservative than among their elders—who are much more set in their ways ideologically.

The authors pose the question: "Do we make it [communism] the immediate terms of the battle by having the word communism in the name? So that a great deal of popularizing of socialism and communism is in struggling out the contradictions among the people—why do you guys support dictatorship, what about God, which holds you back from taking it up as part of the fight against the bourgeoisie etc. Or do we take up popularizing socialism and communism and of course take on anti-communism as we fight against the bourgeoisie?" (appeal)

While of course we take up these things in the course of struggle, this in and of itself does not add up to the struggle on the ideological front. Ideological work is not some garnish that's sprinkled on to dress up and give some flavor to the battle—it must be an integral part of waging struggle or the proletariat will not succeed in its tasks. And yes these ideological questions do take form as contradictions among the people—but that does not mean that we are not directing our spearhead in this work at the enemy or that such ideological struggle is not part of the class struggle too. These questions must be taken on straight up at times—many times. Otherwise the tendencies would be to deal with ideological questions in a programmatic man-

ner and that won't cut it. For example, the question of "God" or the dictatorship of the proletariat for that matter don't flow too easily from "bringing light" into particular battles.

Do we expose this preacher here who's playing a rotten role in a struggle and that churchgoer there (and what if in some cases, some of them play a positive role and should be united with programmatically?) or do we make the mistake a comrade once made when workers were having a philosophical discussion about religion on the job and he piped up and said, "I don't pray to God to keep cranes from falling on my head (neither did any of the workers!—sometimes such an answer may be alright to achieve programmatic unity but it doesn't cut it in regard to our tasks on the ideological front) —I fight the company around health and safety!" Meanwhile the bourgeoisie's theological tools are working double time to promote metaphysics—but communists are afraid to promote dialectical and historical materialism! Do we wait till the Soviets attack to get out there broadly and explain the difference between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois dictatorship?

Besides, the authors either don't mean what they say or don't say what they mean—and we think the second is more where they're coming from. Their paper:

"Well we get asked, do you really want a communist organization if you want the name to be RYB? Yes, we answer—we wanted the RSB to be communist and especially in the last year we've developed it that way 'revolutionary' and all. Suppose one is leafletting for the RYB, we get asked, and they are asked if their group is communist, do they answer yes or no? Yes, we answer, we think that the members should clearly stand for socialism and communism, though we should cast away illusions that this is really raising the Red Flag. Discussions about 'what you are about' usually go on with maybe 5 per 100 when leafletting. Should the leaflets explain the RYB is a communist organization and won't this make the immediate terms of the battle communism? Yes, the leaflets should say it's a communist organization and with a small amount of people it will create great controversy, which is fine." (appeal, emphasis added)

You can't have it both ways. Somehow, signing a leaflet RCYB when the YCL goes out to build struggle will cause such contradictions among the people that the red question will become antagonistic, but signing a leaflet RYB—"a young communist organization"—won't. This is pretty ridiculous and we think related to the fact that the appeal failed to sum up substantially the use of the *Young Red*, our main open communist work among youth. In an introduction to the appeal, it says sales of the *Young Red* are going well, with sales up to 7000, but with all the pages and pages of pleas of "please don't make us have communist in our name because then we won't be able to raise the red flag" no mention is made at all that people have been selling a paper pretty broadly with a *masthead* that says, "Young

*Red*—a National Communist Youth Newsletter." The only way that really makes sense is that the whole paper leans toward presenting a YIA with a strong communist core leading it, and that this paragraph was thrown in so nobody could say that about their line, because it flies in direct opposition to almost every argument they've made in the rest of the paper.

#### More on Composition

But there is one more aspect of the authors' argument as to why Communist should not be in the YCL's name and that is that it would reduce its size by "hundreds." They also talk on about how all the working class youth, who are now communists who developed through the YIA, do not think it would be good to have Communist in the name and most new recruits to the youth cores won't call themselves communist, so communist can't be in the name. First off, there's a slight exaggeration as to the fact that none of the working class youth want to have Communist in the name. Some—though a minority now, it is true—do.

But it's not surprising that many, if not most, of these youth at this time do not think that communism should be in the name, because many of the comrades leading the work do not have a grasp as to why it would be good to have communism in the name and they've been telling the youth that almost any youth who gets involved in struggle should join this YCL and that this organization's main mass function is to be the main mass form to lead the struggles of youth. It's probably the case that these youth don't have much of a grasp of the importance of practical work on the ideological front in and of itself, and probably lean toward "the movement is everything" because the comrades holding this line present the world that way in their paper and it's pretty hard to win people to a correct understanding you totally disagree with or don't understand much yourself.

In fact a number of the more advanced workers we've worked with come up with ideas like—maybe if you guys just called your ideas something else than "communism" people wouldn't get so uptight—people are so uptight and are so ignorant about communism that they'll just shut you off . . . Should we tail behind these workers too—or, if they were youth, should we have them in the YCL while they're still at that level?

There is a qualitative leap involved from being a young activist to being a young red. Becoming a communist—and not just a fully developed communist, but an aspiring communist—means a radical rupture with the past—even for a youth from the working class. It means moving from an unconscious state to a conscious state in a way. It means recognizing a whole slew of things, an approach to society and the world that are not immediately apparent from one struggle—or even a series of struggles (although parts of what make up this revolutionary view are apparent and made clearer through these struggles—but only parts.) Marxism is an integral world outlook. Youth that do not grasp

that Marxism means a whole world outlook and that communism is the final aim of our struggle and is the purpose of having a YCL frankly do not belong in the YCL. Marxism-Leninism is not just or mainly a tool (though it is) to develop the strategy and tactics for particular struggles and Marxism-Leninism is not a way to "use your skills to serve society." As the "Forward to Proletarian Revolution" section of the Party Programme states:

"The proletariat in the United States and throughout the world faces a protracted and complicated task, for the objective of its struggle is nothing less than the complete transformation of all society and involves the complete break with all previous forms of society and all past traditions. . . ."

While it is true that people who refuse to participate in the class struggle cannot call themselves communists (part of our bone with various dogmatists) it is just as true that leaps in consciousness are just as critical to people's participation and more critical when it comes to the quality of their participation, (sustaining in struggle, carrying out the mass line, propagating socialism). If the YCL grasps its ideological tasks, and not just in linking up with mass struggles and "unfolding class consciousness," but daring to present itself as what it is and propagating it, then it will be able to recruit to its ranks fighters who have at least an elementary grasp of what's got to be done in society. And while it is painful in a way, learning that most of all you've been taught is upside down and casting away illusions that there's some simpler answer, it is also a very liberating thing—especially for working class youth—when they take that leap and realize that the working class can turn this whole thing around. That is why the proletariat needs a YCL—to tap youths' "daring, determination to make change, to refuse to accept the way things are," etc.

Yes, many of the youth we've worked with who are becoming communists are hesitant about openly going into their own neighborhoods and saying they are reds—they see it as a contradiction between them and the masses (which it is in a certain sense) and they are afraid of being labeled as a "weirdo" (or whatever the current popular phrase is for that). But because of the period especially—a period of relative lull in the struggle—anyone who consistently works to build struggle—and starts hanging around a certain group of people who do the same—is going to be considered "weird" to a certain degree. (Already for example, some Black youth were very hesitant in taking out African Liberation Day in their own neighborhoods.) They might as well say who they are and be armed to answer "why" (and not just that "we youth are getting messed over").

There is only one real answer for a youth who becomes a "tribune of the people" that's going to make any real sense—and it will make him seem less weird—especially as time goes on and people see more what the RCYB is about—because they'll see that his group really does have something it's fighting for and are pretty dedicated at that and that they are not just some people who have a fanatical obsession with how Mc-



Donalds is messing over youth or with Africa, etc. He's fighting and organizing and educating to overthrow the order that exists and transform society and because of that he's part of the only group around that at every turn unites the masses of youth against the abuses coming down and informs people about what's happening in the world and what's it got to do with them and what they should do about it.

### What's in a Name and Why Communist in the Name is Better

The appeal does make a point that "Revolutionary Youth Brigade" (RYB) could be a YCL and not everything hangs on a name. This is true, one could have a communist organization without "Communist" in the name, but it couldn't be the kind of organization the authors outlined. (The authors do go out to lunch a little and point out SDS as an example—sure various communist trends developed in SDS, but Students for a Democratic Society was almost explicitly anti-communist when it was formed in 1964—and that's when its name was chosen; and to this day, large sections of the American people probably don't grasp that at a time large sections of SDS considered themselves to be red, not just Weathermen—though it did acquire that reputation among some.)

In fact, if RYB was a better name, the Center would go along with it, despite what right lines have been brought up to defend it, and we would concentrate only on combating the right errors. (It is not at all irrelevant, however, that the dispute over the name arose not because the Center insisted that only by having "Communist" in the name could the YCL truly be communist and *therefore* the name should be RCY. It arose, in short, not because the Center insisted that the YCL must, at all costs, under any circumstances, have "Communist in the name" but because some comrades insisted that at all costs, at least under present circumstances, it must *not* have "Communist" in the name—which has been a consistent position of some comrades for some time though the arguments for it have changed somewhat—see, for example, Bulletin, Vol. X, No. X on this.) But more basically, the fact is that RCYB—having Communist in the name—is a much better alternative.

The appeal states:

"We feel that if the name of the YCL is Revolutionary Youth Brigade there will be a much better basis to do just that. First of all the name clearly takes a stand on what should be done in this society—calling for it getting turned upside down and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. It's not a bad word to popularize, as a matter of fact, at the start of Red Papers 6 we attributed a number of damn good qualities to that word. It offers another road to youth (as much as one word can) and defines the organization as one not pissed about just one abuse or another—but wants to fight all manifestations of imperialism and get rid of it altogether." (appeal)

But our authors are very wrong. For all the positive

qualities of the word "Revolutionary" (remember, that word was adopted as part of the Party's name at its founding Congress), it is still very vague by itself—and does not connote all the things our authors say it does, nor does it offer another road to youth as much as one word can. In fact, the authors know this since their arguments boil down to needing something more vague to get over with the masses and recruit youth. In fact, revolution is used popularly not only to define revolution—but has been coined to describe any kind of "radical new thing in society" (and the bourgeoisie of course coins it to promote their "radical" new products). There's the "Sexual Revolution," the Youth Cultural Revolution (not to be confused with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!). And even if people get the point that we're talking about a revolution against what exists today—of itself the word "Revolution" is pretty vague about that, RCYB clearly states what kind of revolution we're talking about—Proletarian Revolution—whose aim is communism and is guided by communist politics and ideology. Frankly the whole paper smacks too much of the old Brigade (before the Party formed) except that it emphasizes training its members in Marxism more than the old Brigade did! It's probably more accurate to describe the line as a "Revolutionary" YIA line—which by the way is what the YIAs are called in the "Who We Are's" of the *Young Red*.

Of course people are speaking to a real thing when they say communism would turn off some people—even many people. In a longer term sense (we're not talking about a fly-by-night organization) with the crisis intensifying and with people, and in particular youth, getting more desperate, it is much more desirable to be well-known as reds when people approach the RCYB, because as was stated earlier, they'll know exactly who they are approaching.

In the short term sense the RCYB will in certain situations suffer some difficulties and even losses because it is a communist organization, and this is why the proponents of the RYB-line say a YCL needs some breathing space, i.e., having communism in the name would keep the YCL from getting to first base. First of all, many masses who are not communists in any sense of the word will find their own level to relate to the RCYB. Already we have some experience where in some neighborhoods over a particularly sharp attack, youths who are not even in the "revolutionary YIA" have broadly distributed leaflets about this attack—leaflets with the word "communist" in its signature.

Even more broadly, youths will read the RCYB's agitation and discuss it and even come to a demonstration or whatever it may call, or will work in a mass organization or coalition that the RCYB is a leading force in (maybe take the posture "I don't like their commie stuff, but everybody's got a right to their views and what they're doing about this is right"). But even where some youth get totally turned off by the communist character, that must be divided into two. While we shouldn't be overjoyed that they refuse initially to

work with the RCYB, it would be narrow to think that's all that happened. For one, that person may have met a red (and one who was open about being red!) for the first time in his life—and right there maybe some of the bourgeois myths will begin to crack (he didn't look like a Soviet agent—what they were saying didn't sound like what I've heard about communists). And the situation is getting worse—and worse for youth, too, who, because of all the characteristics of youth, are less likely to just take this abuse in stride, etc. This individual might himself come around, when he sees that the RCYB is the only consistent tribune of the people (among youth) or at least he will see that other people are checking them out, etc.

Let's take a very current example. The Brigade is the leading force in the coalition around Kent State. The Brigade, we assume, is known as a communist organization by many on campus. A lot has been said about it in the bourgeois press. It would even be more significant though, if an organization with the name Communist right up there were leading this battle—showing clearly what reds do and very importantly—playing an important part in making socialism and communism a social force in the U.S. again. The way things are, when the bourgeoisie red-baits in the press many workers and youth who haven't been directly involved in the struggle, but who support it, might think the press is just trying to badmouth it again. It is far better for these people, and for those people who are involved in the battle but are concerned that communists may screw it up—and even those people who at this time don't agree with the aims of the struggle—to know that communists are openly involved and do nothing to conceal or softpeddle that fact.

Don't the authors grasp that conditions are sharpening—and while there's much confusion as the CC report states, our task is to bring clarity to that confusion? And as these more backward (at least in a certain sense) elements come around because they are more up against the wall and their bourgeois illusions are cracking, isn't it better as they come to some understanding that the working class cannot be passive on any front—just concern themselves with speedup or their contract or whatever—that they remember, not just the fact that the students stood up against this outrage at Kent State, but that communists played a leading role in that struggle?

Are the authors saying that Communist should not be in the name to make some strategic significance out of the fact that people hear that the RYB is reds from various sources but dismiss this as vile rumors because they've liked some of the things these kids have done?

Don't the authors grasp—that for all the conditions they've mentioned (the aspects that were correct)—the spontaneous tendency when approaching someone, or being approached, will be to the right—to be conservative . . . “just in case they haven't heard yet that we're reds.” Are we going to feed these people, these youth,

pablum—even militant pablum—until they know for sure that we're good guys so we can spring it to them that we are reds? Hiding or holding back on what we are so we can lead the mass struggle and be the main form of organization to lead all types of battles is a fine line away from “I hope these masses haven't heard what we are so we can get down on the real issues.” This is emphatically not a question of intention, it is a question of where political line will lead, regardless of intention.

The authors even distort the facts a little in arguing their point. They talk about a YIA chapter that got red-baited real heavy for being involved in an important local struggle and that the chapter had trouble dealing with the baiting according to the example given in the last national bulletin (“if the authorities and the people who run this mess don't like it, then there's got to be something to it”). They admit that it wasn't a very developed chapter—“not because they hadn't studied Marxism” (which our authors claimed they had) but because they weren't steeled in struggle. This last part is far from the truth. This particular chapter and most of its members had been in the YIA since July 4, 1976—and had been involved in all the political battles the YIA took up (African Liberation Day, etc.) and a number of local battles—granted, probably none of these things were very big in impact, but we're not talking about the high tide of struggle of the '60s nor are we talking about West Virginia coal miners when we're talking about stealed in struggle! And this chapter did almost no study of Marxism! They had two somewhat disorganized introductory study sessions; someone from the Party came to do a presentation on unemployment and some of their members attended a city-wide educational on the national question. Also being a YIA chapter, they had little experience of taking any Marxism out to the broad masses of youth, which would have given them some valuable experience when red-baited in the course of struggle. Obviously “communists” who don't know any communism aren't going to be able to handle or understand red-baiting very much—and they aren't going to have much of a grasp of why it's important to take communism out to the youth.

Following the line in the appeal and the logic of the arguments for this breathing space stuff will lead to holding your breath till you are blue in the face. And as has been pointed out, at first contact with people who meet you as an open red even when they react negatively, two things happen not just one—they don't just react against the fact that you are a Communist, they also have contact with a “real live” communist, and to some degree at least this begins to raise some questions about the bourgeoisie's portrayal of communists (unless we act like the enemy portrays us!).

The authors' statement that having Communist in the name is going to reduce the YCL to some Trotskyite sect is pretty outrageous. (First of all the whole paper smacks of right idealism—if we just link up with these day-to-day struggles correctly, then we can go forward, just by unfolding some Marxism through our

program on these battles, or on the other right hand, if we just had "revolutionary"—and not communism—in the name we could really do the dog! Of course the YCL's work and agitation and actions have to reflect the real world and apply the mass line—speak to the actual situation and the real issues and develop tactics and demands to advance the particular battle they are involved in.

The essence of Trotskyite sects has never been that they've called themselves communists but in their petty bourgeois dogmatism and idealism—all their horseshit—their whole whole ideological and political line. It's really an ass kicker—when because of right tendencies in the Party—holding back on politics because the time isn't "ripe yet" or advanced work will really screw up building the struggle—that *opportunists* gain some ground. It's been in more than one struggle that because of this error, the OL comes in, openly as the CP-ML and sweeps up some of the most advanced who we had been painstakingly doing political work with only by "bringing light" into the particular battle. And it's been in more than one major industrial battle that the Party members have paid so much attention to the IWO (Intermediate workers organizations) leg of the work (which we must) but to the exclusion of more advanced work like getting the *Worker* out, that the Trots sell hundreds of their rags (or the CP-ML) and this Trot or revisionist crap gets to be what communism means to the workers—Marxism in a petty bourgeois alien form!

And precisely because it is the *beginning* of a new spiral, a spiral that's going to make some heavy demands on the proletariat as it goes on, there is a certain importance to the "shock value" of being communist in big bright red letters. The proletariat's answer to this crisis is not to fight to *turn things back* to a better period—the "Happy Days" when things weren't deteriorating as much, when life in the U.S. was not quite as decadent as it is now—to where more youths could get skills or at least find a job. No, our answer is not to fight to get things "back where they should be." Our answer is that history must be moved violently forward—there is no other real alternative. There are *radical ideas* amongst workers now—even in a working class that "hasn't had socialism for 20-30 years" but a working class that has struggled and has seen some pretty big mass movements of mainly non-proletarian strata in their time. And a lot of the working class—and even the working class youth—know or are learning "that you have to fight to get anything in this world." But in the main this is so permeated with bourgeois crap (especially among youths' elders) about the "democratic process," "legalism," "political-religious nonsense about "non-violence," "tax reform," etc. and a tremendous amount of confusion as to who is really to blame (corrupt politicians, or worse—welfare frauders, the Blacks, the Chicanos, the greedy whites, etc.) that there are going to have to be some pretty heavy lightning bolts to cut through all this crap.

Obviously the intensification of the crisis will have the greatest shock value—but the bourgeoisie will

continue to find new ways to work and act on the political and ideological fronts to try to contain the general level of consciousness and keep things on a bourgeois road—for example more militant city councilmen and congressmen are going to be promoted on the one hand and right-wing demagogues and demagogic movements on the other—finding the ways to intensify the divisions among the people, play on great nation chauvinism, etc. etc., all as their answers for dealing with the problems their system is facing, but all stemming from and promoting this notion of a "free enterprise system" (although some may promote a mild form of "socialism") and that things must always be in the confines of this system—there is no other alternative.

These are heavy things to break down—these bourgeois illusions. A struggle here and a knocking down a point there, while important, in and of themselves don't cut it. Taking on this horseshit that's so much of our "bourgeoisified working class" straight on is a very important task. To get out there and boldly state that everything our rulers have said is a crock—everything they promote (harmony among the classes, bourgeois democracy, religion or whatever) is wrong—and we need to destroy their society and build a totally new one, has got to be done. Engels spoke to the role of this shock value on the ideological front in summing up the value of heresy in his book, *The Peasant War in Germany*. While this book is speaking of the bourgeois revolution, feudal ideology and the dogma of the Church in particular had probably a much greater hold on the peasantry than even bourgeois ideology has on the working class at this time in the U.S. Engels stressed that:

"It is clear, under the circumstances, all the generally voiced attacks against feudalism—above all the attacks against the Church—and all revolutionary social and political doctrines had mostly and simultaneously to be theological heresies. *The existing social conditions had to be stripped of their halo of sanctity before they could be attacked.*" (emphasis added)

The authors said that this shock value thing was the most appealing argument for having Communism in the name, but their unanimous experience was that this was of no real value at this time in the U.S.

But let's talk about an earlier period—and while there are differences with today a lot can be drawn from it. Let's talk about the beginning of the anti-war movement—the mid sixties. While larger mobilizations were important, there were smaller groups even then ('66-'67) who openly allied with the Vietnamese and started to carry Vietcong flags. This was very, very controversial at the time. People in "peace marches" were often pelted with rocks and called rads—but to carry the flag of the enemy! This angered many—but while it angered, it even spurred on some of those people who were angered by it and those who weren't (especially youth)—why in the world would somebody carry that flag and more, why would somebody risk the heckling, maybe even to get beat up, for carrying the communist flag! Of course it would be wrong to reduce the "left wing" of



the antiwar movement's positive aspect to only the fact that they dared to carry these flags, but the shock of their activity had a very positive affect overall on that struggle, the forces within it and on the broader American public.

In the same way, 10 people wearing Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade T-shirts in a mass demonstration means more than having 50 people wearing YIA T-shirts or even 25 wearing RYB T-shirts (1/3 of them not being reds and many of the other 2/3 not wanting to say they are!). While the YCL must link up with and find the ways to work with youth who aren't reds, that doesn't negate the vital importance of an open red pole among youth that isn't afraid to say what it is.

It is an important part of building for revolution to boldly declare our aims—"disdaining to conceal our views." In fact, the bourgeoisie often makes some ground when it tells the masses they've been duped by reds—especially when reds have been "duping" them—hiding from the masses their views and aims as reds. This of course, does not mean dropping everything else and just go on street corners and talk about socialism with a red T-shirt on—but our whole Party has got to pull out of this rightist bent and grasp the importance of work on the ideological front. And in terms of our youth—they are at a crossroads and are seeking answers, there is "an unwillingness to accept the way things are" and that's why the *Programme* states that it's no wonder that many turn to mysticism or drugs or cynicism.

And while youth cannot be "separated from society as a whole," they are not as "permeated" with as many of the bourgeois prejudices as their elders and they don't yet have the immediate concerns of having the main responsibility for supporting a family, keeping their home, paying their car notes—all responsibilities that do have a conservative pull on adult workers. Shall we leave it to Jesus freaks, punk rock, some opportunists—or groups like the Nazis—etc. to openly and boldly propagate a "life with a purpose" to the broad masses of youth!

### Summation

The character of the RCYB will not be "advanced mass"—at least not in the sense the authors have used it and how it's been popularized throughout the youth and student work. Its main purposes will be to train and recruit communists and exert a steady influence on the broad masses of youth—in building their struggles, bringing them into broad political struggles, and doing work on the ideological front among them. And in doing both of these things, we can maximize the potentially powerful positive influence on the broader sections of the people, especially the working class. In this way and in this way only can we answer the question of "life with a purpose." Youth have big questions and we must actively work to answer them through struggle and ideological work among them and in that

way channel the daring and unwillingness to accept things the way they are etc. of youth for the revolutionary struggle. The YCL must be a separate organization from the Party—with a life of its own—but must be openly allied with the Party and given leadership by the Party.

These are the reasons we build a YCL—not because youth are the "most oppressed" (although we must base our work on the strata of the working class who are most oppressed in the sense of having the least options under capitalism—though not those who are completely demoralized and into "lumpen" stuff as a way of life) not because we have to find them a good place to use their skills for society, but because the proletariat has the task to turn this world upside down (or right side up!) and we need the vitality of our young proletarians to accomplish this.

While breaking through this "red" blind spot among the masses is not an easy task, as the XXX [internal Party document] states, "the only way to guarantee against red-baiting is not to do anything significant." And only a fairly tight group of young people ideologically (though, of course, in relation to the Party, much less ideologically developed) is going to be able to find the ways to break through the bourgeois lies about communism, the stubborn ignorance of the masses and to be able to persevere in the class struggle. But as we've pointed out, there is a basis to get to "first base" as an open communist youth organization—both in the sphere of building struggle and in the sphere of propagating communism itself. And regardless of what has been theorized in this "advanced-mass" formulation, the YCL will have to work in mass organizational forms with youth who are not yet ready to call themselves communists. Not to do so would be both "left" and rightist—to do exactly what the MPR summed up about the old Brigade (quoted on page 5 of this paper).

Right now the prospects for a great upheaval might seem to be in the very, very distant future, but as the CC report continually emphasizes, things can change very rapidly and as it quotes from Lenin:

"The task is to keep the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat tense and train its best elements, not only in a general way, but concretely so that when the popular ferment reaches the highest pitch, they will put themselves at the head of the revolutionary army."

Especially in this lull before the storm we need a fairly tight RCYB—to weather the ebbs and flows of the mass struggle, to be able to apply the mass line among youth, to keep on the "high road" while it isn't immediately apparent that the bourgeoisie is bound to topple. Are we going to shun away from our tasks in the fullest sense because of these difficulties—which by the way may be very small in comparison to what we'll face in the future, as for example opposing imperialist war when the bourgeoisie is actually waging it! Socialism is once again beginning in an embryonic way to be embraced openly by the working class in this country—that is by its advanced section in particular.

The rightist tendencies in our Party (hit at in the

"mass line" articles and more fully identified and spoken to in the CC report and in other subsequent bulletins and *Revolution* articles) will harm greatly that process.

Let our revolutionary working class youth and students work under the open banner of communism not failing to develop policies and tactics around specific battles, not failing to unite with those who are not ready to embrace the Red Flag—but neither failing to boldly and broadly propagate communism, so that they can make an important contribution to preparing ourselves and the broader masses for what is yet to come.

### Factional Spirit

As a secondary aspect to the line questions, it is also important to bring out that the paper had a somewhat factional tone which was also reflected in the amount of "buzz-buzz" that has gone on pretty widely around this question in parts of the Party. While there was a certain amount of "opening up" this debate in order to get the line questions clearer, that was no call for factional activity.

Comrades who for some reason had contact with this line struggle (whether correctly or incorrectly) tended to gossip about it and even used it as capital in branch meetings to bolster arguments against the Party's line ("many people doing the work around the country are opposed to having Communist in the name" etc.). Meanwhile, many of the plans for the building of the YCL were not followed through on—not following up on some of the "summer projects," not following through with the steering committee that was supposed to be the organizing core in building the YCL, in some instances running away from the task of building the convention (which was supposed to be the principal task over the summer) because of disagreeing with the Party's line on the name.

This is not to say that there hasn't been any good work done among youth and students in the last period. On the contrary many advances have been made. But there has been some breakdown in democratic centralism which can only hurt our mass activity and Party life.

Especially since work among youth and students is and has been, despite some erroneous tendencies, more "red" than most other areas of work in its organizational form (this is especially true in the RSB) the spontaneous pull will be away from grasping the importance of the Party as a whole and the Party's overall line and to fall into a certain amount of departmentalism. It is in more than one area where leading comrades in youth and student work miss their leadership meetings for 1, 2, maybe 3 months. In some cases this has been because of very sharp struggle, mass struggle, the comrades are leading. But specifically because of the intensity of particular battles, and this area of work overall, it is absolutely necessary that comrades participate fully in Party life. On this point, comrades should study the most recent Party Branches article in *Revolution* (September 1977).

The appeal took on an anti-Party tone with a number of quips like calling on leadership to leave their offices to check out the real world and more than a little blackmail around the name—people will be so demoralized if RCYB is made the name that they won't (be able to) do the work, etc. Here, once again, while criticizing the tone and spirit, the fundamental thing is the line—which is blatantly empiricist. The overall line of the Party—reflecting the historical and international experience of class struggle and recent experiences in the struggle in this country—is negated and particular experiences in youth and student work (not by any means correctly summed up on the whole) are raised against the Party's line.

While particular practice with youth is important to sum up correctly, the overall experience of the Party on these same questions and the lessons of the world proletariat do have a bearing—a pretty central bearing on the question at hand. The Party also has a pretty developed trunk (system of central leading bodies on a local to national level) where youth work does get summed up (although not enough) and so summation of practice does not only go on the department level (and frankly a number of examples cited in the paper around practice were misrepresented and did not reflect the Party's summation in the areas where the work went on). We don't feel we should go into the question of democratic centralism much more in this paper, but again suggest that comrades study the Party Branches article.

One final point—while it is true that the RCYB needs a "life of its own" (that the Party does not force policy on the RCYB, but members of the RCYB must be won over to line and internal to the RCYB various plans and policies should be developed which the Party should encourage or criticize, etc. etc.), Party members in the RCYB are *Party members* and subject to the discipline of the Party and do not have a "life of their own" (which by the way is what direction the line behind RYB would push things).

### Forward to the Convention

The most obvious task right now is to win the youth and students coming to the convention to the line outlined in this paper—not just that the name should be RCYB, but the character of the RCYB as outlined in this paper, its tasks, the importance of struggle in the ideological sphere, etc. Where it hasn't been implemented already, the line of National Bulletin, Vol. X, No. X should be implemented immediately, i.e., building for the convention is the main task in this period, while building mass struggles will have to be secondary to this. The principal task at this time is consolidating youth and students to come to the convention and preparing them for what has to be accomplished there.

At the convention itself, a key task will be to strive for unity as to the character, outlook, purpose and tasks of the YCL. This should go on mainly in a broad sweeping way (why revolution, the importance of a

YCL) but also around particular questions (the name question, what should the RCYB's stand be on war, unemployment, etc. and around particular campaigns it should take up in the immediate future). Its overall political and ideological outlook and purpose is pivotal

in accomplishing any of the other tasks and is what will make or break the RCYB. Particular guidance on the agenda, workshops, etc. is outlined in "Seize the Time" and assignments at the convention will be handled through the department. ■

---



# Appeal To The Party Leadership On The Name Of The Young Communist League

[This appeal is printed here as it was received by the Party leadership—Ed.]

Last [early 1977], a meeting of the national youth and student commission was held. A meeting where we got into some key questions around the nature of the YCL, particularly its working class youth section. We talked, discussed and struggled over a number of points: from why it's a necessity to form a YCL; the relationship between the youth and student sections; the name and many other topics. We pointed out a number of times at the meeting that these discussions were hampered by our not having practically set out to build the YCL. We stated that as this political task was taken up in the coming period and made into a material force in our youth work—these various points and struggles would be more living and grounded in the actual contradictions of building the overall struggles of youth and that certainly many new questions and ideas would come forward around it.

Since that time—we have moved ahead the work towards building a YCL and indeed the questions and struggles raised and gone through at that XXX meeting are much more living and rooted. A successful initial organizing meeting was held with over 5 to 1 ratio of working class youth to cadre—with a good deal of political struggle and unity developed over forming a YCL. Cores of working class youth have developed over these last six months—in XXX or XXX cities (we take up the work in around XXX cities). A steering committee—made up of mainly working class youth is leading the RSB and various youth groups towards the founding convention. The *Young Red* is becoming a regular news letter—and sales are nearing the 7000 mark. Different forms of studying Marxism-Leninism among youth have been developed and now a centralized means of carrying out this task is being taken up. The work towards African Liberation Day (ALD) was very good among youth—and now a decent program of struggle has been developed for the summer around "Jobs for Youth." And we confidently look towards a successful national demonstration and activity at Wall Street

this August, which will follow with a major conference around the YCL—struggling out the nature of its founding convention and hammering out a last two month strategy on building it.

## Behind the Name, Nature and Tasks of the YCL

The point of all this—is not to say the work has moved ahead in a straight line. It certainly hasn't. New difficulties and problems have arisen and some old ones still haven't been fully resolved (and we'll get into these in the course of the appeal). The point is that off the meeting in XXX, the building of a *communist* youth organization has been taken up. This has brought forward some communist youth who have taken the thing up as their own. More importantly, especially in terms of this paper, it has helped bring about a deepening of our political line—particularly on the nature of a young communist league, what are its political tasks, and how they can be carried out in the years ahead.

As Mao says in *On Practice*, "the problem of whether theory corresponds to objective reality is not and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational mentioned above. The only way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objectives one has in mind."

This is important to emphasize because behind a great deal of our views around the name is the deeper understanding of the tasks and necessity of a YCL and a beginning grip on how it can carry them out. These points, which we've taken up, discussed, struggled over, and deepened have gone on throughout the student and youth sections of the party as we've taken up the building of the YCL. And none of these points are spoken to or referred to at all in the national bulletin. Rather it just speaks to points raised and discussed at a meeting in XXX—before we had really got the machinery going on building the YCL, before we had still taken up consistent work among working class youth in a number of cities.

Now, at this point off of six months of work, the *main* character of struggle and development of line on the commission around the YCL is not around why to form it, why it's necessary, etc.—but rather, how it can carry out its various essential tasks and how can we move ahead to build it. We say "*main*" and not "*only*" because it would be politically naive to say that the "YIA line" is still not held by some comrades—and is unfortunately being strengthened and bolstered by the "RCY" proposal. But overall in the main, comrades have seen from building struggle among youth that a YCL is an organizational form that correctly corresponds to the material situation and contradictions youth face and the key vehicle to leading youth to carry out its revolutionary tasks as laid out in the Programme and MPR.

So we want to stress there's a good deal of unity among comrades on the commission around forming a YCL—unity build [sic] off the practice and summation of the past period's work since the January meeting. And it's in the context of moving ahead to build the YCL that we oppose the proposed name.

We state this not to score high points on a "sincerometer" or to purify ourselves from the "YIA line" by announcements and proclamations. We state this to stress that over the last 6 months a good deal has been learned on the necessity to form a YCL—and how it can go ahead and best carry out its tasks. And that these views and summations must be looked into and popularized throughout the party—especially the youth and student sections. And we stress this to hopefully avoid the vulgarization of some of the struggle around the name to simply those who want to build a YCL and those who do not. That if you really want a YCL, then you'll want "Communist" in its name—and if not, then you don't want one.

This vulgarization, could lead to major problems for 1) it will fail to unite with the great many comrades in the youth and student work who see the necessity of the YCL—the necessity of popularizing socialism and communism, and training new young communists—but oppose the name RCY because it's a fetter in carrying out these tasks; 2) even more importantly it will lead to a failure to deepen our line on the political purposes of forming a YCL, its tasks, and how it can go about accomplishing them in the best possible manner—which is further going on now off the controversy and disagreement around the name.

#### A Fetter on Leading the Struggle, Popularizing Socialism and Training New Communists

We here on the student and youth commission unanimously (other than its chair) feel that the proposed name will be a serious and major setback for our work among working class youth—and a more modest step backward for the party's student work. [As is now clear, this paper was inspired in large part by this "chair"—Ed.] We feel that it's a proposal that reflects a mistaken view on the character of the YCL—a mass communist organization

or an advanced mass organization—and not a junior party. A proposal that will fail to allow the YCL to openly lead the struggles of youth but will bring on what Lenin once said about the phrasemakers—"the riot of phrasemaking and the timidity of deed." As it will lead to second level organizations being the *main* forms of organizations that will lead the struggles of youth—"Jobs for Youth" committees, police repression committees. A proposal that will lead to the failure of offering the other road of socialism and truly popularize communism among the broad masses of youth—which will in turn spill over into the broad section of the American people. And a proposal that will fail to allow the YCL to bring forward new youth into its organization—to whom socialism will be a whole new outlook and view—where they could come in and learn what communism is all about.

In short, we see the proposal of RCY as a fetter to the YCL carrying out its critical tasks. A fetter on its ability to openly lead the struggle of youth. A fetter on its ability to offer and popularize socialism and communism. And a fetter to its critical tasks of bringing forward and training new communists.

We do not make these statements lightly. At this student and youth commission are the leaders of the student and youth work in every area that it is taken up (save XXX and XXX that are absent). Many of us have put long years into taking up the party's task of building communist organization among students, recruitment into the party, etc. and more recently in carrying out similar tasks among youth. And we have, over the years, found the particular guidance of the center to the student and youth work extremely helpful and correct as well as, of course, in its overall leadership of the party. But we do feel a serious mistake is being made.

#### Two Fundamental Questions

We feel there are two fundamental questions involved. The first is the nature of the Young Communist League as an organization. What are its tasks? What is meant by advanced mass organization? Why a Young communist organization must have these two aspects to correctly speak to the material contradictions and problems of youth? Why there will be big problems if our youth organization takes on only one of these aspects? The second point is how this organization which is strategically necessary can carry out its tasks—of openly leading struggle, offering and popularizing the road of socialism and communism and bringing forward new communists—to the sons and daughters of the working class that have been without socialism for twenty or thirty years.

These two major points, and they have a number of facets and aspects to them—will be what this paper will focus on. We are XXX comrades who have been asked by the student and youth commission to sum up the points of the commission meeting—and we too have further discussed and deepened the points made at the

meeting. We are hoping to help deepen and develop the points made at the meeting. We are hoping to help deepen and develop the whole party's understanding of the tasks and necessity of a YCL, inform the leadership of a number of lessons learned around the critical points mentioned above, and to get the name "RCY" reconsidered, further investigated and changed.

As one can easily see, this paper goes on for quite a while—it'll probably go 15 pages before it's through. We know that leading comrades are busy and wading through long papers can certainly be a pain in the ass. We've tried to keep this paper as short as possible—and we discussed taking sections out. But we are sure that this name proposal is a mistake, will mean a big loss in getting the YCL off the ground, hurt the struggle of the working class and its party—that we felt it was important to get a number of points out deeply and seriously.

We are also focusing this paper mainly on the working class youth section of the YCL. This is the section that we feel will most seriously be affected by the RCY proposal. The student section will not nearly be so affected for reasons that we'll get into—though we do feel it will be somewhat held back from carrying out its tasks (and we'll explain that too).

We are confident that this paper and struggle will deepen all of our understanding in how to build struggle and organization among youth—as well as more broad points and questions of Marxism. We are confident that a correct decision will be reached. Our unanimous proposal for a name is Revolutionary Youth Brigade.

#### YCL—An Advanced Mass Organization

One of the key points behind the struggle around the name—is the very nature of the YCL as an organization. Around this question there has already been a good deal of struggle—particularly in terms of its description as an "advanced mass organization"—a description that the student and youth commission unites around. Some say that they don't understand this question and the relationship of these two aspects in one organization. Others are more openly metaphysical and say it's impossible to have an organization with these two aspects. And finally there's some who say "Yes, you can have these two aspects, but that's not what a YCL is about."

So let's get it all straightened out. What do we mean by an advanced mass organization or a communist mass organization? We mean that the YCL stands for socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, links this up to the many struggles that it builds, openly applies Marxism-Leninism to the struggle and takes up the study of Marxism. It stands with and supports the RCP—who politically leads it. These are the characteristics that define its communist character and are the principal aspect of its political and organizational existence, mark its differences with other mass organizations the party builds and mark similarities to the party. On the other hand, the YCL is the main

form of organization which is to lead the struggles of youth (though it will certainly form fronts and mass organizations from time to time mainly around particular battles), and it is the organization that we call on advanced people to immediately join—open to all who want to work with it, generally agree with its program, pay dues, carry out consistent work, etc. It is an organization where the new advanced come in to "learn communism" and most are not even communist when they join. Both these aspects differ from those of the party—the main form to lead the mass struggle, the main form to bring new forces into, and the level of their political development upon joining, this defines its mass character.

Now of course, these are not the only qualities and aspects of a YCL—only very simple things are made up of two aspects. There is also the contradiction of communist and youth which the CC Report speaks to—and we have to take that up in terms of the cultural and social front, the character of its study and meetings, its role of leading youth to be a single spark to all of society etc. And we will speak to these different aspects in the paper—particularly the task of leading youth to be a single spark and what that has to do with the task of popularizing socialism and communism.

#### Advanced Mass Developed by YCL and Comintern

Historically there has been a great deal of struggle around this point of advanced mass or mass communist, and a trace of history of different YCL's and the Young Communist International—will see quite a few flips around these two aspects. Breaking through the middle has not historically been the easiest task. For the concept of "advanced mass organization" did not originate in the student and youth commission of the RCP. It was developed by the Comintern in the late 20's and early 30's when the various YCLs and the Comintern are continually speaking to the tendency of the YCLs to be junior parties—refusing to go out and lead the struggles of youth, and demanding people to be full-blown communists to join an organization, which is to give people the opportunity to "learn communism." As we said the struggle to develop this form of organization runs throughout the history of the Young Communist International—to the mid-thirties. It's particularly sharp after its 2nd Congress in 1923 and the reports of its executive committee—as this was the key period for formulating the YCL's political and organizational unity—off of a few years of consistent worldwide experience.

But the following are different quotes from 6 different YCI Congresses—bringing out how this was not a line of the particular period, but ran throughout the building of Young Communist Leagues. They are 6 quotes out of many hundreds that could be picked out of YCI or individual YCL's materials that go into this point.

"These comrades who made fun of the slogan of



to the masses were the very ones who were the farthest from the young workers; they tried to shut themselves up in little debating clubs as 'pure' revolutionaries, afraid to lose their 'communist clarity' by coming in contact with the noncommunist youth workers. They discussed and discussed their problems but have never grasped the real meaning of a mass organization, of the necessity of taking an active part in the daily struggles of young workers . . .

"A mass organization means that we gather into our ranks the largest number of class conscious or partially class conscious young workers and that, furthermore, we exert a steady influence on the broad mass of young workers who for some reason or other we don't get into our ranks. It also means that all our work must be such as to stir us on to take part in all phases of the life of the young workers." 1922

"The Italian comrades were criticized because their League had not thrown open widely, its doors to the masses of young workers. The tendency had been to band by themselves. Hereafter the Italian League was instructed to strive to become a mass organization and not to fear 'contamination' by the not yet fully communist Youth." 1924

"In drawing up the Economic Program, the Young Communist International lays one of its most important stones which will result, first, in greater work of the Leagues directly on the industrial field—in the shops, mills, unions, etc., secondly, in attracting thus the mass of young workers to the Young Communist League of Workers Leagues, and hence realizing the aim of the Young Communist International—to become mass organizations." 1925

"The Young Communist Leagues must become Mass Organizations—this the task set before the Young Communist International and the Leagues. To become mass bodies of the young workers, the Leagues must throw open their ranks to the young workers, class conscious and not, break with sectarianism and enter into all the activities and lives of the young workers. By waging the struggle for the bettering of the economic conditions of the youth, by fighting capitalist militarism, by striving for their education and physical upbuilding, by seeking to bring the wage-slave, peasantry, and the children of the workers into the Young Communist Organizations and into their activities—by becoming organizations for Militant Education of the youth, only thus could the slogan of the Second World Congress, 'To the Masses' be realized." 1928

The Chinese also stressed the relationship of these two aspects to the student trip that went over there over two years ago—where they did investigation of the YCL. And it has been on this principal of "advanced mass organization"—with advanced or communist being principal—that the RSB has been consciously built. It has been in its internal newsletter a number of times describing its political and organizational unity and was a key discussion point put out to the Brigade in the August 1975 newsletter—that set the discussion

up on the YCL—at the founding convention in November 1975.

### Why This Form of Organization Only Among Youth

Now, why do we form organizations like this among the strata of youth. This is a question that is often asked and while we've hammered this out at a number of commission meetings—it's never been fully summed up why YCLs are a strategically important weapon for the working class victory in the class war.

It's not simply because it's a good "idea" to have one and that they've been built since the turn of the century. Not simply because large quick doses of Marxism are needed to consolidate advanced youth. Not because someone decided it was the historic task of youth to turn around the broad masses of peoples' views of communism. And not because there's a need to create an insurance policy against rightism in the youth work.

No, for with all the varying degrees of merit to these points, they miss the mark as to what's the basis for forming them. The basis, of course, is the material contradictions that the broad millions of youth face which create the necessity for an organization that is "advanced mass." Contradictions that provide the basis and necessity for an organization that will not only take up and lead the many immediate battles of youth but also offer another road and future for youth to take up as they face a certain crossroads of their life. And contradictions that demand an organization for youth provide a vehicle and opportunity for youth to serve the proletariat—using their skills and energy for the class war—and not what the schools and society generally do—train them to be the slaves and servants of the bourgeoisie.

Let's go through what those actual contradictions and conditions are—then we'll talk about why it's crucial to have an organization that develops the relationship of advanced and mass.

We know the many immediate hardships that youth face—both as youth and as part of the overall American people—unemployment, drugs, neighborhoods rotting, hardships and difficulties. On top of this millions of youth are also facing the burning question of what the hell they are going to do with their lives.

For years they have been trained to be the future wage slaves of the bourgeoisie. Now, as they are becoming so, they are not only trying to avoid the pitfalls of unemployment, the army, drugs, crime, etc., as they're also looking for one way or another to start off and develop a decent life, to find a way they can use their skills, make a contribution to society, etc.

Lenin, in all his writings on youth, points out that the bourgeoisie is constantly offering its hundred different futures to youth—all of which are the road to hell. And that the proletariat in turn should offer its future to youth.

## Unable to Offer Any Type of Life with a Purpose

The Programme also speaks to this point in the section under youth starting, "But the most basic problem the masses of young people face is the fact that imperialism is unable to offer them a life with a purpose." The youth need an organization that will not only lead them in fighting around different issues—but takes up this question which is the sharpest one of all that youth face.

This is the fundamental reason why young communist leagues have been developed throughout the 20th century and why we must be "advanced mass" to openly lead and develop the struggles of youth, to help create another pole—another road and future for the broad millions of youth, and give the youth a chance while they're checking out what the hell they're going to do with their lives—to take up Marxism-Leninism and give them a vehicle to use their energy and skills and ability to serve the working class.

No organization taking up the struggles of youth can possibly fully speak to the qualities and needs of youth if it does not—in addition to getting out and fighting for the needs of the people—speak to this major contradiction and problems facing millions of youth, offering them a future and a road where they put their lives to the best possible use. No better example of this is some of the strengths of the BPP (Black Panther Party)—who mobilized a large number of youth—and popularized among Black youth that they should devote their lives to being liberators and freedom fighters. Now all this, of course, must come out as the YCLs take up the many facets of life that affect youth—from the overall way society's going, the major political and social questions of the day, economic hardships and attacks, to cultural and social questions that particularly affect youth. As one comrade said, the YCL has to take this out as it covers everything from "Africa to acne." Once again we'd like to add Africa and building struggle is principal.

Now of course, none of this will happen overnight—that youth will see this other pole—this other way of going with their lives than the 100 dead ends that the bourgeoisie offers. It will only occur as the YCL ties in with and leads repeated struggles on different fronts and links it up with the different aspects and needs of youth. And the broad masses of youth make continual comparisons with other roads that are out there. Along with, of course, as the CC report points out, changes in the objective conditions. The important thing here, is the necessity of openly offering its road to youth and developing a pole around this major contradiction that youth face and seeing this as a critical task for our youth work—and a major responsibility for the YCL. This is why the YCL should be developed—as best and as much as is possible—to become the open leading force taking up the big battles of youth and the American people.

This question is particularly important given the

name proposal. For when comrades have raised how the name RCY will be a fetter on our ability to openly lead struggle, popularize socialism, etc., we suddenly get told of the wonders of second level organizations, mass committees and coalitions . . . and how these forms of organization will be much more "in" during the future and the importance of the YCL openly leading struggle is downplayed. Despite this defying any experience on the campuses and neighborhoods over the last couple of years, we ask the center—who is to speak to the major contradiction that youth face—what the hell are they going to do with their life and what the future holds if we don't strive for the YCL to do this. Who the hell are we supposed to be raising socialism to—the people in the mass committee. Is someone seriously going to suggest we can do this mainly through propaganda while we do our work through second level organizations. How is this turning the broad millions of people's views around about socialism and communism. Why not strive to make the YCL the main form of organization to lead struggle among the youth? Why leave the major contradiction that the millions of youth face out there only for the bourgeoisie to speak to?

## Critical YCL Task—Training Young Communists

So far we've only spoken to the aspect of the YCL concerning leading struggle—now we must focus in on the aspect which requires some deeper summations—its task of training young communists and becoming a center for youth to "learn communism." Providing a vehicle for young people—who are looking for a place to use and develop their skills, lead productive lives, contribute to society, etc.—to do just that, by learning Marxism and fighting for the working class. As talked about before—the necessity for an organization to do that flows from the contradictions youth face. Being trained as the future wage slaves, the youth look one place after another often quickly changing their minds over what the hell they are going to do with themselves. The YCL has to speak to this contradiction and bring forward those who check out fighting the bourgeoisie or a particular attack—so that they will start to learn what this world is about, their class interests and future lie, etc.

Mainly, this is a question of developing the youth politically and ideologically to see the need to use their life to fight the bourgeoisie as they take up and lead the fight against the bourgeoisie. It also means tapping the various skills youth develop—whether cultural, mechanical, studies, sports, etc., and using them to aid the fight against the capitalists!

Now in handling this task the YCL has an important and difficult contradiction to work out around the relationship of "advanced mass"—one that the YCL will live or die on over whether it is to become a true training ground for young communists. For the YCL must have the ability to open its doors for new young activists—who know little to nothing about communism—but want to lead youth to fight the bourgeoisie and

study and learn communism (and this is where the overwhelming majority of new "advanced youth" will be at). While at the same time it must weld within its own ranks firm political unity around a Marxist line and continuing to move forward and train the youth in Marxism-Leninism. Let's go through some of the major points that go along with this: the relationship of advanced and mass; why advanced or communist must be principle; why one-sidedness around this relationship is the road to hell.

### **One-Sidedness or Break Through the Middle, Worst or Best of Both Worlds**

Throughout the history of the Brigade and now in some ways our youth work there has been both positive and negative experience in working out this relationship and avoiding one-sidedness.

One-sidedness in terms of advanced or communist leads to our developing the contradiction of communist and youth or student into an antagonistic one.

One-sidedness in terms of mass leads to a failure to train the advanced communist membership, and the new forces as well—which over a period of time will often lead them to dropping out so you lose the mass character as well. Here, we are going to point out a few ways this stuff can come out. The next section will speak to how we can break through.

In the Brigade from time to time and this will differ in degree from one area to another there's been big struggles on closing the door off from new activists getting involved, building struggle, learning Marxism, allowing the new forces to come in and learn communism, etc. This will come out in a great many ways from the character of the regular meetings: demanding one to be well schooled in Marxism to even get a sense of what's going on; the feeling you got to put 40 hours a week into the revolution and no longer be a student; lack of teaching new forces fundamentals of Marxism as they come forward. The most sharply the above comes out is that the new forces coming forward see an antagonistic contradiction between being a student and a communist—which is death for a communist youth organization.

This has been a continual battle waged in the Brigade (and we have made good progress on this point). At this meeting we've also seen some of the same tendencies come up in some of our best youth groups, Philadelphia and the Bay Area. Part of this is due to the fact that in the recent period there's been a lot of struggle around raising people's understanding and unity around Marxism and the YCL, and also because there's a tendency in doing this to raise people's rational understanding of the laws of this system, why revolution not reform, but not to return this to revolutionary practice to take up and resolve the many particular contradictions that exist.

This did set off a tendency where the youth groups were demanding that new forces be full-blown communists to join—rather than seeing the groups as key vehi-

cles to sweep the new activists through the OHIQ. And where new people were going demanded to be full-time revolutionaries to get involved, move to new neighborhoods, etc. Once begun this resulted in many of the youth stating they saw becoming a communist antagonistically with still being a youth—where they had to immediately give up all the things they had been doing for years and years—whether it was where they hung out and lived, spend some of their time and being out with friends, etc. In both these cities the groups tended to stagnate and isolate themselves from the youth. And the worst of both worlds was developing as we were getting nowhere with "advanced" or "mass." The advanced were not developing as communists because having had their understanding of M-L raised it was being developed as a guide to return to revolutionary practice and bringing new forces forward—it was becoming a barrier to taking up revolutionary practice and bringing new forces forward. And of course no new members came around and the mass character of the groups floundered.

However, a one-sided war against making our communist organization "mass" does not help a thing. The greater error in the youth work has been towards only mass and not advanced. Over the past year the greater struggle has been to move people through the OHIQ and not into the first O. In a number of cities there have been different points where some youth have come forward only to lose them. Through the first 6 months as we've more systematically struggled to sum up and handle this contradiction we've managed to make some decent breakthroughs and consolidate cores of youth in a number of cities. Key here, is grasping that the YCL as a training ground must continue to move the youth forward through the OHIQ as rapidly as possible—as it develops the YCL as a firm communist organization that's politically united. This is both possible and necessary because of the characteristics of youth talked to in the national bulletin about going through quick political and ideological changes and that if we fail to do this how we'll lose the advanced youth. Though we should not isolate this "relatively quicker to change" from the overall social motion going on in society. As we'll get into for most Brigade members it's usually a period of 6 weeks to 2 months when people leap to taking up the stand, viewpoint and method of Marxism—if the Brigade is functioning well. And it looks about the same in terms of the youth as well.

This is sharpened up as we get a grip on those working class youth who are right now taking up the YCL. For instance, right now we are launching discussions and summations over the nature of the working class youth who are developing as the foundation of the YCL. At this point it appears that we are mainly attracting working class youth—who are trying to pull themselves up, develop a skill, education, etc.—very possibly get out of the working class. These youth are coming out of the heart of working class neighborhoods but they tend to be the ones going to skill centers, community colleges, etc. (once again we want to



point out that this is very preliminary and that we don't have a grip as yet on the relationship of our line and this social base).

For youth such as these—youth with the bigger than the normal youth's aspirations—the question of political and ideological development and consolidation is absolutely critical. For over a period of time or a wave of activity—the question of revolution, what you're going to do with your life, etc. comes into contradiction with—graduating from nursing school and having the chance to be a nurse, becoming a mechanic, the life of a worker under capitalism. Youth In Action does not provide this alternative. Clearly the YCL must be developed so that it does and this will be a critical task confronting it—particularly at its early stages of development as it struggles to further build up its working class foundation. To both bring the people into the first O—and through the OHIO. Now, we're going to get into a few points to help point out how this relationship is developed and why oneness will cause us a big pain in the ass.

**A Center to "Learn Communism"**

Back in 1921 Lenin speaking to the Young Communist International stated that Young Communist Leagues are centers for young people to come and "learn communism." It differs from the Party in the sense of how Party members go through a leap upon joining to taking up the stand, viewpoint and method of Marxism (though we all know no one stands still at that point). The YCL members, when they first join, are still in the quantity stage moving towards Marxism.

Most will come forward and check out the YCL because they dug the way it took up a particular struggle, social or political question, etc. Some will come forward because of its overall stand on turning things upside down. Some will come forward because of friends, brothers and hopefully if we can get the thing ripping, someday, social momentum, etc. People will come forward and check the thing out for many of these reasons—for some it will be 1 or 2, for others there will be more interpenetration. For all these people will be in motion towards Marxism—but certainly not communists when they join. A statement by the 5th Congress of the YCI talks to this—during the late 20's when the Comintern was in its "left" period—about when the YCL's got their work going well. And the quotes run down earlier also speak to this point.

"It will draw into its ranks not only those youth who consider themselves communists or sympathizers, but also those more progressive and radical youth who are becoming class conscious, who are ready to learn about, study, and fight for socialism, who are willing to unite with us in building non-party communist youth leagues." (YCI, 5th Congress)

The experience of the RSB has certainly borne this out. Our experience is that when the RSB is going well—say like when it was building African Liberation

Day—and new members are coming forward, maybe only 70% of the membership fully considers itself communist. Usually, in this period, it's after about 6 weeks to 2 months of constant work in the Brigade do members consciously start to look at themselves as communists. The people certainly are in motion towards it, checking it out, studying it, seeing how it can be a material force in changing the world—but they haven't taken up communism yet and are not ready to call themselves communists—though they'll say they're in the Brigade and what it's about.

Anyone who thinks this isn't true we would have to call an idealist, a candidate for an award once offered to some of us for proposing the building of a YCL (the Hegel award), denies quantity leads to qualitative changes and vulgarizes to the point of absurdity how youth will take things up quickly. Not only that—we think that it's a good thing when stuff like what was going on during African Liberation Day is happening. Where the Brigade's going out as a communist organization and taking up the big battles among the people—and bringing forward new advanced fighters who want to learn some new things and brought into the Brigade where they can learn communism. This is what a mass communist youth organization is all about!

**Advanced Must Be Principal—Avoid Eclecticism as Well as Metaphysics**

However, there are some critically important points here that must be gone into. For a vulgar interpretation of above would lead to major errors—and in developing the Brigade as a mass communist organization the student and youth commission has had a great deal of struggle and a certain amount of development and deepening of line and basically come down to what's principal, advanced or mass, communist or mass. An eclectic view on this would be death—just like a metaphysical one.

For the task of developing the organization as "advanced mass" or "mass communist," a place for new forces to learn Marxism, cannot mean that the functioning of the organization can be geared mainly to the relatively backward—the new forces checking out Marxism, seeing what the organization is about, etc. This was a major struggle in our commission that went on last winter and up and down the student branches—what should regular Brigade chapter meetings and the organization as a whole be geared to—the questions and view of the new forces coming forward, or the political tasks of the Brigade as a communist organization. The former led to nothing but big problems. Chapter meetings time and again getting caught up only in discussion of human nature, the working class, China, Russia, etc. While the political struggles on the campuses, major social questions of the day, were not taken up at all. Once again we have nothing but the worst of both worlds—the new advanced "masses" do not mainly learn Marxism through meeting one week after another on China, human nature, etc. And never seeing

how the political line of Marxism can be a material force to change the world. And the organization as a whole breaks down as well—as it never struggles and develops line for the struggles it's engaged in, the present political situation, etc. All this then has to go on outside the regular organization (Brigade or youth) mainly by Party members—with no ones initiative getting released at all and a host of other problems. The whole group breaks down and becomes a training ground for no one.

How did we break through and move forward? By gearing the regular chapter meetings—mainly made up of the general communist membership but with the new advanced forces who should and must come to check it out—to the political tasks of the Brigade. Making them centers to struggle and develop political line on the immediate struggles involved, the major political and social questions of the day, our political tasks and plans and policies on how to carry this out. This of course should be developed so the new forces know what's happening and can actually add their experiences—building off their strength of being "fresh" from the masses. Then the general members—along with the advanced—go out and make their political line and ideas a material force to change the world—then further sum it up, etc. As people start to see and learn how to use Marxism to grasp necessity and then use this understanding as a material force.

It was in carrying out these principles developed last XXX [time of meeting referred to earlier] in building the Brigade as a mass communist organization that the RSB consolidated itself as strong communist cores at the chapter level better than ever before, as well as showed its best growth since the Party formed and for the first time became a multinational organization beyond one area of the country. On top of this we've developed political education for the general membership around popular questions of the day—Africa, international situation and 3 worlds, national question, unemployment, etc. As well as points like the CC report, forming the IWO, etc. All this is done up and down the Brigade and we ask the Center to investigate any area to check it out. It's all directed so that the general membership bringing along the new forces come forward and are around us, want and are able to take up the Brigade and Marxism as their own as the vehicle and means to leading social change both in terms of the immediate social abuses and in terms of turning this whole world upside down.

Related to all this is a recent summation by the theoretical team in student work that formulated the task of both teaching new forces the ABC's of Marxism and moving the general membership of the Brigade on a theoretical escalator. That in the Brigade we have to much more take on the task of moving people beyond the initial leap to Marxism over that 6 week to 2 month period talked to before. In other words in addition to schooling the new forces in the ABC's of Marxism, we also have to start developing people's understanding of the DEF's and LMN's of Marxism. And of course those grounded in the LMN's will be better able to push for-

ward the overall work of the Brigade and provide new forces to teach the ABC's. Much of this has been launched over the summer and is off to a good start. We again ask those to investigate who feel that we don't want the Brigade or youth to function as a communist organization.

The key through all this training as communists is to make *advanced* principal—develop the YCL as a communist organization to carry out its tasks to change the world, but do this in a way where new forces openly called on and developed to come forward, learn what M-L is about and see it as a vehicle to change the world. This doesn't mean you don't have specific activities toward the new forces at any one time—you certainly do. But we're talking about the general way the group should function and bring forward new communists—while training those already in the YCL.

You can't close the door and not allow people to come forward. As Mao says, "We want people to join the revolution." The YCL must open its doors to the advanced—give the young advanced fighters a chance to fight the bourgeoisie, learn about communism and become Marxist-Leninists. But it must do this as it actually functions as a communist organization, struggles to develop political line and unity, takes on political education, theory, etc. and continues to move the advanced forward. In our work in the Brigade we have found a correct relationship between these two aspects with advanced as principal—leads to the best of both worlds. One-sidedness on either of these aspects leads to the worst of both worlds.

All these points are much more developed in our student work than our youth work because of uneven development—and the fact that the Brigade has existed as a communist organization for the last 2 years. But many of these points and principles are being applied to the youth work, with more consistency over the summer and as the groups take up the jobs campaign and head towards the convention. And we can see that off the campaign around Wall St. came the consolidation of cores of new communist youth in 3 or 4 cities. This came off 1) struggling to develop the youth groups as centers for the development of political line around the unemployment campaign and other social and political questions (Humboldt Park, neutron bombs, etc.); 2) the promotion of communist ideals as to what young people should do with their lives—serve the people, etc. and speak to their aspirations of wanting to contribute to society, the people, etc.; 3) taking up the study of Marxism-Leninism in a popular way—which we've organized on a national basis. Again we'd like the Center to sum this up—communist cores have been developed in a number of cities—by applying the principles spoken to above.

### YCL Members Will Go 3 Ways

One last point to help clarify the relationship of advanced and mass and the nature of the YCL. Often the RCY proponents state that all the members of the

YCL should move on to the Party. We think that if this occurs the Party is making a mistake in building organization among youth. A well functioning YCL will have its members go mainly three ways as they get older and more fully enter society on their own. The best will be recruited into the Party—and we of course have to bring as many forward as possible to do so. Others will continue in certain revolutionary activity—most probably in fits and starts, often depending on the objective conditions. And certainly a number will drop out at least temporarily of activity completely—hopefully a little better off in terms of knowledge and experience for the days ahead when the class struggle will be more intense. Again, we don't think that's a bad thing—that's a good thing that speaks to the character and nature of the group. Of course, we want to maximize through our work—that as much as possible given the objective conditions—the first of the above results occur. But if the YCL does its work well—all three different roads will get taken—even when we're under socialism.

One last point while we're talking about the nature of the organization to lead the working class youth. We've all been through the various material and social reasons why youth are rebellious, tend to take things up quickly and more boisterously than others, capable of making quicker leaps, etc. The task of the YCL as the mass organization to lead the youth is to openly tap that quality. This is both in terms of waging general mass struggle—and youth playing their role as single spark to all society. The role Mao speaks to in May 4th Movement. The role youth are now playing in Soweto. The role youth and students played in the anti-war movement and the Black Liberation struggle.

And as has been pointed out to us—and is often one of the main arguments for the name "RCY" it will be an important task of the youth and students to raise the banners of socialism and communism to the broad masses of people. We totally agree. The question is how—and we've got to get into that in this next section.

Okay, so over these last few pages we've struggled to put straight out what a YCL is about, what are the critical tasks it must carry out and why must it develop as an "advanced mass" or mass communist organization. And that its failure to do so will be a failure to speak to the contradictions and problems youth face.

Now let's talk about how we can have this organization carry out these tasks, and what the name's got to do with it. So we can see why young Communist Leagues (sic) have been built by communist parties since the turn of the century, and how they flow from the material contradictions that capitalism creates. Our task is to build one here in the United States in 1977—an organization that leads the youth to fight the big battles, offers the future of the working class and socialism to youth, becomes a training ground for young Marxists—takes up the various social and cultural questions of youth, leads youth to play their role of single spark to all of society whether around a particular struggle, advanced idea, etc.

## On Names

First we'd like to make a few points about names in general. Now of course someone could argue that a name is not that key and what's crucial is how you apply the mass line, build struggle, unite the advanced, etc. Of course there's a lot of truth to this point and in the final analysis the name ain't going to mean shit if these things aren't carried out well. But a name can help or hurt a group's work—in what it immediately throws off, the image it projects, etc.

On the other side it's important to watch for the flip side of this line—that the name means everything. And that the name becomes a dividing line on whether or not a group is genuinely communist or is going to popularize communism or not. This simply defies experience. The RSB has been successful at proving this the case. It has become a well known communist force on many campuses. Even recognized by the Trots as the leading "socialist" group on the campuses today. It brings communist ideas to hundreds of thousands of students during the course of a school year. It popularizes Marxism and offers to students who are fed up with capitalism a whole new way to go. It's been a consistent source of recruitment for years. And it always leads or is part of—a lot of struggle on the campuses. Calling itself revolutionary has not held it down from those tasks—as we'll get into later—we think it's helped it. There's many other examples we could go into from this country and internationally—SDS, Vietnamese Workers Party, Albanian Party of Labor, and dozens of YCL's—that have not had the name communist.

So in approaching the name we can't look at it from a) it doesn't matter as long as you practice the mass line or b) do you really want this to be a communist organization or not. We have to approach it from the point of view of which name will best put forward the group—what it's about, and enable it to carry out its tasks—including popularizing socialism and communism.

## Communist Youth Group in China Named "New Democratic Youth Cores" (sic)

One last thing while we're on the subject of names. Despite the common belief, "Young Communist League" is not the "sacred cow" of names for the YCL's. The main period that the YCL's were named this was from [19]25 to 36, and even then there were at least a dozen Young Workers Leagues in the Young Communist International. And many YCL's had different names at different points. For instance, in China the YCL was launched in 1928 and was called the Communist Youth League. In 1935 it was changed to the *New Democratic Youth Cores* (sic), while still remaining the communist youth organization of the party "for all youth who wanted to learn and apply Marxism-Leninism and build the class struggle on the political, economic, social and cultural front."

While there's no clear overall summation as to why the



change in name, the different scraps we've pulled together from New China Quarterly, Belden's "[China] Shake[s] the World" and a few other readings point out that the name change was part of the overall summations of the three left lines in the party in the prior period. Its name was changed back to communist Youth League [sic] in 1949 after the seizure of state power.

### New Spiral

Our line on this overall period in the U.S. was developed and deepened a great deal by the CC report. It's since been further deepened as we've used it as a guide in our political work, in discussions with the advanced, in further publications like the UWO pamphlet, and in many other ways.

The beginning of the breakdown of bourgeoisification of the working class—a period of growing economic and political attacks. A period no longer of rising expectations of the working class but anger and concern over when the hell all this is going to stop. As the CC report characterized "It is a period marked by struggle, including growing working class resistance, especially to attacks on living standards, but of scattered struggles and a great deal of confusion."

And this is all borne out clearly when we look at the situation and struggles of working class youth. Entering into a situation of stiffening and worsening conditions. A far cry from the Happy Days image of the 50's and early 60's—with no room to even enter the working class and become wage slaves as the economy stagnates—with 20, 30, and 40% unemployment in different towns. The cities and neighborhoods rot as youth wonder not only where the hell they're going to work in the future—where the hell are they going to live, drugs, military, we could go on and on. It's very clear—working class youth, especially minorities are entering into a very rough situation.

Right now, in the face of all this, most youth are somehow trying to pick up a skill, get a job and squeeze through a decent life. The community colleges, skill centers, and nursing schools are at a record high. Military enlistments are also at a record high. "Hustle" is taken up by those who have no "normal means" of eking out a decent life. There's a tremendous amount of confusion among youth as to what the hell they're going to do with their lives, what society is all about, etc. With aspirations relatively lower than those of the 60's—more now in terms of how it is possible to somehow get a decent life.

Now it's clear that many of these things will hit a brick wall (trying to pick up skills, etc.), they already are somewhat—and this leads to even greater frustration and anger. And of course there will continue to be struggle such as Humboldt Park and responses to various police murders around the country brought out. The point we are trying to briefly make is that the situation of youth cannot be separated from our overall summation of the period—both what we sum up in the CC report and what we sum up in the IWO pamph-

let.

But this is not just a question of struggle—how much have people fought over the last year or two. And then deciding what our name should be. For as the CC report brings out, while the general overall motion will be to worsening conditions, greater struggles and confrontation—this does not go in a straight line—but rather in a spiral which twists and turns.

### A Working Class Without Socialism for 20 Years

The point is to grasp the *overall period*. Bourgeoisification beginning to break down. A period of growing but scattered struggle—and confusion. *And most importantly—particularly in terms of developing a young communist organization—the working class is entering this period having been without socialism for 20 or 30 years.*

Let's remember what Engels said about England—when bourgeoisification was beginning to break down—a quote that is often used when talking about the situation in the U.S.

"The truth is this: during the period of England's industrial monopoly the English working class has to an extent shared the benefits of that monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out among them; the privileged minority pocketed most, but even the great mass had a temporary share now and then. And that is the reason since the dying out of Owenism there has been no socialism in England. With the breakdown of that monopoly the English working class will lose that privileged position; it will find itself generally—the privileged and leading minority excepted—on a level with its fellow workers abroad. And that is the reason why there will be socialism again in England." (Engels, "England in 1845 and in 1885")

For the past 20 to 30 years the bourgeoisie, off its material base as the top capitalist power, has been beating the shit out of socialism and communism. It has been aided in this process by the degeneration and fascist activity of the Soviet Union and the lack of a proletarian party and class conscious section of workers. There has been no need for our bourgeoisie to rule or lead the people through any other political parties other than the 2 clear cut bourgeois parties. This of course is a marked difference from most capitalist countries—where the working class is more class conscious and has a long history of independent political movements, and various sorts of socialists and communists leading them.

This is not to speak to this question statically or one-sidedly. For already the process Engels tells about is underway. Certainly there is great cynicism and distrust in our government and leaders since the 1930's. Certainly people are seeing things going to hell—getting angered and frustrated and wondering when it's going to stop. And certainly there is already a growing amount of struggle and the party is increasingly becoming a part of them—directing them at the enemy, deepening peo-

ple's understanding and organization, bringing forward new communists and preparing ourselves and the masses as best we can—for the battles ahead as the conditions worsen.

But as we pointed out a number of times summing up July 4th, the Battle of the Bicentennial was the first time in 20 years the working class was taking up a major political struggle—independent of the bourgeoisie and its agents. For 20 or 30 years the working class has been without socialism. For one, this comes out in youth in terms of a tremendous amount of ignorance about socialism—for instance many of us were surprised when after leafletting about Mao we found the great majority of youth didn't even know who he was. But it's not just a question of "blank slate." For because of the bourgeoisie, its material situation in the U.S. in the last 20 years, the Soviet Union and the lack of a party, among the broad sections of the working class anti-communism is a sharp contradiction among the people and is looked at as fascism, on a par with Nazis, dictatorship, anti-God, etc.

Now we say this not to wallow over it. Not to say nothing can be done. We struggle to formulate and understand the different contradictions so we can resolve them. We must always seek to strive for victory, create new things and make the maximum advances possible, but this must be in accordance with the objective conditions that exist and in the laws governing their development. The CC runs this out well. "To take stock of this is not to say 'not much can be done, wait till conditions are more favorable' but to lay the basis for determining how to make conditions and the actual laws of development." "We must start from the actual conditions and break through the actual contradictions to advance toward the revolutionary goal, not in isolation from, but together with ever greater sections of the working class, ever broader ranks of the masses."

#### On What Basis Do We Popularize Communism?

Certainly the task of turning people's views on socialism and communism around is critical. Certainly youth still need another road offered—they're still facing a future life of hell under capitalism and want a way out. Clearly we should develop our youth work to help break through on this contradiction and play its role of "certain sense vanguard"—that will take an advanced stand to the broad masses of workers. And clearly we should get on the case of this right away and move this forward as much as possible.

But the question comes down to—what basis do our youth groups start to bring out communism to the sons and daughters of the working class who have been without it for 30 years. On what basis are we going to let them turn this stuff around. Does making the red flag the immediate terms of the battle really start to popularize communism and turn this stuff around?

Do we give the various youth groups—which will number 8, 10 or 12 in size—the chance to go out and popu-

larize socialism and communism as it takes up the big battles—or not. Do we give the various youth groups—who certainly in the next few years will be mainly (in overall strategic sense) trying to build themselves up, expand to new neighborhoods, continue to develop ties, learn the situation and struggles and deepen our line on youth work—the chance to popularize communism and socialism as part of the struggle or not. Are we going to give the youth groups the chance to bring out that they stood for socialism and communism just as it stood and fought against the many rotten conditions throughout society—the police terror, unemployment, etc. And are we truly going to let the youth groups take on anti-communism and raise the red flag of socialism as part of the contradiction against the bourgeoisie and not *mainly* a contradiction among the people.

#### Make the Red Flag Mainly a Contradiction Among the People or Mainly a Contradiction Against the Bourgeoisie

We all know there will be a good deal of controversy and frankly hostility when the youth groups go out there with the YCL. Anyone who thinks not or says "big deal—everything divides into two," should get out of their office and deal a little with the particulars of moving class struggle forward. For the question is on what terms do the groups start to popularize socialism and communism and take on anti-communism to a working class that has been without it for 20 years. Do we make it the immediate terms of the battle by having the word communist in the name? So that a great deal of popularizing socialism and communism is in struggling out contradictions among the people—why you guys support dictatorship, what about God, and which holds you back from taking it up as a part of the fight against the bourgeoisie, etc. Or do we take up popularizing socialism and communism and of course take on anti-communism as we fight against the bourgeoisie. We ask the center—what does it mean the working class has been without socialism for 20 or 30 years? How does it gone [sic] when communism becomes the immediate terms of the battle? Has this been the best way that we've started to popularize socialism. Certainly the Party Center must sum this up in developing its overall line and please while taking up the qualities of youth let's not isolate them from society as a whole. We say this makes all the difference in the world as to whether the YCL will be able to carry out its tasks—and develop into the youth arm of the party, or becomes a small, isolated, almost trotskyite sect. Putting out its pure line, unable to unite or lead struggle, only hoping for the day when objective conditions are "right" and people will see that we've been correct. Not at all the way to build the YCL.

We do not feel that by having the name "revolutionary"—not "communist" that this will be a panacea to combatting anti-communism. Hell, we've seen two youth groups get slammed up and down by anti-communism in the last six months, XXX and XXX, and they were named Youth in Action. Both groups got hit very

hard with anti-communism from school heads, police and press. In both places it went very rough—and these were examples of it clearly coming out from the authorities! In both places the groups had a rough time of dealing with through (sic) applying the “If the authorities line . . .” as laid out in the CC Report. The going was rough because of the low level of political development of the group (yes, they take up Marxism—but their experience in leading struggle is very low) which is a fact we’ll have to deal with in the initial years of the organization. Because the bourgeoisie’s forces were extremely well organized, hitting people in homes, schools, on press. It was rough, because the anti-communism the bourgeoisie has put out has a base among the masses because the working class has been without it for 20 or 30 years (bourgeoisification, Soviet Union, no proletarian pole and independent political movement) and this came out in a tremendous amount of pressure and isolation from friends and families. And it was rough because it was practically hard to unfold due to the relative low level of struggle of the working class, etc. In both these places it led to problems with the groups and their functioning.

And with the name revolutionary it’s not like there will be no contradictions among the people around communism and it won’t come purely from the bourgeois authorities. Last year in XXX the youth group built a struggle around cut backs in a job program. And in the course of it there was a lot of putting out of socialism and communism and what’s the only road and future for youth. On top of this the poverty pimps and agencies came whirling through the neighborhoods telling parents and all there were commies hanging out with their kids, they wanted to tear the neighborhoods apart, etc.

Throughout the neighborhood as the struggle around jobs built and even as it started to die the people were talking about the communists. Many sharp contradictions came up from the people—particularly parents—as will always come up as we take up battles in the neighborhoods. It became very sharp with parents and some youth and a lot of struggle around god (sic), Russia, Martin Luther King, Black people’s struggles, working class, etc.

Here we were able to make it a very good thing though there were certain losses—because our forces could take up this contradiction—even though it was mainly coming out among the people—as they fought for issues concerning the people. Here we were raising it and taking on opposition to it as part of developing class struggle. If the name had been RCY—it would have been the immediate issue of struggle and would have been much more difficult to struggle over and turn into a good thing. This is what the youth and student commission is asking the center—to let the YCL fight for the Red flag as part of developing the class struggle. Let’s have the battle around it move the class struggle forward—not hold us back from getting out of the starting blocks.

## Let the YCL Carry Out Its Tasks

Now we’re not saying—please let’s stop all this stuff about communism, let’s avoid controversy and contradictions among the people, let’s just keep nice and safe “YIA.” Hell, we need the YCL to carry out the tasks talked earlier about and start to stop this shit around communism and turn it into a good thing. And as we said, the controversy and contradictions among the people around the Red Flag *can* be a very good thing—so that people start seeing what communism is all about, what it’s got to do with the struggle, what class it stands with and serves, what class stands opposed to it and attacks it.

*But, while grasping the importance of this task, let’s grasp the contradictions that go with it—and give our forces the basis to overcome them.* The basis is the class struggle and we’re asking that the youth groups popularize socialism and communism as they become the social force that moves the class struggle for youth forward.

There are other examples we can go into. There are the people in Humboldt Park who would not allow us to work with them if we used the word communist—though they liked us leading the mass organization and said we could spread our views and ideas. As the struggle around Humboldt Park went on over the 2 and 3 weeks—and our forces took on the task of turning this stuff around—some decent advances occurred. And the guy who was so opposed to us as “communists” is not helping to build the UWO and recognizes us as “communists.” This is what we mean by letting the groups into the ballpark—so they can start to turn this stuff around. It’s very much in accordance with Mao’s statement, “All work done for the masses must start from their needs, and not from the desire of any individual, however well intentioned. It often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such cases, we should wait patiently. We should not make change until, through our work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out.” *United Front in Cultural Work*, Vol. 3, p. 186.

We are saying, build the YCL and let it carry out its tasks. We are not saying don’t raise the banner of socialism and communism; let’s avoid anti-communism. But let’s proceed on this task from where things are actually at—and give the groups the ability to raise the Red Flag as it takes up the class struggle—not make the terms of the battle the red flag, so that the struggle *mainly* becomes one among the people.

Is this backdooring of Youth In Action? We don’t think so. It’s taking the step beyond rationally drawing out the need for a YCL from the contradictions capitalism creates—and is “shooting the arrow at the target” and struggling to find the ways that the YCL can carry out its tasks. Making the red flag, the main *immediate* issue of the struggle does not enable us to carry out



these tasks. Engels spoke on a similar point at a similar time in England about the dogmatic English social democrats who during this period insisted on making the red flag the terms of the battle.

"The English Social Democratic Federation is, and acts, only like a small sect. It is an exclusive body. It has not understood how to take the lead of the working class movement generally, and to direct towards socialism. It has turned it into an orthodoxy. Thus it insisted upon John Burns unfurling the red flag at the dock strike, where such an act would have driven them back into the arms of the capitalist. *We don't do this. Yet our program is a purely socialist one. Our first plank is the socialization of all the means and instruments of production.*" (Our emphasis) Engels, Daily Chronicle, 1893.

Around 5 years later, the English social democrats did grow a little bit—during a labor upsurge—only to lose its forces a year later and they eventually become [sic] social chauvinists and sold out the working class during the war.

We don't think this should simply be written off by saying "Well, that's the working class—we don't do our work like that in the working class." Certainly that's true. And we're not calling for a UWO or a UWOC for the youth either. We're calling for a communist youth organization—because of the needs and contradictions youth face. But still these overall conditions and contradictions exist in society and affect the way this communist youth organization should take on its work and we develop the battle and popularization of the Red Flag.

## 2nd Level Forms Lead the Struggle

What will happen if the groups take the name RCY. For one we may try and lead this or that struggle going out as RCY. It will cause a good deal of immediate contradictions among the people—struggling over God, the Soviet Union, dictatorship, the Nazis, etc. isolated from the class struggle. Rather than one being able to take up this stuff and put out what communism truly stands for—we will be getting bogged down in these discussions and battles—having a hard time rooting them in the class struggle, the particular battles we are engaged in. We ask the Center—how does it go when we have to struggle ideologically over communism—as the first thing we're about. We've found it doesn't go well at all, and is not the way to win people to see what communism is all about. Due to all the contradictions laid out before (working class without socialism, material position of U.S. capitalists, lack of practical movement, etc.) the groups are going to have a very hard time getting involved in developing struggles and a certain amount of demoralization may set in.

From our experiences in taking out the YCL broadly in agitation, slide shows, etc. this has what has mainly occurred (as almost all our agitation and propaganda over the last six months has built the YCL as a young communist organization).

Those who support the RCY line claim that the "shock" or electricity of "communist" will jolt people out of their traditional ways. Comparisons with the Panthers and their raising the gun, and other means of moving people out of their set, normal ways are given. We'd like to go along with this—it's the most alluring of the RCY arguments. However, an argument like that must be grounded in the real world. For arguments like these can be used for any action or activity that's "ahead" of where the people are at. Our experience is that at this point—the shock value of "communist" does not drag people out of their normal ways. The Panthers raising the gun was advanced activity that was at the crest of the wave of the social movement of Black people where the question of how to respond to the repression of the state was at the fore. We feel that if the center feels our being RCY somewhat comparable to the Panthers raising the gun—there must be some overall summation of our experience in taking this stuff up. It's our unanimous experience that such action right now—leads to isolation rather than spark to further activity. And not that this means we shouldn't raise the Red Flag and communism—but that we should be well aware of the contradictions that will develop around it—so we can better resolve them. Simple calls for boldness and bravado in taking the line out, stating that it will spark further activity—without summing up the overall conditions and past experience—has been the basis for one "left" line after another in the international communist movement.

But worse than any demoralization will be that communism will get pitted against leading the mass struggle. We already talked about one way this would come out—the groups developing like a trotskyite sect. Putting out its pure line, as unable to unite or lead struggle only hoping for one day that objective conditions will change and people will see that they were right all along. More likely things will go the other way, the YCL will stop being the main form developed to lead the struggle. The primary contradiction talked about earlier that faces youth—what the hell the future holds—will not get spoken to nearly as fully or well. The advanced will mainly come into different fronts. And the organizational tieups of having to consistently build two organizations, second level ones and the YCL will cause a tremendous amount of trouble due to the level of our forces both in terms of quantity and quality.

## Breach of Theory and Practice

On top of that the breach between theory and practice among the young communist membership will become extremely sharp. A breach which Lenin points out in "Youth Leagues" is particularly sharp among youth because of the general split of mental and manual labor under capitalism and the drill sergeant method of teaching in bourgeois schools—that youth spontaneously rebel against by avoiding reading, studying, etc. Now the advanced youth will take up communism in small discussion groups, wage periodic ideological struggle

among broader sections of youth, and spend the major portion of their mass work building one mass organization after another.

On top of that this whole new wave for 2nd level organizations and mass committees is like a damn thunderbolt out of the sky. For years, we have struggled to develop the Brigade (and would with the youth section as possible) to become the open leading force of the struggle. And we have seen in dozens of cases that this is possible and has made the Brigade—student organization of the party—very clearly the revolutionary organization on the campuses now in this country. Some are saying that we should retreat on this stance; the future holds more mass committees and coalitions—so don't worry about openly leading mass struggle. Sure, if there's big moves to war or fascism this is true. But let's not throw what's beginning to develop out the window. Let's not throw out that a beginning layer of students—many of whom are not communists—see the Brigade as the open revolutionary force on the campuses—the face to check out if you want to know about social change. Now the push is to start to hide this and tell us of the wonders of 2nd level groups.

We ask: who's about popularizing socialism and the red flag if the main form to lead struggle is 2nd level groups? Why are people putting a brake on one of the best developments of the party's work—its student organization seen by thousands as the force that stands for social change? And on what basis is this summation developing—that the future holds more second level work, other than arguments that the RCY can openly lead struggle have hit a brick wall amongst the comrades in the work?

The left-right punch going on is astounding—the advanced tucked away—of “uncontaminated” by non-communist youth as the old YCL would call it having their little discussions, selling of propaganda, waging ideological struggle among the people. And what form leads the youth in struggle—one mass committee after another. Is this raising the red flag and making it a battle among the people.

### Pits Communism Against the Mass Struggle

By using the name RCY we are pitting communism against building the mass struggle. And this is what the advanced who are helping to build the YCL are always struggling about at the meetings going toward the YCL. They are not saying, “No, don't build the YCL. No, don't turn people (sic) views around about communism. No, don't train people in communism.” But they are saying that you don't do that by making the Red Flag the immediate terms of the battle—which is what they consistently say will occur. We ask the center to go investigate this among the working class youth who are helping to build the YCL. They are not afflicted with lingering anti-communism. They fear us pitting the advanced against the mass. They are really saying in very perceptual terms, what Lenin said about the phrasemongers who in the name of preparing people

to defend socialism from invasion—were actually hurting its attempt. “We must fight against the revolutionary phrase, we have to fight it, we absolutely must fight it, so that at some future time, people will not say of us the bitter truth that, ‘a revolutionary phrase about revolutionary war ruined the revolution.’” (Lenin, The Revolutionary Phrase) Let the YCL fight for the Red Flag, fight over the controversial questions among the people and turn it into a good thing—but let the YCL do this as it takes up the class struggle against the bourgeoisie.

### Revolutionary Youth Brigade

We feel that if the name of the YCL is Revolutionary Youth Brigade there will be a much better basis to do just that. First of all, the name clearly takes a stand on what should get done in this society—calling for it getting turned upside down and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. It's not a bad word to popularize, as a matter of fact, at the start of Red Papers 6 we attributed a number of damn good qualities to that word. It offers another road to youth (as much as one word can) and defines the organization as one not pissed about just one abuse or another—but wants to fight all manifestations of imperialism and get rid of it altogether.

While the name has these qualities, it also gives the groups the freedom to go out: united with youth; take up the mass struggles; become a fighting political force among youth; and raise the Red Flag of socialism among youth in a way so that the Red Flag will be popularized and seen as part of the war against the bourgeoisie.

The name allows the group to become a force that will *mainly* lead the various struggles of youth—while offering the road of socialism and popularizing communism. The name RYB allows the groups to implement the line of the CC on taking on anti-communism—bringing out that, “If the authorities don't like it—there must be something to it” by letting the youth groups raise the red banner and fight anti-communism as it fights the bourgeoisie (the authorities) and not take this on mainly in fights among the people. We ask the Center to let the YCL fight the authorities. Let the YCL be attacked by the authorities. The name RYB will also give the YCL the ability to bring in new advanced fighters—people who dig the YCL for one reason or another, want to check it out, work with it, learn about Marxism—but don't consider themselves communists, do have a certain amount of anti-communism or at least hesitations about it because it's a whole new thing that ain't been around for 20 years and won't work with a group named RCY. (Will get into this point later on over how the name proposal will affect the YCL's task of training communists.)

### Do We Really Want a Communist Organization

Well we get asked, do you really want a communist

organization if you want the name to be RYB? Yes, we answer—we wanted the RSB to be communist and especially in the last year we've developed it that way "revolutionary" and all. Suppose someone is leafletting for the RYB, we get asked, and they are asked if their group is communist, do they answer yes or no? Yes, we answer, we think that the members should clearly stand for socialism and communism, though we should cast away illusion that this is really raising the Red Flag. Discussions about "what you are about" usually go on with maybe 5 per 100 when leafletting.

Should the leaflets explain the RYB is a communist organization and won't this make the immediate terms of the battle communism? Yes, the leaflets should say it's a communist organization and with a small amount of people will create controversy which is fine.

Then we get asked what about over a 4 or 5 month period of the RYB doing consistent work in a neighborhood. Won't it get known as a communist organization, won't it have to face all sorts of anti-communism. If so then why don't we get it right out there at the start and say it's communist! Yes and no we answer. The first point is true and will be a good thing—a very good thing indeed. For as the groups take up the struggle against the bourgeoisie—around cop terror, unemployment, major political and social questions, etc., we will raise the Red Flag and no doubt get attacked for it by the bourgeoisie and certainly cause a damn big stir among the masses. Raising the Red Flag in this context can lead to some damn good things happening and the popularizing of socialism we want. Communism is right out there in relation to fighting the bourgeoisie and fighting for the people. That's not the case when it's the immediate terms of the battle—again we ask the center to sum up experience around this point and not metaphysically isolate building struggle among youth—because they have certain qualities distinct from other classes and sections of society. By raising the Red Flag in this context—and not making it the immediate battle—we feel we are carrying on in the spirit of Mao's quote around changing conditions through our work. Taking into account what those conditions are and setting the basis so that people will see communism [sic] But let's not metaphysically isolate the struggles of youth from the overall struggles in American society. For some have argued that if our only concern was to develop the revolutionary struggles of youth they'd agree with us for sure—but they get more confused around it when they put the struggle of youth in its overall context and the role of youth. Okay, so let's go into that one.

The task of developing the youth to raise the banner of socialism to the American people is indeed critical. But this can't be separated from developing the struggles of youth and students. This goes back to the bulletin off the very first student commission of the RU—where national leadership criticized the tendency at the meeting to pit the task of building the student movement as a force in itself to strike blows at imperialism against the task of raising

important political issues, ideas, to the class and broader sections of society. One must build the youth and student movement as a powerful force as possible against imperialism applying the mass line and using revolutionary theory to help us guide ourselves around the important political issues of the day not just for youth, but for the working class and society as a whole. Because of the actual contradictions youth face we see the necessity to offer and popularize the road and future of socialism among them. As the youth take up this banner it spills over and is seen by the society as a whole.

What good is having communist in the name if it holds back our youth groups from becoming a fighting political force to lead the youth? How can the youth popularize socialism and communism if the only ones raising it are groups of 8 and 10 isolated from the struggle? How much can Jobs for Youth Committees spill over socialism? Or only once or twice it gets raised when struggles develop so intense and sharp people's anger is so directed at the bourgeoisie that you can get out there and lead the struggle no matter who you are.

#### If You Ain't Got Nothing to Spill What Can You Spill Over?

The main way that the youth will raise socialism and communism to the broad masses is the same way they raise all advanced issues to the American people—a spillover as the youth and student struggle develops, unless someone is going to say the *main* thing a YCL should do. [sic] As the struggle youth builds around the many contradictions they face—both as youth and as part of the American people—the banner of socialism will be raised as the only future for youth and what youth should take. This should be seen by the YCL not as a byproduct of the many immediate struggles of youth, but as part of speaking to the overall contradictions youth face under capitalism spoken to before, along with tapping youth's rebelliousness, etc. But this task cannot be separated from building the struggle of youth unless we're talking about building some trotskyite thing where—socialism, the working class, etc. is used as a club on youth and someone weirdly thinks this is raising communism to the broad millions of people.

The name RCY will also be a tremendous obstacle and fetter for the YCL to carry out its other crucial task—training and developing new young communists. As we noted earlier, when a YCL is doing its work well—many young people will join it who will be somewhat class conscious, developing towards Marxism, etc., but not yet communists. The people are into motion towards it, checking it out, studying it, and seeing how it can be a material force in changing the world—but they haven't fully taken up communism yet and are not ready to call themselves communists—though they'll say they're in the YCL.

We're saying let's open the door for these forces to come into the YCL and learn what communism is all



about. The name Revolutionary Youth Brigade gives the new advanced—those when they are first coming in—the room to breathe. To do exactly what we said earlier—check it out, study it, see how it can be a material force in changing the world as they work with the groups, etc. As we mentioned before when the Brigade is going well maybe 70% of its membership will clearly look at itself as communist. The same we have no doubt, will hold for our youth groups—if we built it on the same principles.

By naming the group RCY we will be cutting ourselves off from the immediate sense hundreds of working class youth who would come into the YCL. Hundreds of youth who will check out Marxism—move into Marxism—but are not ready at first to openly work under that name. One working class youth after another who is building the YCL will tell you this—in one city after another. Could there not be some truth in what they say? Why are we going to cut ourselves off from training hundreds of working class youth in Marxism?

Some say they have no understanding how this can be. How can someone work with a communist organization, but not say openly they are a communist. How could someone only work with a communist group if "communist" is not in its name.

If one looks at the situation as a materialist and dialectically they should not have this problem. As a materialist by grasping the overall period in the U.S.—

*the fact the working class has been without socialism for 20 years and that this comes out with real contradictions. Including a certain amount of struggle and hesitancy around taking up communism—particularly when it's the first organization you're ever joining—going out among your friends, families and neighbors.*

As a dialectician by seeing that people go through motion and there's a struggle between a number of views and ideas about communism people dig as opposed to things stemming from society that hold people back. Just making the general statement youth can change politically and ideologically won't do. This has to be rooted in the experience of 1977. We are saying that is not quick enough that the advanced will come forward and immediately join the RCY. Revolutionary Youth Brigade does open this door—so we can get on with the task of training young communists; move through the rest of the OHIO.

OK! We've laid it out as best we can. We've formulated off our experiences of building struggle among youth and students—why the YCL is the correct vehicle for struggle; its tasks and how it can best go out and accomplish them. Our position stems from looking at the way the YCL can best accomplish its tasks of leading struggle, popularizing socialism and consolidating and training communist cores. The name RYB we feel will enable us to take up this task much better than RCY. ■

To contact the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade, write to:

**RCYB**  
**PO Box A3836**  
**Chicago, IL 60690**



