

City
Convention
BULLETIN

Local New York
WORKERS PARTY

NOV. 31 - DEC. 1, 1940

REPORT
of the City
Committee

SEVEN MONTHS OF THE NEW YORK LOCAL WORKERS PARTY

Unanimously approved by the City Committee

A. THE BACKGROUND.

1. The balance sheet of the past seven months must be drawn upon a background of bleak historical and objective developments. The war and the blitzkrieg generated in this country a wave of patriotic fervor which hindered our propaganda by a sharp decline in the receptivity of the workers to our message. The split in the S.W.P. caused confusion in the minds of the advanced workers. Splits moreover are not conducive to an elevation of morale and enthusiasm. Accompanying these developments, labor in the United States has suffered severe setbacks; the labor unions in the U. S. have been further split and weakened, its ties to the national defense administration, like a strangulating noose, have been drawn tighter around the neck of the labor unions. In our own movement, the effects of the reaction are best symbolized by the desertion of Burnham; the passing over to reaction of Diego Rivera; the assumption of an active social patriotic stand of Chen-Du-Su; the collapse of the Canadian section; and the recent digressions of the S.W.P. from the well-established Leninist anti-war policies; not to speak of the Lovestoneites, who have now completely abandoned the course of the revolutionary struggle against the war. The war and reaction have blitzkrieged weaklings and waverers out of the movement and its periphery. This is the historical setting upon which the new party entered the political arena. Upon the New York party, which represented roughly half the membership of the new party, fell the major responsibility of establishing the W.P. as a factor in the life of American politics.

2. In addition to the factors listed above, several others obtained which stood as serious obstacles to our efforts.

First, it must be borne in mind that the new party was launched just as the summer months were descending upon us. The summer period is traditionally the slump period of the labor organizations. It is a period of vacations, moving, travelling, transferring. Both the city and national offices anticipating the difficulties of the summer period, considered these months as the crucial ones for the new party.

Second, we inherited from the S.W.P. habits and methods of work which had to be corrected. These age-old traditions thoroughly imbedded in the methods of the party, had to be rooted out under conditions where the hectic world developments denied us the time opportunity of careful and methodical attention to these specific weaknesses of the party.

Third, we inherited not a party, but a faction. The members of the party had for nine months been oriented to function as a faction; internally, to discuss, to be mobilized for voting rather than for working. Moreover, the months of intense factional strife left the party members exhausted financially and physically.

Fourth, the split left the party without a periphery. Most of the sympathizers of the S.W.P. had been admirers and followers of Trotsky. They naturally inclined to the support of that group which received the endorsement of Comrade Trotsky.

B. WHAT WE INHERITED.

1. The split left us stripped of even the barest office necessities. The local office particularly had to begin by equipping itself with the essential instruments for work. For three weeks the task of reorganizing the New York party had to be performed without the benefits of either a desk or a typewriter. The contact lists, large and long neglected, were antiquated. But these were only minor irritations. These could be corrected with the help of money and technical effort. The real problem of the organization, the habits, methods, morale, techniques, these could be corrected only by energetic retraining. The new party required REVITALIZATION.

2. Nine months of heated factional struggle had left the membership exhausted physically and financially. The New York caucus had financed the fight and New York had been the center of the heated, taxing dispute. For nine months, the membership of the "minority" had been knit together and trained to work as a FACTION. The work of a party is very different from that of a faction. It was necessary, not only to re-introduce the membership to party functioning habits, but in the process of the readjustment, to correct the terrible habits acquired in the past.

What were these habits? A certain routine existence; a marked lack of discipline; a headquarters rather than a street existence. Sloppiness, sluggishness, slovenliness; indifference to assignments; no checkup; a concept that party membership consisted merely of paying dues and attending a branch meeting, more or less. A belief that any member taking one assignment a week was an active member. A very bad social composition; a disregard for punctuality; the existence of an office leadership. All of this played an important part in the issues of the factional fight. The documents on the organization question, prepared by the "minority", emphasized that these were characteristics of our ENTIRE organization. The minority faction was not immune. We never said that these shortcomings were only in the province of the "majority" caucus. Our charge was that the "majority" was perpetuating this system.

3. The split discouraged and disheartened many sympathizers. The split found us with half the membership and reduced us, at least where numbers are concerned, to an even smaller propaganda group.

4. And finally, the social composition of the New York minority was particularly bad. The minority caucus never sought to conceal or deceive anyone on this score. Rather, did we insist that this general weakness of the New York movement had to be corrected, and quickly. It was a crucial question.

C. THE POINT OF DEPARTURE OF THE APRIL CONVENTION OF LOCAL N. Y.

1. This was the background of the past seven month period: The New York local convention set forth the objectives of the organization in the preamble to the PROGRAM OF ACTION, which read in part:

"In accordance with the decisions of our April National Conference, the main task of the Party for the next period is to take drastic steps towards the transformation of the Party into an **ACTIVIST, AGITATIONAL** and **COMBAT** organization, composed primarily of industrial workers, and working among them with the aim of winning them to the **36**

"Radical changes in our habits of work are imperative if this transformation is to be achieved. RESPONSIBLE, DISCIPLINED, AND ENERGETIC ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE PARTY IS NECESSARY "

This was the point of departure of the April convention. It is apparent that the City Convention understood the problem of the organization. In the course of the past seven months, sharp changes in the objective situation resulted in a digression from this or that point of the PROGRAM OF ACTION. But the City Committee was never diverted from the main task of the period. It worked persistently and tenaciously to carry out the mandate of the April convention so clearly posed in the preamble to the PROGRAM OF ACTION. The first prerequisite in the achievement of this objective was to turn the wheel of party orientation from the headquarters into the streets.

D. MAY DAY, 1940.

1. The new party was less than three weeks old when the May Day demonstration was held. It was not without significance that outside of the Stalinists, only the Workers Party held an outdoor demonstration on the traditional holiday of the working class.

It was the first public appearance (in the streets) of the party. The demonstration itself had to be organized within a week. It followed by five days a large indoor meeting on the split in the S.W.P. That is to say, the arrangements for both these major projects had to be made on extremely short notice and the preparations were almost simultaneous.

2. For the May Day demonstration, a special New York edition of Labor Action was issued. In makeup, appearance and content, it was a model number of the paper. A total of 3,500 copies were issued, of which 2,500 were handled by local New York. Fifteen thousand copies of a printed leaflet were issued and distributed, in addition to five thousand mimeographed leaflets. The May Day demonstration was preceded by a series of street meetings conducted by the branches thruout the city. For three nights prior to the demonstration, the party branches held preliminary May Day street meetings. Three meetings were also held in the needle trades market.

The May Day demonstration, despite a mediocre party and YPSL turnout, was a modest success. Although at a number of points the crowd was larger, the average attendance gathered at the demonstration was about 500. A fair quantity of literature was sold and distributed. The demonstration, despite the fact that we were denied a loud speaker permit, was very colorful and effective. From a moral point of view, it was an important event because a) it put the W.P. into the streets as the only public counter-demonstration to the Stalinists, and b) initiated our street meetings and street work.

But the demonstration served another purpose, an internal purpose. It graphically revealed the weaknesses of the organization. The entire work of the organization of the demonstration was carried on by a handful of comrades.

But we emphasize again -- the party of the Third Camp, in contradistinction to the other anti-war and so-called anti-war parties, went to the workers in the streets, in dramatic manifestation against the war.

E. MASS MEETINGS.

The summer period is recognized as generally poor for indoor meetings. Despite this, the party held eight city-wide indoor meetings as follows:

- a. April 19th - The split in the Socialist Workers Party.
- b. May 15th - The Invasion of the Lowland Countries.
- c. June 21st - The Defeat of France.
- d. July 5th - Anti-Conscription.
- e. July 23rd - The War and Conscription.
- f. September 7th - The Elbert Williams meeting in Harlem.
- g. September 12th - The L.D. Memorial Meeting.
- h. November 19th - Russian Revolution Meeting.

This report does not include the indoor meetings held during the election campaign. (If these were included, and the May Day and Soviet Consulate demonstrations added, we could calculate that city-wide mass meetings and demonstrations were held on the average of one every two weeks.) Nor does this include the Shachtman lecture series, the first of which will be held one week before the convention. It is apparent from this report that the New York party held more than its quota of mass meetings.

F. THE FIRST STAGE OF OUR WORK.

1. If the periods of our work were to be categorized, they could be organized according to three definite stages:

- a. The Post Split Period -- the period of consolidation.
- b. The Blitzkrieg -- the anti-war, anti-conscription drive.
- c. The Election Campaign.

2. Immediately after the split, the City Committee set about to reorganize the party branches, to consolidate them. The record revealed that there were 238 members of the New York S.W.P. on the caucus list of the minority. Our supporters in Jamaica, Astoria, Williamsburgh, and Far Rockaway, were too few to constitute separate branches. The Yorkville branch, left with only a few members, sought dissolution. Recognizing the area as a favorable one for work, the City Committee made a special effort to supply the branch with added forces in order that it be maintained. The City Committee initiated a registration with instructions that those who failed to register be dropped from the lists. Forty-two names on our caucus lists availed themselves of the opportunity, failed to register (that is, to join the W.P.) and were promptly dropped. This gave us a basic membership of 196, after the registration.

After considerable reshuffling of forces, the party in N.Y. had 11 branches as follows:

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|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Downtown | 7. Boro Park |
| 2. Lower East Side | 8. Brownsville |
| 3. Harlem | 9. Bronx |
| 4. Yorkville | 10. Food |
| 5. Needle Trades | 11. Upper West Side |
| 6. Westchester | |

In accordance with our policy of shifting to more proletarian and where possible, American sections, the Boro Park Branch was shifted to West End; the Lower East Side was to devote part of its energies in the Polish district; the Upper West Side was to devote itself exclusively to the Negro area on West 59th St.; both the Bronx and Brownsville branches were to devote a good part of their work to the Negro area in their respective districts.

2. Innumerable meetings were held with the/branch organizers, discussing their problems and seeking to achieve the necessary consolidation. The City Committee apportioned departmental tasks to its committee members with a view to keeping as many of its members free from City Committee assignments in order that they be permitted to devote themselves to branch work. This despite the fact that the City Committee was acutely short-handed for forces. Of 13 members and alternates on the City Committee, fully 9 were serving as branch organizers or on the Branch Executive Committees.

We were intent upon completing the consolidation of the branches before the summer months set in, but our objectives were interrupted. With the invasion of the Lowland countries, the party had to make a quick turn. This turn, deliberately conceived, had as its objective to reach in the most dramatic manner possible, as many workers as possible, presenting the name of the Workers Party and the party itself as the anti-war party in the country.

The period of consolidation, lasting roughly from April 25th to May 15th, had as its high points:

- a. the organization of the party; establishment of the office; formation of branches; registration; city convention; organization of the City Committee,
- b. the mass meeting of April 26th on the split in the S.W.P.
- c. the May Day demonstration,
- d. mass meeting of August 15th on the invasion of the lowland countries.
- e. the opening up of the street meeting season.
- f. the financing of the National Office. (The overwhelming burden of getting the National Office, press, etc. started was of necessity shouldered by the New York Party.)

G. THE BLITZKRIEG.

1. Up until the middle of May, the European War, with the exception of the episode of Denmark and Norway, had been stalemated. With the invasion of the lowland countries, the American scene seemed to undergo a sharp change. Pro-Ally sentiment rose to fever pitch; the atmosphere was charged. The party began to encounter real difficulties in our efforts to hold street meetings. The "agencies of order" began working overtime. Several comrades were arrested on a number of occasions. The office was visited a few times by police officers, etc. At the same time, official Washington initiated a number of steps which were bringing the country inexorably into the war.

It was impossible to predict at the time exactly how much time there was before America would be drawn into the war. It was impossible to say how long a period was permitted us for free agitation.

Given this condition, and the fact that the party was new, unknown -- the task of publicizing the party for the widest numbers of workers, or publicizing our program and paper, became the imperative necessity. Everything else was secondary. We were determined to capitalize upon whatever time we had left to make the party known as the anti-war party in the United States. It was indicated that a new party should have as one of its main tasks, publicizing the party. Now however, this task was posed in terms of limited time.

The task of stabilization of the branches, of necessity was subordinated to the immense job of wide-spread publicity. Given the small numerical forces in the party, it became imperative that we conduct city-wide actions in certain given neighborhoods in order that our work be carried out effectively. As a result, the City Office rather than the branches had to become the directing center for the activities of the individual party members. City-wide mobilizations became a regular feature of party life and activity. THIS METHOD OF WORK HAD TO PROCEED AT THE EXPENSE OF FULL ATTENTION TO THE BRANCHES AND ATTENTION TO COMMITTEES.

2. The Blitzkrieg had other significant effects. It gripped some of the members with a terrible fear. Members became suddenly aware that the revolutionary organization involved not only sacrifices but risks. The invasion of France convinced others that "this was a war for democracy", "that democracy had to be saved". Others discovered that there was no hope in the revolutionary movement. There followed a few resignations from the party. They were not many, but they were more courageous admissions of those who anticipated them -- that is, those who deserted by failing to re-register.

3. There was still another reaction in the party. There were those who favored a policy of retreat, of lying low, of not being "too ostentatious". The City Committee found it necessary to combat those who wanted to go into hiding, to give up branch headquarters, to curtail or suspend public activities.

4. The bulk of the party organization reacted differently. The City Committee at several special meetings considered the state of the organization in the light of the "new" situation. At a special membership meeting called to effect a quick tightening up of the party in the light of the war, it declared that "the war had confronted the world with a military situation; it is a military situation for the party as for the world in general". The process of "tightening up, of strengthening discipline, had to be telescoped. NO RETRENCHMENT IN ACTIVITY, BUT INTENSIFICATION. NOT INTO HIDING, BUT INTO THE STREETS.

Every party member was called upon to do his work or to be "excused" from party membership. Comrades who in the past had been given special privileges because of civil service work, were called upon to share the work equally with all other party members. A campaign of activity was outlined and presented in the form of "the anti-war drive".

A City Disciplinary Committee, composed of rank and file comrades, was established. It functioned for three months, interviewing members, reviewing charges, outlining activities for delinquent members. The Disciplinary Committee in conjunction with the City Committee established a new precedent in our organization; namely that members were not doing the party a favor by paying dues and voting. That it was a privilege to belong to the Party. That membership in the Party meant working for the Party, obeying discipline, and carrying out assignments. Through the intervention of the Discipline Committee members who were delinquent in their party responsibilities were unceremoniously dropped from membership. The effect of the efforts of the Discipline Committee was a quick tightening up in the organization and a general increase in the activities of each individual party member and for the party as a whole. Even more important there developed a greater distribution of the work and of branch and city responsibilities.

5. The work of the City Disciplinary Committee is especially noteworthy in view of the fact that the committee got under way just as the Party was entering the summer months. In order to avoid disruption of the work, a plan was evolved to stagger the summer leaves of absence so that sufficient forces would always be on hand to carry through our campaigns. There was of course an unavoidable decline in some activities--but a summer slump was averted. The Party was kept intact throughout the summer and carried out the Plan of Activities outlined for it in May.

6. The second stage in our activities lasted roughly from the middle of May through the middle of August. Street meetings were already well under way by May 15th. But the war called for an increase. All during May, June, July and August, branches held street meetings. One of the branches set a record by holding three street meetings a week over a sustained period of time. Meetings were held in the needle trades market during May and June. The street meetings constituted the major form of our activity in the second stage. Also, branches were engaged in street sales of Labor Action. Party members were beginning to devote three, four, and even five nights a week to street activities.

7. The anti-war drive constituted the kernel of this stage. A six-week campaign was outlined beginning June 14th to July 21st. A daily calendar of activity was presented. A minimum of four nights per week were to be spent by the branches in neighborhood work and a fifth night was to be devoted to a general party mobilization in one of the boroughs. On June 14th the campaign opened with a series of roving street meetings in the Bronx. Five meetings were held that evening. At the adjournment of each of the meetings the comrades bearing placards and distributing literature paraded through the streets to the next meeting. On the following week the city-wide mobilization was held in Brownsville, with two street meetings and an indoor meeting, the latter of which was not very successful. The following week a series of street meetings ending in the July 5th mass meeting in Manhattan. The following week the mobilization in Harlem, etc. One important project in the campaign fell through; the scheduled beach party and street meetings arranged for Brighton Beach. All other projects in the campaign were carried through.

In the course of the campaign we issued 35,000 copies of a four-page fold, distributed 15,000 anti-conscription thro-w-ays, distributed 9,000 copies of Labor Action, 25,000 copies of a special anti-conscription leaflet, 5,000 leaflets (Jewish and English) for the Brownsville meeting, and 15,000 leaflets announcing the July 5th meeting. During the campaign we organized on a modest basis a poster shop, and provided the branches with attractive posters which were effectively utilized in our street work.

We also organized special distributions of Labor Action in the needle trades market, at the Kearny strike, at the I.L.G.W.U. convention, etc.

The anti-war drive was the first real campaign organized by the Workers Party in New York. Aside from its other achievements, the campaign proved a necessary and valuable training ground for the more intense mobilizations that came with the Election campaign.

8. The outstanding features of the second stage of our activity:

a. the intensification of party activity and responsibility, tightening up in discipline, averting a summer slump.

b. the holding of three indoor meetings, 5 city-wide mobilizations covering three different boroughs, and Harlem.

c. the sale and distribution of several hundred thousand pieces of party literature.

d. the holding of over 125 street corner meetings plus street sales of Labor Action, pamphlets, etc.

e. the organization of the first campaign in the party.

9. Also--during this period the first results began to show in our drive to change the social composition of the party. In food particularly, through consistent effort, a fairly good number of comrades (party and youth) were placed. Comrades began to seek employment in the needle trades, and a few began attendance in the needle trades schools. Opportunities opened up in the trade schools and the policy of the city committee was to encourage attendance in them.

Along these lines and in an effort to oriente the comrades to industry, the trade union department organized a class which provided comrades with a rudimentary training in sheet metal--enough to enable them to get jobs where greater experience was obtained. For the first time, party members engaged in non-proletarian professions were getting jobs in food, needle trades and most important, in the basic industries. The trade union department set up what was virtually an employment bureau which kept the comrades posted on factory openings. Accompanying the improvement in the social composition, the organization also experienced an improvement in its national composition.

10. In June the country was confronted with the prospect of conscription. The New York Party was quick to turn its attentions to this problem and shifted the point of agitation on war in general, to conscription in particular. Anti-conscription posters were made and utilized with good effect. Our street corner meetings and mobilizations made this the central issue. While the Cannonites rationalized their inactivity by a new theory on conscription; and the S.P. remained in the shell; our party with its small forces conducted an energetic campaign around conscription. Two of our three indoor meetings were centered around this issue. Two leaflets were printed on conscription. And the bulk of our street meetings, mobilizations, etc. were centered around the draft. Plans for a sticker fell through due to lack of funds.

11. The Yorkville Branch in the course of this entire period had been doing active work in its area. The Fascist McWilliams had launched a primary campaign which in July was in full swing. His campaign went unchallenged. Neither the Stalinists nor the Socialists countered the McWilliams propaganda. The Yorkville Branch in conjunction with the City Committee outlined a plan of activity in the area. The Branch initiated a campaign of agitation which was to have been culminated in a counter demonstration to McWilliams. Only part of the program was carried out. All plans for the counter meeting had been completed. The Party was mobilized for action. However the death of Comrade Trotsky came at the height of the preparations. The Trotsky Memorial Meeting was held on the night of the scheduled anti-McWilliams demonstration. The latter was called off. In view of the petition drive which followed it was impossible to continue the Anti-McWilliams efforts.

However in the campaign the Yorkville Branch did commendable preliminary work. A series of street meetings were held in Yorkville in conjunction with the City Organization. The Branch also issued two special leaflets exposing the McWilliams program. These activities were effective enough to come to the attention of McWilliams and to warrant special replies by McWilliams.

H. THE PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD.

1. Between August 1st and September 1st, the final plans were being drafted for the Election Campaign. The initial steps in the campaign were also taken. At this time a number of activities were engaged in, deserving of comment in this report.

2. The interest in the conscription issue was gaining momentum and our anti-conscription drive, even if not formally, was in reality extended. There was a continuation of street meetings and distributions, pamphlet and Labor Action sales. There was also a special concentration on Labor Action and N.I. distribution. The National Office had turned over to Local New York over five thousand back copies of Labor Action which we used for factory and neighborhood distribution. We also conducted a special distribution of leaflets and L.A.s at the Stalinist anti-conscription rally at Randalls Island.

3. It was also the period of the anti-McWilliams activities reported above

4. About this time preparations were begun for the Elbert Williams Meeting -- a protest against the lynching of this Negro worker.

The plan outlined on the Elbert Williams lynching was to negotiate with the NAACP urging them to initiate a campaign. The NAACP proved reluctant to do so. The Party then proceeded with its own plans for a meeting in Harlem to be followed by meetings in Brownsville and the Bronx. We felt that these would serve as pressure upon the NAACP aside from its other indicated values. On our initiative the Elbert Williams case was brought to the attention of the Negro workers in Harlem. Preceding the actual meeting held under our auspices, but to which the NAACP sent a speaker, the Party held a series of street meetings in Harlem. These proved to be our first really successful street meetings in the area. Many pamphlets, "My Friends" were sold as were Labor Actions. Although the election campaign interfered with the plans for the Brooklyn and Bronx meetings, the Harlem meeting was a distinct success. Over 100 outsiders were present and about 20 contacts made.

5. On August 21st the press reported the attempt on the life of Comrade Trotsky. On the 22nd the news of Comrade Trotsky's death flashed upon us. The shock left the party stunned. The New York Party immediately proposed a united front with the SWP for a series of actions in protest against the Stalinist assassination. First we proposed a joint protest meeting. After considerable hedging the SWP agreed to grant us a speaker for ten minutes at their meeting. The meeting of the S.W.P. was supported by us to the fullest extent. We helped in the distribution of the leaflets and almost half the audience present were members or sympathizers of the WP. By our actions, which forced a "common" protest meeting we achieved, in the eyes of the New York workers a united action against the Stalinists.

Second, we proposed a united front demonstration before the Soviet Consulate. We held that this demonstrative act would more dramatically hurl the charge of murder against the Stalinist regime and would serve to further crystalize the condemnation which the workers of New York felt toward the Stalinist act of assassination. The SWP rejected this proposal for united action on the ground that such a demonstration would give the appearance of an anti-Soviet manifestation, obscuring the need for the "defense of the USSR".

The Party nevertheless went through with its plans, held a demonstration which resulted in the arrest of 5 comrades. At the same time additional numbers of the special Trotsky issue of Labor Action were widely distributed by the Party.

In criticism of our activities around the assassination, it is necessary to say that the organization did not respond promptly enough to the event. On the day of the assassination a special leaflet should have been issued in thousands of copies and distributed especially to the trade union centers. Small manifestations might have been organized in addition to the street meetings that were held.

6. Beginning August 15th the petition work for the election campaign was introduced. The election machinery was being oiled up. Petition gathering got under way and proceeded slowly -- interrupted by the activities around the Trotsky assassination!

7. The highlights in this period are listed:

- a. The Elbert Williams action.
- b. Beginning of joint picketing with the Negro movie operators of Lowes Victoria theatre.
- c. The McWilliams action.
- d. Continuation of anti-conscription activities.
- e. The "joint" protest meeting against the assassination of Trotsky.
- f. Soviet Consul demonstration.
- g. Beginning of the election campaign.

I. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN.

1. The City Convention in April called upon the incoming City Committee to participate in the National Elections of 1940. It left to the incoming committee the right to decide in what precise form this participation was to take. Late in the month of June, the City Committee undertook a discussion of our role in the national elections.

Between April and June the situation had changed somewhat and doubts arose as to the advisability of running a campaign participated in through the instrument of the running of a congressional candidate. These doubts were motivated primarily on the grounds that given the limited forces of the party, and the FBI drive against the CP election petition campaign, the possibilities of obtaining the required number of signatures was rather dubious. The proposal followed that we run no candidate in the campaign.

From more optimistic circles came the proposal that we run two congressional candidates; one in the Bronx and one in Brownsville. The supporters of this view held that two candidates would give wider publicity to our Party, afford better opportunities for propaganda and permit of a wider distribution of Party forces in the work.

The majority of the City Committee decided to participate in the election campaign by running a single candidate. It felt that given our present forces and the added objective difficulties, the limited finances, a single candidate was all the organization could carry. The Bronx was selected as the running field primarily of the groundwork that had been laid in the previous Shachtman campaign and because of the possibility of putting forth the Party spokesman as our candidate.

The progress of the campaign revealed that the decision of the City Committee in contradistinction to the two other proposals, was correct. After a short period of petition activity it was evident that the Party lacked the funds and the forces to conduct a successful petition drive in more than one area. Also, due to the nature of this particular election campaign, to have failed to participate by running a candidate would have been an error of major importance. It would have rendered the party ineffectual, for the duration of the most hotly disputed election campaign in many years. The issues in the 1940 election aroused the political consciousness of millions of American voters. Indicative of this interest was 1) the heat with which the issues were debated, 2) the political nature of the debate, and 3) the record vote that was cast. This election campaign posed before the American public in the sharpest form the questions of war, national defense, and economic, social and political problems in the domestic scene. The mere participation in the election campaign availed the party of the opportunity of counterposing our program to that of the other political parties. The very participation in this campaign thru a Congressional candidate was a factor of tremendous importance, not alone to the N.Y. party -- but to the W.P. nationally. The national plenum in outlining the election policy of the W.P. called for participation in the elections by running candidates in several cities thruout the country. Only New York was in a position to carry this thru. This gave added national significance to the N.Y. campaign.

2. By comparison with the previous election campaign (Councilmanic), the difficulties were quite evident.

- a. the party had one half the membership of the S.W.P. Likewise the Y.P.S.L.
- b. in 1939, the central issue in the campaign was "anti-fascism" which coincided with the receptive mood of the Bronx voter. In 1940, the party ran on an anti-war program and was compelled to address itself to auditors who were decidedly pro-ally.
- c. the 1940 campaign had to be conducted under conditions of a drive of intimidation, conducted by the Attorney General's office, the F.B.I., and the state and local authorities, who in state after state published the lists off C.P. petition sheets.
- d. the campaign in 1939 had as its field the entire Bronx, whereas in 1940, the field was limited to an area covering about one half of the Bronx.

It was apparent that the entire party would have to be mobilized in the Bronx if the campaign was to meet with any success. It could not be accomplished by any one section of the party. It was all the party -- or no campaign. The City Committee understood that this meant a further interruption of neighborhood work, that branch work and branch life would suffer, that the circulation of Labor Action thru the branches would be radically reduced. We weighed these factors in the light of the national, political importance of participating in the campaign. Both the City Committee and the Political Committee concluded that the benefits which would accrue from the latter far outweighed the costs.

3. Beginning about the first week in September, the party was called upon for city-wide mobilizations. While the campaign to get 6,000 signatures (later increased to 8,000) was opened in mid-August, it really did not get under way until the first or second week in September. By October 6th, after a month of intensive work which involved party mobilizations, four and later five nights per week, we succeeded in getting 7,700 signatures. These were checked, notarized, bound and submitted to the New York Board of Elections. Shortly afterwards, we were notified of the acceptance of our petitions and Shachtman was placed on the ballot. This in itself was an accomplishment of no mean proportions for our party in this given period.

Without waiting for a verification from the Election Board, the party inaugurated its campaign of agitation. Long before any other party held meetings or distributed literature, the W.P. opened its street meeting rallies and gave wide distribution to our literature. The roving street meetings were employed as the regular rather than the exceptional method of street work.

The Campaign Committee had set the goal of 50 street meetings in the three and one half week agitation period following the petition campaign. Shachtman was to appear at each of the meetings. We fell short of our mark, mostly due to bad weather and on a few occasions due to bad planning. We held only a total of 36 street meetings in the three and one half week period. Shachtman spoke at most of these meetings, although toward the end of the campaign, Comrade Shachtman's voice gave and he was thus unable to speak during the two final nights of the campaign. We were hampered in our street meetings by especially cold weather and rain. This was felt particularly before we got the loud speaker equipment. It was gratifying however, that cold weather and even rain notwithstanding, the party members carried out their assignments. On a few occasions, Comrade Shachtman and other party speakers held the platform during the rain.

Special mention must be made here of the use of automobiles in the street work. Thanks to Comrade Joyce, the party had at its disposal a campaign car. In addition, four other cars were virtually placed at the disposal of the Campaign Committee. Without them, our roving street meetings and even some of our distributions, could not have taken place. These cars, forming a caravan, were used to dispatch small contingents of comrades from corner to corner. On one or two occasions, they were used to deploy forces from one meeting to another when difficulties arose with the crowds.

4. The comrades who participated in the last campaign have testified that despite our inferior numbers, there was no comparison between the street work of the two campaigns. It is not unimportant to note, and the comrades were heartened by the fact that the party spokesmen appeared on the street corner, not once or twice, but regularly thruout the campaign.

5. The Campaign Committee proved correct in its emphasis upon street meetings, rather than indoor meetings as was the case in the 1939 campaign. Thruout the campaign, four indoor meetings were held. Two of these were organized by non-party groups, one by the party, and one by the YPSL.

The first was a forum held in late August and attended by 75 people. The second was organized by the Negro newspaper, "The Listener-News". This was attended by about 200 negro workers in the Bronx, address by comrade Shachtman, and was greeted enthusiastically by the audience.

The meeting organized by the YPSL was not very successful. No real effort seems to have been put into the meeting. It was attended by about 15 outsiders.

The final meeting, the windup rally -- held the night before election, was attended by about 50 outsiders and could be considered only moderately successful. However, in order not to lose the opportunity to address the workers on the streets, about 30 comrades were organized as a street contingent. These comrades conducted four street meetings while the indoor rally was being held.

6. The returns from the election board credits us with 411 votes. This is a very unimposing figure. But it is a good vote insofar as it is quite definite that practically every vote cast was a vote not for a good Jewish name, not a crackpot vote, but a genuine vote for the W.P. It was a genuine vote against war.

In the presidential election, when a straight party vote is the customary habit, a voter who goes out of his way to seek out the name of the Workers Party candidate does so because he likes his program. In a campaign characterized by its heat and the pro-ally sentiment, the voter who casts his ballot for Shachtman does so because he has heard or read our message, and is recording himself against the war.

7. The main concentration of our campaign work was in the Negro area. Here too, to the best of our knowledge, we received 65 votes. But undoubtedly it was the first opportunity these workers had of hearing the message of the Workers Party.

8. One of the outstanding features in our campaign was the amount of literature issued. In the 1939 campaign, there were 28,000 pieces of literature distributed. Twenty-thousand printed throwaways and a special supplement of the Socialist Appeal -- 8,000 copies. The following is the record of the printed propaganda material issued in this campaign:

- a. Labor Actions 14,000
- b. Special election Labor Action .. 4,000
- c. Special election issue of
Challenge 5,000
- d. Leaflets on Forum 5,000
- e. Leaflets on Mass Meeting 10,000
- f. Anti-conscription throwaway 45,000
- g. Pamphlet, Election Platform 15,000
- h. Two page folder 25,000
- i. Miscellaneous 15,000

A total of 138,000 pieces of literature. By the end of the campaign, there was not a single piece of literature left. All was distributed.

9. Worthy of special mention is the pamphlet which was published. A twenty-page, attractively printed election platform. Most of the 15,000 copies were distributed to workers attending our street meetings, and in house to house distribution.

10. Additional material: a) 60 posters, b) a large sign for the West Bronx headquarters. The sign planned for East Bronx was never completed. c) The loud speaker equipment. d) Two blowup pictures of Shachtman.

11. Additional publicity: Comrades Joyce and Dinsmore were placed in charge of publicity work. Press releases were issued and sent to the major and minor newspapers in New York. Only one printed out release — The Listener-News. Letters were sent to organizations, asking that they invite Shachtman to appear before them to present our platform. Again only the Listener-News replied. Letters were sent to trade unions with a similar request, asking for the endorsement of Shachtman. No response. A special release in Jewish was sent to the Jewish press. No results. The press maintained a solid boycott. The S.L.P. answered our request that they support Shachtman with a vituperative language. The S.W.P. supported Altman. The S.P. and Lovestoneites made no reply.

12. A Campaign Committee was elected which underwent a change in personnel after the first four weeks. The P.C. recommended that the City Organizer be placed at the head of the campaign, and this was approved by the C.C. The Campaign Committee, following its reorganization, functioned very well on the whole. With the exception of the last two or two and a half weeks, it can be said that the committee as such, actually organized, directed and led the work. In the final weeks, however, due to the fact that three of its members obtained jobs, that kept them working overtime, and the fourth was ill, the committee did not function, and a disproportionate share of the work fell upon the shoulders of the Campaign Director and two other members of the committee.

13. The City Committee understood that the campaign in the Bronx was the work of the city organization. The members of the City Committee participated actively in every phase of the drive. City Committee meetings were held in the Bronx all thru the campaign, and at a late hour in order that the City Committee members might participate in the detail work of the campaign. City Committee members set an example in the work, were active in gathering petitions, spoke at street corner meetings, distributed literature. Again: compare this with the last campaign, where the City Committee sent its representatives to the Bronx on two occasions to tell the comrades how to do the job right. This was the work of the city organization. Consequently, it was the work of the entire City Committee.

For a period of time, the Campaign Committee assumed the role of the City Committee. That is, the City Committee was subordinated to the Campaign Committee, rather than the reverse. But this was unavoidable. The initiative for the work had to come from that committee which was specifically assigned to direct the campaign.

14. In the campaign, the YPSL did not make a good showing. It was the first time the party had called upon the YPSL to aid it in its work. It responded very sporadically. Its representative on the Campaign Committee failed consistently to attend meetings -- and even the two Bronx YPSL units failed to make any consistent and appreciable showing. It was the election campaign that first revealed the serious situation in the N.Y. YPSL, a problem with which the recent convention of that organization dealt in full, and which it is now seeking to resolve.

15. Aside from the wide publicity of the party and its spokesman which was afforded by our participation in the campaign, we succeeded in getting over 300 contacts. It is now the task primarily of the Bronx Branch to follow up and capitalize upon the campaign.

16. The campaign also served to reveal many weaknesses in the party, particularly its habits of work. We did not always carry out our plans with the necessary precision, and very often with the possible maximum effectiveness. It revealed that the party was not yet geared for quick shifts in activity. Most serious of all, the party was not Labor Action conscious. It is true that we distributed a fair quantity of the paper. However, our literature failed to stress Labor Action. Of all the literature issued, only the pamphlet called special attention to Labor Action, and the final throwaway made a casual reference to it.

17. The election campaign in the Bronx was the biggest and most effective campaign conducted by the party. It was a major accomplishment for the Trotskyist movement. It represented almost three months of sustained effort and determined work. It involved the majority of the AVAILABLE party membership in the activities. It reached many thousands of workers with our message and program. It put the party spokesman before the Bronx electorate. It put the party on the map as the only genuine anti-war force.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE CAMPAIGN, ITS LESSONS, EVERY DETAIL BE STUDIED CAREFULLY, NOT AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE MODEL CAMPAIGN, BUT AS A BASIS FOR EFFECTIVE AND IMPROVED CAMPAIGNS.

J. CITY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.

1. In the last seven months there were seven city-wide membership meetings as follows:

- a. April 24th On the Split in the Party.
- b. May 24th The New Turn in the War.
- c. June 11th The War and the N.Y. Party.
- d. July 26th Report on the National Tour.
- e. August 18th Report on the Plenum ... Election Campaign.
- f. September 15th . Report on Mexican Trip ... National Report.. Election Campaign.
- g. October 13th ... Conscription ... Election Campaign.

An average of one meeting per month. Most of the earlier meetings, however, were, due to the need of establishing Labor Action, devoted too much to financial and organizational considerations and did not afford adequate opportunity for the membership to engage in political discussion. This was partially corrected with the later meetings especially after the establishment of the National Tax. 50

It was with respect to the City membership meetings that the City Committee sought to tackle the problem of punctuality at meetings. By strict enforcement of a rule which excluded comrades who came late; by starting the meeting when scheduled -- we had real success in developing the habit of punctuality at least where membership meetings were concerned. Some branches employed the same method with equally good effect. But the Party in general (especially committees -- the C.C. included) has yet to achieve the habit of punctuality.

K. BRANCH ORGANIZERS MEETINGS.

1. The City Convention in April made a decision that the Branch organizers meet at least once every month. Instead of the monthly meeting, organizers were called together once every two weeks. The semi-monthly organizers meeting became an institution in the party. Only in the last weeks of the election campaign when the party and the city organizer were completely engrossed in campaign did we relax in the schedule of organizers meetings.

2. The organizers meetings proved to be an indispensable instrument of the Party, not only as a link between the City Office and the Branches; not only as a forum for exchange of opinions on Branch activity; not only as an implementer of the C. C. decisions; but also as a deliberative body which contributed many valuable suggestions for the work of the organization. This institution must be continued.

L. THE CITY COMMITTEE

1. The April Convention elected a city committee composed of 9 members (including the Youth Rep.) and 5 alternates. It divided the work as follows: Gould, Organizer; Carter, Y.U. Dir.; Temple, Educational Director; Lynn, Negro Director; Howard, Membership Director; and rep. to the Youth, Russell, Oponents Director, and Morris, Literature Agent. We were exceedingly shorthanded for forces to take additional posts, since the bulk of the committee members were serving as Branch organizers or on Branch executive committees. In addition, both Russell and Lynn were branch organizers. Carter had to divide his time between the T.U. work and Editor of L.A. -- Howard subsequently was made organizer of the U.W.S. Branch.

About 6 weeks after the convention Comrade Temple was sent to Mass. by the R. C. for organization work, and the Educational Dept. was left without a director. In addition one member of the city committee got a night job out of town. Both these comrades were replaced on the C.C. by the first two alternates. One other member of the committee, comrade Hall was compelled to interrupt his activities when the C.C. granted him permission to take advantage of the Trade School courses.

It followed from this that the main load, fell upon the city organizer. Instead of drafting more and more comrades into city departmental work, the trend was to draft city committee members into branch responsibilities. This was especially true when several branch organizers were called out of town or took ill.

2. The City committee was primarily an activist committee. Its members lead the work not only in the branches but carried the great deal of the street work. They were in the forefront of our actions, did a good deal of speaking, etc. This was necessitated not only by the shortage of forces, but because in this period particularly it was imperative that the leaders of the N.Y. party in the forefront of the actions of the party. The City committee was not mere office committee. This was best demonstrated a) by the anti-war campaign, b) the Soviet Council demonstration and c) the election campaign.

3. At the same time the City committee served as a deliberative body, which worked out the campaigns and actions for the party.

M. LABOR ACTION

1. The outstanding accomplishment of the NATIONAL organization in the past period has been the maintenance of Labor Action as a weekly. Mainly responsible for its establishment and maintenance is the N.Y. organization which contributed most heavily to its financial support. Several thousand dollars were contributed by N.Y. local in the early months of the party. These contributions assured the maintenance of the paper.

2. But there is a marked inconsistency in the financial support given L.A. by the N.Y. party and the low N.Y. circulation of the L.A. The record of the N.Y. local circulation of L.A. is the darkest spot of the work of the organization. Beginning in May with Branch Bundle orders around 7-800, the branch bundles declined to around 300 and under (with newsstands circulation- 500). The first decline experienced seemed to come under the impact of the Blitzkrieg. Our comrades began to meet with difficulties in street sales. At the same time there began a decline in newsstand circulation and some dealers began the cancellation of orders on the ground that L. A. in their opinion was "5th Column". A further decline was experienced when we began our city-wide party mobilizations which unavoidably detracted from the Branch Neighborhood sales.

Another point of importance no doubt rested in the fact that we could not provide for a full time L.A. director. (The previous administrations all had full time paid S.A. directors.)

In the first months of the organization we organized wide street sales of the paper, neighborhood open air meetings had special L. A. pitches, and the branches themselves held regular street sales in the neighborhoods in addition to special city-wide sales (14th St.-- Times Square). A few of the branches held sales at specific factory gates without meeting any real success. One branch concentrated on block work with promising results. But all this was curtailed as a result of the city-wide actions, which utilized large numbers of the paper for free distribution. This was especially the case during the election campaign. While it is true that that the city organization (thanks to a special rate provided by the

L. A. office) handled fair quantities of the paper, throughout the 7 month-period, the branch bundles declined to the 300 mark.

3. The April program of action set 1500 as the circulation goal of L.A. This figure proved to be too high. However, a quota of 1,000 papers weekly was entirely realizable and must be accomplished in the next period.

4. But for the branches to handle bundles not exceeding 300 papers, means that the paper in N.Y. is little more than a house organ. The program of action and the incoming city committee must devise methods of increasing circulation as the first and most essential task of the next period.

N. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

1. The same criticism leveled with respect to L.A. also holds for the N.I. The average circulation of the N.I. by branch bundles is about 200. With newsstands it is about 300. The figure is menacingly low. In part this low figure reflects the lack of a periphery since that is the main basis for circulation of a theoretical magazine. Systematic contact work, circulation and subscription drives can easily increase the N.Y. circulation of the N.I. which, like L.A. is the principle instrument for Party education and recruitment.

O. PAMPHLETS

1. The National office printed 3 pamphlets, in bundles of 10,000 each. New York was to handle about half of each. Our showing with respect to two of the three was only fair; with the third it was poor. N.Y. sold close to 4,000 of the pamphlet "My Friends" a good proportion in the Negro districts of Harlem, West Side Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn. We handled about 3,500 copies of the pamphlet "This is not our War". But our circulation of "Conscription--for What" was well under 1,000. This was due in part to the fact that the title of the pamphlet was misleading. The contents of the pamphlet had little to say about conscription, especially as the conscription issue was posed in the concrete sense after the bill was introduced. Our comrades received complaints from purchasers which did not encourage the comrades to sell the pamphlet.

But our record of sale of the former two pamphlets was not as "good" as may appear. 75% of the value of a popular penny pamphlet is the rate of time of sale. Each pamphlet should have been sold within one month--whereas it took us two and sometimes three months to dispose of our bundles.

P. THE BRANCHES

1. The new party started with 11 branches. At the beginning of the Summer months with a tightening up in the Needle Trade.

UNIONS, we found it necessary to pass a rule that N.Y. workers in the Party refrain from doing public party work in the market. This being the case and in view of the need for active members in other branches, we dissolved the N.Y. branch, sent its members into some of the weaker branches, and transferred the direction of the work in the N.Y. market to the city committee.

The Westchester branch was also dissolved but was reconstituted in the fall due to the developments of a union crisis. The understanding was that with the resolution of the Union Crisis, the branch would again be dissolved and its members sent to other branches.

The West End Branch was also dissolved due to the fact after 3 members were dropped for inactivity, the Westchester comrades withdrawn for their own branch work, and a number of members moved out of the neighborhood. Left with about 14 members of which only 3 lived in the area, or reasonably close to it, we began consideration of its dissolution. The C. C. sought to prevent this by transferring 4 or 5 YPSL members who lived in the area, into the party. After discussing this with the YPSL and their rejection of this proposition, we dissolved the branch. Thus the party has 9 branches.

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Downtown | 5. Yorkville |
| 2. Lower East Side | 6. Food |
| 3. Upper West Side | 7. Westchester |
| 4. Harlem | 8. Bronx |
| | 9. Brownsville |

2. At the time of the dissolution of the N.Y. branch The C. C. proposed the dissolution of the Food branch on the same grounds as motivated our decision on N.Y.— The primary object of the move in the case of the Food branch was to strengthen the Harlem branch which had been weakened by the transfers of some of its members to branches out of town. The members of the food branch rejected the proposal and a compromise was reached whereby the Food branch was to cooperate with the Harlem Branch. This cooperation proved to be inadequate and subsequently the Food branch practically did nothing at all to aid the Harlem branch.

A new group of comrades were transferred into Harlem from other branches. This was a temporary arrangement to strengthen the branch until the general reorganization of the branches which must come immediately after the city convention. In this reorganization, the Harlem and Yorkville branches must receive first consideration.

3. The Yorkville branch which was really established by transferring 6 comrades into the branch immediately after the split was weakened when the organizer (Erber) was sent to Chicago for party work and a few other members were transferred to other cities (Harbin-Mass., Lauren-Washington, etc.) We sought to add forces to the branch by transferring members from other branches into Yorkville (5 comrades when the acting organizer became ill, we withdrew one of our best organizers from his branch and made him organizer of Yorkville. This branch, located in a key neighborhood, and which did some of the best work in the party, requires more attention and more forces which must be given it after the convention.

Q. EDUCATION

1. Like the branches, all other subcommittees, educational work suffered as a result of the city-wide actions. Moreover, reacting to 9 months of factional discussion we went to the other extreme and neglected internal education. In the initial period the emphasis of work of the Educational committee was on agitation rather than internal education. A few steps were taken, two outlines issued a speakers bureau established, etc. The speakers bureau did not function very well although in mid-summer when the work was taken over by Comrade O when it functioned well.

As reported above, in July the Educational director was withdrawn from N.Y. and sent as an organizer into the field. Comrade

Denby then assumed this work and he too was called out of town on union work. The educational department therefore did not have an opportunity for serious development of the work until the fall when Comrade Temple returned and resumed his functions in the N.Y. organization,

By this time, through the work of the Speakers Bureau, branch educationals had improved. The educational department organized the Shachtman lecture series and began preparations for the "Labor Action School".

2. The political level of the N.Y. party is much too low, especially in view of the war. The war and its concomitants further restrictions in work, pressure, etc. demands a high degree of education of the membership. Full consolidation of the party is inconceivable without a thorough education of the membership. The work of the educational committee since the fall is a good sch. Educational activity (internal education) must be among the first of the major objectives in the party.

R. Y.P.S.L.

Immediately after the split, the city organization of the party pursued a policy of encouraging the YPSL to engage in its independent activities. In the SWP the YPSL was being constantly called upon to do the work for the party and we felt that now they must be allowed to develop their own activities without being hampered by demands from the party. This practice in itself, was translated into an attempt of "let the youth alone". The result was that little attention was paid to the special problems of the youth organization. This condition was accentuated because of the failure of the Youth representative to the Party to attend meetings of the C.C. On several occasions appointments were made by the Party city organizer with the YPSL organizer to discuss youth problems, but the YPSL rep failed to keep them. Relations between the two organizations are really implemented, not through the respective organization representatives on the city committees, but through the organizers in their daily contact. This contact was not maintained.

2. The first and only time the Party called on the YPSL to aid it in its work was during the election campaign. Here, the YPSL

was not asked to do Party work, but to develop its own activities around the campaign. As indicated above, the YPSL response was poor.

3. There has developed in the YPSL some crystallized anti-Marxist views. The Party cannot exempt itself from its share of responsibility for this condition. By our failure to encourage and aid in the education of the YPSL we contributed to the situation that now exists. We must now assume the task of cooperating with the YPSL in putting across its plans for the Marxist education of the youth.

4. In the next months detailed attention must be given to the YPSL. This means: regular semi-weekly conferences between the two organizers, financial aid to the YPSL, however small. Care must be taken in the selection of Branch representatives to the YPSL units. The reps should be capable and tactful comrades who can give attention to the problems of the units. Party members must be made available to teach YPSL classes.

S. NEGRO WORK

1. While work among the Negroes was conducted by some branches and through the city office, the work was haphazard and lacked centralization. The comrade in charge of this work was also the organizer of his branch and could not give the time required by this work. The Brownsville, Bronx, West End and Upper West Side branches were all doing work among the Negro workers, but this was never coordinated. During the election campaign we made a special concentration in the Negro area but the Negro Department did not direct it.

2. Three main projects were engaged in—all in Harlem:—The Elbert Williams protest; the joint picketing with the Negro Movie Operators of Loew's Victoria Theatre; and the literature concentration with the "My Friends" pamphlet.

3. One of the chief obstacles in this work is the shortage of Negro comrades in the party. It is difficult for white comrades to do this type of work. The Party has arranged to obtain the services of Comrade Stassen, who will divide his time between New York, Philadelphia and Washington. The three cities are arranging to pay his wages. Also—the party in N.Y. is participating in the Waller Defense case, which undoubtedly will help us in our Negro work.

T. CONTACTS AND THE CONTACT LIST.

1. After the split we inherited an antiquated contact list with over 3,000 names. After spending a good deal of money checking these names, the list was cut in half. At the same time we have been developing a new contact list. We already have over 500 fresh contacts. Comrade Alvin was put in charge of contact work and began the organization of the lists and their distribution to the branches. They are good lists and must be followed through by the branches. These lists are our potential literature subscribers and potential members.

U. NEW YORK MEMBERS AND THE FIELD.

1. In the past period the N.Y. party has contributed over

a dozen developed party members to other cities. The N.O. has drawn from among the N.Y. party organizers and field workers. Three of these comrades are now organizers in other cities. Another group has helped to constitute a branch in an important industrial city in this country. Still others are active members of leading committees outside N.Y.

The withdrawal of these comrades has affected our work here, but it has served to the greatest advantage of the Party. Nationally, in the next period, it will be necessary to draft other N.Y. comrades for field work. Two comrades have already been asked to take field assignments and have accepted. In the interests of strengthening the party in the field, this policy must be encouraged.

V. TRADE UNION WORK AND THE PROLETARIANIZATION OF THE PARTY.

1. The city organization established a Labor Department with a full-time Labor Secretary at its head. While he will present a full report to the convention, a few comments are in order here.

2. The convention in April established three fields of concentration for party industrialization: food, needle trades and transport. In the latter field almost nothing was done save for some distributions of L.A. to the transport workers. We had no contacts in transport, and have none today. In food we organized a special concentration. Beginning with a fraction of 4 we succeeded in placing a good quota of comrades in the industry. Our comrades under the supervision of the trade union department worked as a fraction and are now advanced in the work.

In the needle trades, with union membership almost rigidly fixed, we had greater difficulty in getting the comrades into the industry. About one half dozen comrades got into the industry or attended N.T. schools which are now providing these comrades with jobs.

3. In June opportunities opened up in some basic industries and the Labor Secretary initiated a drive to place comrades in this industry. A good number of comrades were excused from party activities in order to facilitate their attendance in the evening classes of the trade schools. This long-range view bore gratifying results. Party members obtained employment in the basic industries. All indications are that the coming months will witness an extension in this field. The shift in our concentration from the lighter to the heavier industries was a great step forward for the party.

4. The steps toward proletarianization are only the first ones. These must be implemented in two directions: first, by placing more comrades in the basic industries; second, recruitment from the factories. Thus far, in no field have we recruited workers from the factories. Only when this is done on a substantial scale can we begin to talk about a proletarian party.

W. FINANCES.

1. (The financial statement is given in a separate document.)

2. In the first two months the average income of the city office averaged around \$30.00 per week. Half of this sum was used for

wares. That gave the office \$15 to operate on. With that we had to equip the office, publish literature, organize actions, etc. The city office refrained from making any special appeals for funds in order not to interfere with the special appeals that were being made in N.Y. for L.A. -- We point out that at no time during this administration did we go beyond the regular collections through the 2% city tax and (later) national tax, for special appeals.

Beginning in September, the weekly income increased to about \$35 per week, which gave the office a \$20 weekly operating expense. We had to run the election campaign on this income. This was of course impossible. The campaign demanded a large expenditure of money. By national decision we could not make a special appeal to the members for contributions. As a result the organization is in debt for over \$300, of which about \$200 was accumulated as a result of the election campaign.

SUMMARY

Comrades:

The N.Y. party has just completed seven months of the most intensive activity in the history of our movement. The unique feature of this activity lies in the fact that it was not episodic, sporadic or periodic. It was seven months of uninterrupted action which involved progressively increasing numbers of the available party membership. It was performed in the summer period and on an historical background that was not favorable to us. It involved the biggest sustained campaign in the record of our movement. The primary, almost exclusive, character of our activity was street work. The principal direction of the party was towards efforts in placing comrades in industry. If we did not achieve a full transformation in the habits of work, significant progress was made in this direction.

The above report indicates the tasks for the next period. Concentration on Labor Action, education, continued efforts toward industrial concentration; branch and neighborhood work. We must further tighten the ranks of the party; we must make continued efforts in the correction of methods of functioning. Thus the Party will steel itself for the war and its historic tasks in the war.

CITY COMMITTEE

PROGRAM OF ACTION

Approved unanimously by the City Committee
(A number of special points will be presented orally.)

During the past period, the party placed the main emphasis upon the task of creating an activist party, designed to publicize the program and the name of the party before large numbers of workers. The distinguishing feature of the coming period must be one of education and consolidation of the party.

This consolidation will be accomplished by three major methods.

1. Organizationally, internal tightening-up must be based on continued activity, but an activity conducted primarily through the branches. The work of the branches must center around the aim of developing the sale and distribution of the party press, especially Labor Action; it must have the objective of building a neighborhood periphery around the branch, looking toward immediate recruitment.

2. The internal educational work and political training of the party members must be intensified and expanded. The present war crisis and its accompaniments exert a tremendous pressure upon the politics and morale of every individual. If the party is to be able to withstand the blows of reaction, each member must be steeled and armed through Marxist training.

3. The trade union work of the party must be extended, and additional comrades placed in important industries and trades.

II

THE PRESS

1. The activity of party branches should center around the sale and distribution of the party press, especially Labor Action. The methods of literature distribution should be systemically carried on through:
 - a. House-to-house canvassing.
 - b. Development of a regular route of customers.
 - c. Regular sales at a given street corner.
 - d. Regular sales at a union hall or factory.
2. Special attention is to be given by the City Committee to setting up a functioning, efficient Literature Department.
3. The city quota for Labor Action shall be 1000 copies per issue.
4. The city quota for the New International shall be 300 copies per issue for the next two issues, after which time the City Committee is to review the quota.
5. The branch quotas for Labor Action and New International shall be assigned by agreement between the city office and each branch, based on the above city figures.
6. The city quota for the national pamphlets shall be a minimum of at least one-half the number issued.
7. Continual stress is to be laid in neighborhood work on getting readers and subscribers to the party publications.

TRADE UNION ^{Wd} RK

The industrial work shall continue in the direction already indicated by our past activities:

1. Industrial training of comrades, particularly in metal trades. Systematic placing of comrades in government industrial schools, including comrades who are now white collar or unskilled workers.

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2. Systematic placing of comrades in large plants, and important industries; planful concentration of given plants and industries.
3. Organization of fractions in unions where we have two or more comrades. The frequency of meeting of these fractions should be decided by themselves.
4. Regular mass distributions of Labor Action in front of large concentration plants, organized by the city office.
5. Regular Labor Action sales and distributions by branches at factories and unions whose problems are discussed in Labor Action.

BRANCHES

1. The coming period must see a change in the orientation and direction of the work of the party. The branches must become active in their local areas and more self-dependent. Work must be organized on the basis of the branches, rather than on the basis of the center. The branch must become the primary educational unit of the party and the basic force for the sale and distribution of the party press.
2. The city committee shall undertake a strengthening and reorganization of the branches to the end that a maximum of activity can be conducted in the most productive neighborhoods. In particular the Yorkville and Harlem branches are to be reinforced numerically with a view to giving them a more substantial organizational basis.
3. The branches must aim to make their headquarters a neighborhood workers' center. They should develop a branch library, with party literature, Marxist publications, newspapers, etc. The headquarters should be kept open at least two regular nights a week for the public, with this fact publicized through Labor Action, any branch leaflets, signs, and mailings. Recreational material, such as games, should be

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made available.

4. Each branch must point its work to the objectives of building up a branch periphery and a list of sympathizers, with the aim of recruiting them into the party.

5. Branches should experiment and use frequent social gatherings of different sorts--small house parties, informal discussions, outings, etc.--to build up neighborhood contacts especially.

6. While the party forces are, at present, too weak to permit of constant intervention in neighborhood issues, the party branches must be on the alert for the development especially of the larger neighborhood problems in their branch activities.

EDUCATIONAL WORK

The special objectives of educational work in the next period should be: 1. Basic education in the principles of Marxism, particularly with the war question in view; 2. Emphasis on the development of the educational life and activities of the branches; 3. Training ^{of the} individual comrade as expounder of our program and speaker; 4. Encouragement of a live, thinking, and provocative internal intellectual life in the party, as an aid in the explanation and defense of the party program and Marxism.

A. City-wide educational work

1. Insurance of the success of the Shachtman lecture series. With the formation of four classes in the first term of the Labor Action Institute, a large section of the party and youth must be recruited as students.

2. Following the school, organization of other classes which can best be held on a city-wide scale (for example, on trade union work, on party organization)

3. Organization of an internal party forum, for the discussion of

political or theoretical questions of concern to the members.

4. Party aid to YPSA educational work, in providing instructors and speakers, etc.

Branch educational work

1. Special attention by the branch and from center to the personnel of the branch educational directors: stabilizing, eliminating constant changing of the director; careful choice of politically capable director with sufficient authority among branch members to enable him to function as an educational guide and advisor.
2. Regular educational programs at each branch meeting. Greater dependence on branch members and involvement of all branch members in program as far as possible. At least one program during month based on current New International or Labor Action. Special efforts to be made to see that party members read the party press. Suggestions and plans for branch educationals will come regularly from city or national educational departments.
3. Each branch should set as its aim the formation of a study group or a reading group, following the close of the Labor Action Institute term.
4. Encouragement of, and checking on, personal self-study and reading by each branch member by the branch director.
5. Organization of house gatherings for informal discussion with contacts and incidental social features, by branches or individual comrades, especially trade unionists.
6. City Committee to choose two neighborhoods for setting up of public open forum, under auspices of local branch and full aid from center.

NEGRO WORK

1. A major activity of party branches situated near Negro areas shall be the concentration of work in these areas.

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2. The Harlem concentration is to be strengthened in the coming period and special attention to the branch should be given by the city committee.
3. The party branches should arrange educational and discussions of the Negro problem.
4. Attempts should be made, where possible, to contact Negro organizations and thus build up contacts for the party.
5. The incoming city committee should consider the problem of the retention of Negro recruits in the party.
6. Branches should utilize special Negro problems, such as the Elbert Williams case, Walker Defense case, Negro discriminations on jobs, and housing, as activities organized on such issues are the only effective means of gaining the confidence of Negro workers.

RECRUITMENT

The view that party recruitment in this period is virtually excluded must be vigorously combated. The party branches must become recruitment-conscious. The activities proposed under the section of branch work must be undertaken with the conscious aim of recruiting to the party. Contacts already established must be followed up, in particular those obtained as a result of the Bronx campaign.

CITY COMMITTEE.