

CITY CONVENTION REPORT.

This report covers the work done by the New York organization since our last convention one year ago. (Some of the points have been dealt with in the oral report only.) It is a year in which several important changes have occurred, both externally and inside the organization itself.

The change in the war picture, with a resulting change in the attitude of large groups of workers towards the no-strike pledge, the WLB, etc. have had their effect on our work. Similarly, the worsened employment situation in NYC has played a role in the kind of work we have been able to carry on.

Organizationally we have the same number of active members that we had a year ago, but today they are organized into five instead of six clubs. One of our concentrations was disbanded, but another one has been organized since a year ago.

In general, we have followed the main lines adopted at our last city convention, namely work in our concentrations and the recruitment of new members. We have made some gains and improvements in our general functioning. This, of course, does not mean that the gains and improvements have been made in every phase of our work; that we took advantage of every opportunity or that we could not have done better. For example - our recruitment was good - but not sufficient and our total figure fell far below the goal set at our last convention. It is true that there were any number of extenuating circumstances; that the breaks were often against us and that in comparison with other branches in the country we did very well. It is also true that after a certain amount of recruitment into a given club it becomes necessary to devote the main energies of that club to internal education rather than to continued recruitment. Yet these factors alone cannot explain why our modest quota of 50 new members set at the last convention was not met, let alone exceeded. An examination of our total work should show why this has been so.

MEMBERSHIP:

Our active membership today is 110, of which 44 are in concentrations; 22 in industry general; 24 non-industrial workers; 8 housewives; 8 functionaries; 4 students.

During the last year we accepted 23 new members; 5 new members are now on probation; 15 were transferred to NY from out-of-town; 17 were transferred out; 8 were sent out of town on assignment; and 10 were dropped from membership.

The recruitment picture is as follows:

		Concentrations	General Industry	Non-industrial
Applications	- 34	19	11	4
Accepted	- 23	14	8	1
On probation	- 5	4	1	
Rejected	- 6	1	2	3

Recruitment by Clubs is as follows:

		Concentration	General Ind.	Non-Ind.
Q1	- 6	6		
Q2	- 5	5		
B2	- 4	2	1	1
B3	- 5	5		
Harlem	- 4		4	
Bronx	- 2		1	1
General	- 5	1	2	2
Reappli- cations	- 3		3	

Of the total number of new members recruited, 8 were Negro members - all industrial workers,

The above recruitment and membership figures reveal the following factors:

1. Recruitment has definitely become a "way of life" for the organization. Most of our activity is now carried on with recruitment as a conscious goal, instead of an incidental thing which might or might not take place.

2. Most of our recruitment was done through our concentration work, and the overwhelming majority of our new members are industrial workers.

3. Of those who did not pass their probation period, only a negligible number were industrial workers. Almost all our new worker members stayed in the organization and became active in it. Our organization is better equipped today to attract and keep industrial workers.

4. One proof of the above is that today, unlike a year ago, we are not worried about "what to do with contacts," "how to get them into the party." It is true, of course, that we have to discuss and plan and work for recruitment; that it doesn't happen by itself. But there certainly is that concern about "bringing new people into the clubs" as there was a year ago and more.

5. Most of the recruitment was done during the first half of the year. Following that period, which itself had come after a time of slow, preparatory work, came a period of integration and education of new members. This in part is responsible for the slowdown in recruitment. Another factor was the loss of one of our concentrations the loss of several of our best "recruiters" who left on other assignments.

6. Although on the whole our attitude towards the recruitment is vastly improved, there are still some comrades who are hesitant in this sphere. In addition, we are still plagued by an old weakness - that of starting on a job, but not following it through to the end. Instead, we tend to let our activities get shifted into other fields which might be more alluring and profitable for the

organization. The result is that we are left with many loose ends - contacts, friends, others who do not become members of the party.

Our membership today is more active today than it was previously, although there are still a few comrades who do not share in one way or another in our work. Following the last convention, the city committee and club organizers combed through the membership for the purpose of activating each one. The result was that 15 members, who for one reason or another, could not undertake any party assignment, were dropped to the status of sympathizer.

During this same period, a number of leading people left town on other assignments. These included several CC members.

THE SITUATION IN THE CLUBS:

Bronx: After a long period of extreme activity on the part of the Bronx membership, who were composed in the main of young enthusiastic people, the club found itself with a very long subscriber and contact list. However, due primarily to the composition of the Bronx club, its youthfulness, etc., the club found it next to impossible to recruit any members into the party from all this work. Its several attempts to hold public meetings fell through because of circumstances completely outside the control of the club or the organization.

The C.C. discussed on several occasions proposals made by this club for "neighborhood work", i.e., involvement in tenant organizations etc., but rejected these proposals on the ground that we did not have the suitable personnel in the club for initiating such activity in the neighborhood. A canvass of the neighborhood revealed no existing organization in which our members could work, so that we would have to be the initiators of such organizations and activities. It was the opinion of the C.C. that we were not in a position to do this unless the Bronx club were re-inforced with new members, which unfortunately the city organization could not supply.

Faced with this situation, an active membership placed in a position where it could not recruit to the party, the C.C. together with the Bronx club, after long deliberation, decided upon the dissolution of the club and the transfer of its members into other clubs where they have continued to be active and in many cases playing leading roles.

As a result of the activity of the Bronx club, however, we have created a certain amount of sympathy for our paper and ideas in the neighborhood, still retain quite a few subscribers who have renewed their subs, have several contacts. At the present time, the Harlem club is following up on this work.

Harlem: This club has turned its attention from work in the Harlem community as a whole to activity which is commensurate with our strength in Harlem. House-to-house distribution of the paper in a housing project has brought in a large number of subscriptions and has given us some excellent contacts. As a result, the club was able to organize a contact class through which two members were recruited to the party.

At the present time, the club is once again in the position of

to organize another contact class with good possibilities for recruitment. In this way the club is building up and getting into a condition where it can intervene in community affairs on a more realistic basis than we have ever been able to do in the past.

A section might be devoted at this point to our "Negro Work." During the past year, the party recruited a greater number of Negro workers than it ever did before. What is more important, however, is that these comrades have remained in the organization and have become a very active part of it, taking leadership in some very important work. Most of these comrades, however, were brought into the party as a result of our concentration work and this in large measure accounts for their speedy integration into our organization. In this sense, Negro work - or work among Negro workers - has now become the task of every club and almost every member and is no longer relegated to special committees.

Q-1: (Report does not include concentration work reported on orally). For the greater part of the year, this club's work was almost exclusively concentration work. With the liquidation of this concentration, and the transfer of many of its members to other clubs, Q-1 is now following up on the contacts of the old concentration. It is also doing some house-to-house activity in connection with the sub drive; general contact work, etc. In this club/the comrades of a new concentration which has still to be formally organized.

The work started by this club in recruitment has in many respects served as a model. It was this concentration which started the organization of contact classes, getting of subs on a large scale, sales of Plenty for All, etc. The particularly favorable conditions of this concentration was naturally very helpful. Nevertheless, this concentration showed a good grasp of what its tasks were in regard to recruitment.

Q-2: (Report does not include actual concentration work). Most, if not all, the work of the club has been in connection with its concentration which has been the most stable of all. From a very small group, this concentration has grown through recruitment and employment of new people to considerable size.

Almost all the members of the club are actively involved in the work of the concentration and the general work is carried out well. Unfortunately, this club still overlooks or relegates to last consideration the specific task of recruitment, with the result that it has some good contacts, but does not get around to bringing them into the organization.

Soon after the last convention, five members were recruited into the club, three of whom had originally been contacted through the School. Since that time, recruitment has come to a complete standstill, although the number of contacts has grown. The integration of the new members has been very good, for the very nature of the club's work immediately involves all members.

At the present time, the club has an added activity in connection with the sub-drive. They are canvassing a housing project and receiving a substantial number of subs.

In the coming period, this club will have to place emphasis upon

the problem of party recruitment, or its excellent concentration work may well go wasted for the party.

B-2: From the largest concentration a year ago, this has now become very small. In the oral report, we pointed out what the circumstances of work were in this concentration, and the limitations this places upon our perspectives there. At the beginning of the year, two members were recruited from this concentration. At the present time, there is prospect for the recruitment of at least one more.

In addition to its concentration work, this club conducts general contacting work and is doing work in a housing project in connection with the sub-drive. There are also three students in this club who are working among youth contacts, getting subs, etc.

B-3: Since the last convention, the work of this club has undergone considerable change. From general contacting, house-to-house work, this club has become one which devotes almost all its energies to its concentration. It is a very new concentration, with most of its members in it not more than six months. To date, two new members have been recruited from one section of this concentration, and one from another. A contact class is now under way which should result in some recruitment. (The problems of this concentration, type of work, etc. were in the oral report.)

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

At the beginning of the year we attempted to have a functioning educational department. The committee met for a while and worked out a number of plans and projects. It was able to publish a few informational, educational bulletins which were to be used by club members. It also met with the club educational directors and assisted in the working out of club educational programs. Beyond that, the department could not longer function as a department for the simple reason that almost every member of it was already overburdened with other party activity.

The WF School which we ran last year was by far our best achievement in this field. Its excellent attendance both by members and non-members alone testifies to this. The continuation of the school as a party institution and its expansion should be one of the things to which we must devote the most serious attention.

In the clubs, most of the educational activity has been devoted in the recent period to the study and review of Marxian fundamentals. For example: B-2 has studied several of the Lenin pamphlets, as has B-3. Harlem and Q-2 have both used the Communist Manifesto as texts for educational work in the clubs. Q-1 has had a class on the principles of the WP.

In addition, almost every club has had functioning study groups, that is, small groups which meet once a week and study together some important piece of literature or a given topic.

At the beginning of the year, most of the discussion in the clubs naturally centered around the issues which came up at our national

convention and this discussion had great educational value for all our members.

PROPAGANDA:

Outside of L.A., whose distribution has declined somewhat during the year (due to loss of one distribution point, shortage of distributors), Plenty for All has been our main propaganda instrument. We do not at the present time have sufficient material which will bridge the gap between L.A. and the party program and it is necessary that we exert the utmost pressure that such pamphlets be issued by the NO immediately.

Plenty for All has had continued good sales as we meet new contacts, but after that we have nothing to give to these contacts other than the NI and the old Marxian classics sold by the Book Service,

We made one attempt to issue a special leaflet addressed to the CP. The distribution of these leaflets was good, but the response was practically nil. Our energies could have been much better expended had we issued a leaflet or pamphlet on some subject like the Labor Party, the No-strike pledge, the transitional program, Re-conversion, etc. and distributed to our contacts.

Our public meetings have played a large role in our propaganda work. The tendency has been for our meetings to grow in size, and to attract more and more the newer contacts we are meeting in the shops. These meetings should be utilized more for recruitment purposes than they have been in the past. From an organizational point of view the meetings are still poorly run and lack the necessary sparkle to make them really peppy and colorful. This problem too merits the most serious attention of the next committee.

SWP:

In view of the fact that we meet members of this organization in almost every one of our fields of endeavor and also because of the special situation in that organization, we must in the coming period establish closer contact with these members. Special attention should now be paid to this work. As a first step, it is necessary to conduct an educational program on the differences between the two organizations and to keep our members fully informed of the developments which are likely to take place in the coming period. The special literature addressed to the SWP must be gotten into the hands of SWP members and every effort made to conduct discussions with them.

DISTRIBUTIONS:

As we stated above, there has been a decline in the circulation of the paper. At the present time we distribute about 5,000 copies per week, in addition to special distributions. This is a drop of about 2,000. Part of the drop was caused by the closing of two places of regular distribution. However, we have found another field for distribution and at the present time this field can be greatly expanded if we can get a sufficient number of comrades to participate in this work.

It has been the unfortunate practice of our organization to so routinize the matter of distributions that many comrades don't attach the necessary importance to this work. Actually next to our work inside the concentrations, the distribution of the paper is the most important activity that we conduct. There are very few places indeed where the distribution of our paper has failed to have important political results.

In the coming period, we shall have to devise means of making this work assume the importance it deserves by organizing our activities accordingly.

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE WORK:

This work, engaged in to some extent by nearly all the clubs, is not, at the present time, a major form of our activity and we do not look to it as a major source of recruitment. Yet, in the opinion of the City Committee, it is wrong to conceive of this work as utterly useless. If nothing else were accomplished by it - and this is not the case - our paper and organization become popularized among large sections of people in this way. However, this work has offered us the opportunity of meeting some very good contacts. In the coming period, the organization of this work, and the interchange between clubs of contacts, etc. will have to be better organized in order that we may get the best and most out of this work.

CITY COMMITTEE:

The organizational weakness of the committee is manifest at first glance. Practically every member of the committee is so involved in his particular sphere of work, club, concentration, etc., as to be able to devote very little time to general, departmental work of the committee itself. Our several attempts to strengthen the city office but at least another part-time worker have fallen through. In addition to that, during the course of the year, five of the original nine members of the committee left, either to out-of-town assignments or for special reasons.

As a result of this situation it has proven impossible to have a functioning educational department, labor department, person in charge of distributions, etc. This is the first time in the history of the NY organization that we have had only one functionary - and at a time when the number of our activities has been growing.

The committee therefore tried to act on all these matters in committee. Labor problems were discussed at greater length by this CC and it took a more active part in the formulation of policy. It also did this with regard to educational work. This CC tried to act on a number of other political questions, namely the ALP problems, our role in the concentrations, etc.

YOUTH WORK:

In the past period, the number of young sympathizers and contacts that we have been making has been growing. We have several young comrades who can now begin to work with these contacts for the purpose of organizing them. Action on the proposals which are now being discussed should be taken immediately after the city convention.

Among those proposals is that we attempt to organize some sort of youth forum, run entirely by these contacts and sympathizers and in which our members will function. This forum or club should have as its main aim at the present time educational activity, social activity, etc. In it, naturally, our comrades will present the point of view of the party and try to give direction.

The next CC should have on it one person who will be able to devote himself to the problems of this work.

(The work on concentrations and concrete perspectives in that field were reported on orally. These should be discussed in the clubs and will be discussed and acted on at the convention.)

SUMMARY:

In the opinion of the City Committee, the NY organization has made a good deal of progress in the last year. We have more than "held our own." That is, we have grown through recruitment, and in the last year our influence has grown even more. In a great many situations, where a year ago we were outsiders looking in and having something to say about what ought to be done, today we are active factors and what we have to say counts.

There are almost daily inquiries from all kinds of people about what the party thinks on this or that question, what the paper would say about this or that situation, etc.

We are in the concentrations and our problems now are mainly on how to do things rather than what to do. The best work of course is carried out by those who made the turn when it was first proposed and have stuck to this kind of work.

The NY organization still continues to supply forces for our out-of-town work,

PERSPECTIVES:

1 - Recruitment: This point to be discussed by clubs, with each club reporter bringing to the city convention the concrete perspectives for the club.

There are a number of friends and contacts who can be recruited into the organization in the coming period without very much effort.

2 - School: Build up the WP school as an institution which will be able to run classes for members and non-members, organize study groups, prepare outlines of study, run lectures and forums.

3 - Sub Drive: To go over the top of our quota. Upon conclusion of LA drive, to start an MI drive.

- 4 - Distributions: To raise our distributions to at least 7,000 by the addition of two more distribution points.
- 5 - Party Center: To work towards the establishment of a NY party center, where classes, lectures, forums, can be held. A Headquarters which can be kept open evenings, etc.
- 6 - Youth Work: Immediate action on the formation of a youth group as outlined above.

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