

BUFFALO REPORT
MARCH, 1949

The following was the perspective for the Buffalo Branch in Nov. 1947:

- (1) Recruit members to the W.P.
- (2) Develop an additional cadre
- (3) Widen our base in the shop
- (4) Widen our periphery of general contacts
- (5) Make the W.P. known as a "force" in the city, through public stands on issues, such as transportation, gas distribution, Indonesia, etc. and through public meetings, letters to the editor, speaking before the city council, etc.
- (6) Utilize the five members we had just recruited from the SWP to drive a greater wedge into their branch. To generally wage an offensive against the SWP, not as a primary activity, but in the course of our other activity.

This report should be read with the objective of discovering (1) whether the perspectives were right or wrong; (2) whether the methods and procedures were adequate or inadequate; (3) what our future perspective should be; (4) whether the conditions of the Buffalo Branch can throw some light on the national problem of the W.P.

This report covers a long period, Nov. '47 to March '49. It encompasses periods of intensive activity with periods of deadening lull, exhilarating successes with chilling setbacks. For long intervals of time we ran an excellent series of socials and political meetings with as many as 123 in attendance. For other intervals of time we had no social or political meeting of any kind. We made some extraordinary financial contributions to the fund drive and to the special fund drive. At the same time we have some extraordinary debts to the National Office.

Neither the heights nor the depths are characteristic of the branch. We have increased in size steadily for the past 3 years. We have earned an enviable reputation in the local UAW, on the campus, at several small groups like the YMCA, the NAACP, for a while, and the AVC while it lasted.

We have always made every effort to participate in as many organizations as possible. Since the writing of the last report, organizations like the NAACP and the AVC have completely dissolved.

One can see that there is no mention of any campaigns. Neither rent, housing, prices, nor electoral. Many were surprised that Buffalo did not have any candidates in the '48 elections on the theory that any five active comrades can run a campaign. It is our opinion that a campaign can bear fruit only after some real base has been laid in the city for it. The publicity that a campaign might have gotten us would have been temporary and likely would not have yielded us any members. Instead it probably would have taken valuable time that was more profitably spent in duller but more fruitful work.

We had four main areas of activity: (1) The shop; (2) The campus; (3) Socials and political meetings; (4) Internal education.

We recruited 3 members from the shop. On the campus we recruited 2 members to the branch and five members to the SYL. We maintained our headquarters and enlarged our periphery as a result of our social-political program. We had a sustained educational program more extensive than any we have had before.

The activity of the Buffalo Branch and the lack of it, the gains and the losses, the high morale and the low are recorded below for you to judge for yourself. If any conclusion can be drawn from our experience and succinctly put, it is this:

- (1) Our shop orientation and shop activities have been the base of the branch. They gave the branch perspective. Their sustained character gave the branch stability in low periods. Participation in trade union matters can be credited with keeping the Buffalo branch from becoming completely provincial and isolated. Though the concern with our shop problems, the UAW as a whole, we maintained a real concern about the W. P. in Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Frisco, Pittsburgh, Seattle, New York, etc.
- (2) Though we functioned more or less to the best of our ability, we could not function as a small edition of a mass party or anything like it.
- (3) Our social-political program is and probably will be the second most important branch activity.
- (4) Though our educational program was the most extensive that we ever had, it could not substitute, in terms of political growth of our new members for a genuine political milieu which Buffalo does not have.
- (5) We conflicted with the SWP on a wide variety of fronts and though we never descended to their level of struggle, demonstrated that our positions and methods were far more attractive to the shop workers, mutual contacts, and in other groups in the city. We have grown steadily in the past 3 years in members and shop influence. The SWP has become smaller and smaller in members and has lost most of their much vaunted control in local trade union situations.

The problems facing the branch today are:

1. Control of several trade unions has been wrested from the SWP and/or other opposition by the Reuther group. As our members play an important role in these Reuther groups they will be almost completely involved in trade union work which will necessitate a great deal of help from other branch members.
2. To what extent should we be a group aspiring after the public eye? Letters to the editor, news releases, public stands, etc. This is tied up with the problem of a local newspaper campaign against the SWP. This newspaper published the names of the SWP, personal slanders, and the names of all the workers who attended some of their meetings. The attack of the newspaper has been against Trotskyism. Trotskyism to them and to the workers means the tactics of the SWP (elaborated in the addendum to the report). It is impossible for us to develop the line that we are the "good" trotskysts and that they are the "bad" trotskysts. This problem of our branch must be dealt with at the convention.
3. The two factors above have a great deal to do with the vitality of the branch. We cannot expect to be "hitting the bricks" with Indonesian picket lines, Labor Action sales or demonstrations. The decline (at least temporarily) of AVC, NAACP, etc. has narrowed the scope of extra shop activity. Some adjustments can be made. We may try to start a women's club similar to Chicago. Thus our three facets of

future activity seem to be: (1) the shop; (2) internal education; (3) social and political program. The nature of our social-political program is in doubt. Can we afford to have our members bring workers to hear Shachtman....and be in the papers the next day...or worse...on the day before their elections? Yet not to invite them means no Social-Political program. We can only begin to handle this problem when we have clear: (1) the nature of our party; (2) a definitive position on our relations with the SWP and "Trotskyism".

MEMBERSHIP

In December, 1946 we had 14 members

In November, 1947 we had 24 members

In March, 1949 we have 29 members plus 5 SYL

There is a total of 5 people who are almost completely inactive (a) by reason of a leave of absence; (b) by residence in a nearby city.

Two members are in bad financial standing who are functioning very well in their respective shops.

Eleven work in shops, 6 white collar, 5 housewives, 5 students, 1 union official, 1 functionary.....plus 5 SYL students.

We recruited over this period 8 branch members, lost 3 ---5 additional
We recruited over this period 7 SYL members, lost 2 ---5 additional

Branch meetings had as many as 25 - 30 people for long periods of time. For other long periods 10 - 14 people made up the regular participants. The problem is the age old one of incessant, oftentimes boring meetings. More and more special interest events are needed to keep branch meetings alive.

FINANCES

We maintained our headquarters at \$40 per month
We spent over \$200 building a stage, painting, shelving, etc.
We ran a raffle and took in about \$100
We collected \$800 for the fund drive....\$200 over our quota
We collected \$625 in three days for special fund drive
We OWE to the national office: \$ 232.00 (approximately)
We OWE to the branch treasury: \$ 106.00

TRADE UNION CONCENTRATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION:

In Dec. '46 we had the following trade union composition: 8 members in five shops, divided in this manner: 3, 2, 1, 1, 1; two of these were barely in the party and we lost them. One was transferred to New York.

In Nov. '47 our trade union composition was: 9 members in shops divided in the following way: 2, 1, 2, 4. The shops are listed in the same order as above. One can observe a slight shift of fractions. One fraction was composed of completely new people. All fractions were led by members who have been in the movement if not the Party for more than six years. Subsequently we lost two members in concentration D and one member transferred to another plant because of layoff.

Our present composition is: 11 members in shops divided as follows: 3, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1. Shops are listed in same order as above, plus additional ones. There is good reason to believe that re-hiring will concentrate our members still further.

Our trade union work can be summarised here as follows:

1. We recruited 5 shop workers and have held four. There is, of course, a great deal of integration that must take place before these members are firmly rooted in the branch.
2. We industrialized two members who were transferred into Buffalo. They were working in UAW shops. They left Buffalo for personal reasons.
3. We extended our scope of operations in the shop. Our members are playing a leading role in four major union situations.
4. Our members have played an aggressive role in the CIO Council, PAC Conferences, Educational conferences, Area-wide caucus and general meetings, etc.
5. Our relations to the Reuther leadership are excellent. We have won their respect and have cooperated with them wherever possible.
6. Our members played a leading role in breaking the first major Westinghouse plant out of the hands of the CP. They are now in a toe to toe battle with the SWP who have taken off where the CP ended.
7. We sold about 150 subs to LA in the shops.
8. We did not correspond regularly with the Labor Secretary.

We suffered as most other places do from the exigencies of fate. After placing three comrades in one UAW shop they all left for personal reasons. Two who had just colonized in Buffalo - de-colonized. The other left Buffalo also. One friend of our spent 9 months in a plant, was fired for "lying" on his application blank. His work had been perfectly satisfactory. All the cooperation possible was given us by the UAW international....but he stayed fired. Layoffs shunted quite a few of our members around just when they were in good positions. These handicaps have not prevented us from making this our most fruitful period of shop activity.

SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE:

In January, 1948 we received a letter signed by the National Chairman of the WP requesting us to assign one comrade to Youth work. An organizer for the SYL was appointed by the E.C. With partial assistance of two other members, the SYL organizer soon recruited several members to the SYL, who formed themselves into an organizing committee for the SYL. Full cooperation was given to the SYL committee by way of use of branch headquarters, supplies, instructors for classes, etc.

Today we have an SYL unit of 8 members....three of whom are also party members. Their contribution to branch life has been extremely valuable. They have brought as many as 35 to our biggest meeting and always bring about six to a dozen to our socials.

The branch is proud of the part it played in forming and maintaining the SYL unit and will continue to give it all the support possible.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY:

We had four facets of educational activity since the last report.

1. For some time we tried the following method. We divided the branch up into several groups. Each group was to be led by an experienced member. They were to discuss problems that had bearing upon their activity or related to their particular interest. This plan went along well for only a short time. The instructors were exceedingly busy with shop activities and the plan was too elaborate under the circumstances. One or two of the groups went on meeting for a longer period and were very satisfied with the procedure.
2. We managed to make branch educationals interesting for some time. We had several well planned 3 or 4 month programs which were well prepared. The big difficulty with branch educationals is that they come EVERY WEEK, week in and week out. The pressure on the speakers is great and the rest of the branch get tired of hearing the same people all the time. We feel that we might have spread the educational work a little deeper in the branch ranks.
3. We planned an elaborate "school" which met once a week for about 12 weeks which traced the history of the socialist movement, the Russian revolution, degeneration of Russia and the left opposition, formation of the Trotskyist movement in the United States, SWP-WP split, positions of the Workers Party. This class was a branch assignment, and an SYL assignment. Attendance was fairly good throughout. Once again however, the branch was listening to the same people, on Tuesday and Sunday.
4. The SYL meeting on Friday has an educational program each week. Again major educational burden had to be carried by the same people. The Tuesday, Friday and Sunday schedule was pretty rigid one to meet.

The school is now finished and we plan to have one or two informal discussion groups.

It is the opinion of the branch that our educational program was better than anything they had ever known in other organizations like the CP or the SWP. It did not solve the problem of educating the branch. Perhaps this is expecting too much from any educational program. Buffalo pays an untold price for being...Buffalo... and not New York or Chicago or Frisco. Our new comrades just aren't in a political milieu that gets them on their toes and keeps them there. We can and do engender temporary flushes of enthusiasm. It is difficult, if possible, to sustain it.

SOCIALS AND POLITICAL MEETINGS:

A mere listing of the affairs we had gives one some insight into the program:

2. Dec. '47 Social---At this social we picked up an idea from the party builder sent in by the Cleveland branch. They suggested that skits be written and parts bid for by the branch. We made a small fortune on this affair and had a great time to boot. It began the most successful social program in our branch experience.
3. Jan. '48 New Year's Eve Party with a full fledged show---This was a swell affair. We made a profit for the first time at such a big affair. About 60-70 present.
1. Dec. '47 Public Meeting for Shachtman---55 in attendance---gained one member. Financial loss---\$20. (this should be listed first)
4. Feb. '48 Monte Carlo Night---We hired a real roulette wheel, dice, cards and phoney money and had a Labor Action Casino night. Had fun...made money.

5. March '48 Garrett Meeting----One of the smallest meetings we have ever had, but one of the best in composition. It lasted till the wee hours and left us with some excellent contacts. We made money on the meeting though expenses included Garrett's fare and three days in Buffalo.
6. April '48 Social with full show.
7. May Day: Coolidge --- 70-odd. Seven or eight people came from the university for the first time. Shop fractions brought a good part of the audience. Made money on the meeting over Coolidge's expenses.
8. Just a plain ordinary social with cards, dancing, etc.
9. June --- Meeting with Jason speaking on the Chrysler strike. This was immediately after the strike and it was a "coup" for the branch much as the debate we organized the year before for Ben Hall. EVERY PERSON IN THE ROOM WAS AN L.A. SUBSCRIBER. Some 50 attended. We made money on the meeting though we paid Jason's expenses.
10. The Summer period: (1) We ran one very successful picnic, taking carloads of people to a combination beach and park. We made money at the picnic by charging for transportation and for cold drinks we brought along.

In this period we decided to redecorate our headquarters again. We built a stage..built shelves, tables, painted, bought shades, etc. We spent \$200 improving the headquarters. The money was raised in part by a raffle. The job was very difficult to accomplish as none of us were painters or carpenters. Our stage alone cost about \$90. We put enough wood in it for six houses. But the activity made us feel that the summer was not wasted. We had a really sharp headquarters to start the fall season.

11. Oct. '48 Shachtman meeting: This was really our high point! We sold some 40-50 tickets in advance. 123 people showed up at the meeting, overflowing our hall. The composition was excellent. S.P., SWP, Anarchists, CP, 10 Wallacites, local union officials, 35 students, the rest workers from the shops. We made money on this meeting including Shachtman's expenses.
12. Social with a show two weeks after Shachtman's meeting with 80 in attendance. Had a full show. Made money on the social.
13. Nov. '48 Draper Meeting: Excellent meeting, about 60-70. Made money on this meeting also.
14. Shmoo For Socialism Night: Or plain social with a theme. Made Money.
15. New Year's Eve Show: Big affair--- 70 plus. Make money.

The Socials and political meetings gave a tremendous vitality to branch life. 70-80 people in our headquarters every three or four weeks was exhilarating and a great morale builder. We sold literature, paid our rent more easily, carried ice, cleaned the headquarters, wrote the newsletter and mailed it out, rehearsed for shows, etc.

It is important to observe that....we made money on our affairs. We made money not only at the Socials, but at the political meetings which are usually written off in our party as losses. The secret is simple. We finished our speeches early, placed two trustworthy members at the doors to keep people in the room, and served

attractive refreshments. Two and three hours after the speaker had concluded there were people dancing, playing cards, drinking, just as if we had started with a social.

Since New Year's Eve (49 we have had no political or social function of any kind.

The convention changes upset our schedule, some of the people were a little tired, but the two main things were: (1) we did not have a functioning social committee or social director after that date; (2) general activity in the area dropped off somewhat through no fault of our own.

The Newsletter which we developed as a part of our social-political program was of great value to us in terms of drawing people to the headquarters and in terms of maintaining friendly contact with our periphery. It was usually carefully typed with attractive letterheads, ads and contained some short, newsy items of local interest.

Immediately after the convention we hope to start a new series of social and political meetings that will carry us to New Year's 1950.

LITERATURE:

We did better this year than ever before in the literature field. We sold around \$150 worth of literature. Our best job in literature was the sale of around 150 subs to Labor Action, almost exclusively in the shops. The Labor Action sub card can be credited for this success. We have been delinquent in getting renewals. This we should be able to correct in the near future.

The "FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM" was our best-moving piece of literature. It got an excellent reception among workers and students. We have not done much on the Labor Party pamphlet so far but we feel we can take care of our bundle of 200 after a while. We have sold 140 bulletins in this period. We sold about N.I.'s per month. For quite some time we sold 20-odd Labor Actions at plant gates every week. For better than a year we have hardly sold 10 single copies of Labor Action. The fact that we have not been able to use Labor Action for sale lately is due, in our opinion, to factors other than willingness or unwillingness of our members to go out on sales.

VETERAN'S WORK:

The veterans chapter of the AVC collapsed. We are not active in any other veteran's organization.

NEGRO WORK:

We played an active ^{role} /in the formation of a youth group in the NAACP which temporarily netted us quite a few contacts. The group collapsed thru no fault of ours.

RELIEF:

We sent three enormous shipments to Europe. We sent one of these thru the ACEWR and two shipments thru Nancy McDonald. We plan to ship any further relief direct to Europe. Funds are, of course, the greatest problem in relief.

Report on West Virginia Branch

11 Jan 49

This report is submitted as pre-convention discussion material in accordance with the letter of Oct 25 1948 from the Director of Organization. For the sake of convenience, topics are listed in the report as they were listed in Comrade Gould's letter.

1. Political Activities. The party has not attempted to run any campaigns or to show its face openly to the community. Political action in the name of the Party or even on an Independent Labor candidate basis would be very difficult here at present because the recent local democratic ticket was made up almost entirely of leading figures from the UMW locals. It was necessary for us to assure several friendly UMW leaders that the WP would not "split the vote" in some mysterious way which they feared because of our labor party agitation. During the campaign, the county Democratic Chairman went so far as to state that the Democratic Party was a labor party, and was engaged in pursuing the class struggle!

If we were not successful in a positive way, we had certain real successes in a negative way. At the height of the Wallace wave our county was invaded by Wallaceites from a nearby city where a CP branch exists, in an effort to get roots here. They went naturally to UMW leaders, Negro leaders, and campus leaders. In several cases the people they contacted were actually members of our branch. In the remainder of the cases, we were in touch with the people they contacted, and quickly and completely scotched any Wallace movement whatsoever, thus keeping the area our own "preserve," except for minor SWP activity.

However, at present our "political" activity has a new arena, due to a rather advanced PAC-type development here. Before the election, all the unions in the area came together in a "Democratic Labor Committee" to back the union members who made up the democratic slate. The committee campaigned independently of the Democratic machine and had the advantage of including -- and quite without friction, too -- the AFL, CIO, UMW, District 50 and Rail Brotherhoods. When the Democrats swept the election locally, largely through the work of the labor committee, the committee decided to become permanent and function on a year-round basis. Although keeping the word Democrat in its name, it now declared itself non-partisan. Then, with the hearteningly simple and direct good sense of local unionists not under the watchful eye of the orthodox top bureaucracy, it decided that the NAACP should be in a labor political organization and invited them in with full rights, an invitation enthusiastically accepted. Noting this, the local AVC (see below) applied for admission on the basis that veterans should also be represented in a labor political movement. The AVC was also welcomed, thus bringing in simultaneously students and veterans.

State legislators and county commissioners belong to and accept instructions from the body, which is made up of three delegates from each local union and other affiliated body. It is busily concerning itself with all the affairs of the community -- schools, hospitals, smoke abatement, social work agencies, and so on. In addition, it

carries on spirited educational work. Publicity has been excellent.

In short, we have here a labor party which need only cut its umbilical cord to the democrats! By the time this is published, we shall have several delegates, with prospects for more.

2. Local campaigns. Under the name of the party, none.

3. Trade Union Work. A prefatory note is necessary here. It is to be hoped that the visits of many comrades to this area, together with sober accounts of the UMW published from time to time in Labor Action, have at least started to dispel any illusions that the party may have about the UMW. (It should be added parenthetically that the Militant continues to enhance the widespread illusions about the UMW in the labor and radical movement in a disgustingly dishonest manner, comparable only to the CP's sins in this field.)

It is universally known in our movement that Lewis himself is bureaucratic, tyrannical, politically reactionary, and brutal. It is not realized how these traits seep down throughout the union and poison it.

When opposition threatens -- or more properly, when opposition even begins to threaten to threaten -- it is met with physical violence. This is not uniformly true only because of the inefficiency of the bureaucracy. When we write of goon squad beatings, we are not writing historically, either. It has happened here recently to a local president whom the writer knows personally.

In addition to Lewis's well known tactical brilliance and flair for Shakespearean rhetoric, he also has the psychology of a 19th century robber baron and the methodology of a Tammany political boss. His own pay is \$50,000 a year plus his rent free Washington mansion. The vice-president and secretary-treasurer get along on \$40,000, and Lewis's philosophy of why men serve the causes they do is applied to the lowest office in the smallest local. All local officers are reimbursed, and not stingily. I write it sadly, but this has become the main motivation for holding office. Many UMW locals are robbed blind by their own officers. There are happy exceptions, of course.

An example of what we mean was the action taken when retirement pensions were finally added to other benefits derived from the Health and Welfare fund. With the reasoning of a Girdler, Lewis announced that the increased benefits justified increased dues and initiation fees, and these items were promptly raised to \$4 and \$50 respectively. Another aspect of the Health and Welfare fund is instructive. A retired miner gets his pension by slipping \$10 or \$20 to the local union official who processes the forms!

The aggregate of these factors, plus another important one, makes the UMW local shockingly weak. The other factor is the nature of the industry. The auto workers and rubber workers are strong, basically because modern capitalism has organized thousands of workers under one roof and put them to work under a system of division of labor that teaches cooperation.

The coal industry, like the railroads, is an "old" industry in the U.S. economy, and therefore antiquated and backward, an industrial condition reflected even more strongly in the miners union, as in

the railroaders union.

The average mine local has about 300 men in all, split up in three different shifts, with each shift scattered while at work over miles of dark tunnels. The effect of this is the opposite of the effect of the auto industry on its workers.

We must add here that the mines are at present seeing the start of a tremendous program of rationalization, concentration, and mechanization, the effects of which are only beginning to be felt. One result will probably be a strike this year for a 30 hour week which, among other things, should tear Truman's present friend of labor pose to ribbons.

Given all the above conditions, the local union in the UMW, as opposed to the international, do not discharge their functions. Safety regulations are not enforced as they should be; grievance settlement is spotty, and there is a good deal of cynicism in the rank and file. We have fractions in two mine locals, one of which is a better than average local. We hold several offices in this one. To date, all we have attempted is the improvement of the functioning of the local on a trade union level. This will have to be the perspective for some time to come, and any notable success will be no mean achievement.

We also have a fraction in the glass industry, the second most important industry in the county. This fraction was established out of necessity. Rationalization plus overproduction has made mine jobs completely unobtainable. An apparently permanent surplus of miners is already beginning to develop.

The glass plant is unionized and contains a number of young people. We hope to make it an "entre" to the Democratic Labor Committee mentioned above. We have a similar perspective, of course, with regard to the mine locals.

4. We have six people in an alive and aggressive AVC chapter. The chapter has consistently and consciously followed the program of the Labor Wets Group. The chapter is influential among alert and political students on campus and has, as indicated above, made good connections with the labor movement. Its perspective is to leave the campus, where it is now a nominally campus organization, and become a labor chapter in the community.

The chapter conducted a widely publicized fight against the appearance of the Austrian-clerico-fascist emigre, von Schuschnigg, when he was scheduled to appear as a University Convocation speaker. It has maintained an excellent series of speakers, symposiums, etc., for two years. When the chapter is transferred to the community as a labor chapter, it will be possible to link up veteran and union work more effectively.

5. Labor Action and The New International. It has been impossible to get LA and NI on newsstands to date. The NI is "peddled" person to person on campus, as is the Student Partisan, both of which are well received. Our fairly large circle of students and minor sympathizers are all subscribers, in the case of the miners, to LA alone.

6. Negro Work. Although the branch contains Negro members, there has been no specific Negro work because the problems of the Negro miner are so specifically linked to those of the white miner that there has so far been no genuine opportunity for Negro work as such. The branch has excellent contact among Negroes and contains one of the leaders of the Negro community. The AVC cooperates closely with the active local chapter of the NAACP.

7. Membership. At present, 14, including seven miners, two retired miners, one unemployed miner, three glass workers, and one part time student - the organizer. Of these, one miner is inactive and two may move to another community. Several months ago, one member of the branch was transferred to the Buffalo branch, and a contact from here is now in the Chicago SYL. Several miner and several student contacts are "in sight" as recruits in the near future.

8. Functioning of executive committee. This has been spotty. Because of the two rather sharply divided areas of work, there are in reality two informal executives.

9. Functioning of the branch. Branch meetings are a clearing house for the three trade union fractions and the vet fraction. A good deal of time is spent on education. Socials, although too infrequent, have an excellent effect in bringing the branch together.

10. Weaknesses of branch. One weakness is lack of a headquarters. The branch really needs two - one near the campus and one in the coal fields. It has neither. What space is available has so far been out of reach financially. No one who lives in Morgantown proper has a house, which makes impossibles socials or any large political gatherings. The miners' homes are also too small for large gatherings - in reality, too small for branch meetings, although that is where they are held.

A second weakness is lack of transportation. The only car in the branch is largely unavailable because the owner needs it to commute back and forth to work. Since the branch is spread out over ten miles of town, village and country, coordination and communication is very difficult.

A third problem is a hostile atmosphere. A small local branch of the S/P here is staffed and lead by Johnsonites of the jet-propelled variety. Some months ago they capped the climax of a lurid series of escapades by being exposed and fired and blacklisted in one of the nearby mines. The resultant excitement has left an atmosphere of suspicion, distrust, and hostility which we still feel. It has forced us to be less open than was previously possible. Similar antics took place in AVC and on campus. Although the Johnsonites have now for some time been very quiet, isolated and apparently almost inactive, their "heritage" is still with us.

A fourth difficulty is coordination of students and miners. Although the branch is at present all in industry except for the organizer, five industrialized people are former students, three of them college graduates. To a great extent, their interests are still primarily in the intellectual world. A paradox exists in that, in one sense,

our many fine contacts on campus are a handicap, since they keep the former students occupied to the extent that work in the mine fields suffers. The divergencies in age are also a problem, running from 17 to 70.

11. Education. Formal classes for members and contacts in the past year have been on Socialism, Utopian and Scientific; State and Revolution; and Fascism and Big Business. They averaged about eight people. At present there are no formal classes due to the pre-convention period, but sympathizers and contacts attend pre-convention discussions. A class is at present under way after branch meetings on the history of the Miners union. Branch educations have dealt with Wallace, various other aspects of the elections, the role of the union bureaucracy, the civil rights program, etc.

12. Public Meetings. Speakers at public meetings in the past year have included Comrades McKinney, Garret, and Maxwell of New York, Sifakis and Freeman of Pittsburg, Clark of Cleveland and McDermott and Williams of West Virginia. Fifteen people from here heard Comrade Shachtman on his recent tour in Pittsburg.

13. Student work. In addition to AVC and educational classes, a Politics type club, similar to the one at the University of Chicago, is in the process of organization. It has not been formed to date for lack of a meeting place, but one is now in prospect.

14. Relief. No international relief work has been carried on because the branch itself contains two severe hardship cases. Money and clothing has gone to them.

15. Morale. Being subjective, it is hard to appraise on paper precisely. One big problem is the adjustment of intellectuals to an area which is provincial, cramped, backward and relatively uncultured. Rightly or wrongly, they would like to break lances in some metropolis. In addition, with the mines not hiring at present, the remaining jobs open are at a very low wage scale. Further, there are no women in the branch and almost none in the periphery.

Among the miner comrades, who are generally far advanced politically over the average miner, the most disheartening thing is the backwardness of their fellow workers. One of our comrades is a former CP organizer, one a former SLP'er, one a former Wobbly. Comrade Williams, for instance, has been in the struggle forty years, and while he is not a "tired radical", it is a hard grind.

It is a source of joy to note that "political" morale is in no wise a problem. To the writer's knowledge, no one questions the validity of our theories, the future of the working class or the role our party is destined to play. Which is not to say we are naive, or have grandiose notions.

16. Perspective. This has actually been covered in earlier sections. We are in mass organizations, we have contacts, and we are recruiting. We need to get a headquarters, to develop more of a miner cadre and to raise our educational level. We hope to do these things.

Gerald McDermott
West Virginia Branch.

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From the Active Workers Conference to today the party membership has declined gradually from 40 to 32. At that time, however, there was no SYL unit and several of the 40 would have been youth members normally. Today we have an SYL unit of 17, of whom 6 are dual members, so that actually the Chicago movement is just about the same size now as then. It must be recognized, however, that on the whole the level of activity of the party as a unit (not in terms of what its members do in other organizations) is a good deal lower today.

Some parts of the Chicago picture are amazingly good, but these good parts are threatened and undermined by the lack of any real branch life. If we omit the dual members, who after all are not obligated to attend branch meetings, we find that the average weekly branch attendance is only half of the rest or slightly less. During a period of eight months, when we experimented with two branches, South Side and Central, the latter composed mostly of the older and more settled (or rather bogged down) members, failed to function, skipping most meetings, failing to attract any contacts whatever, unable even to produce a branch exec that would meet or function.

The branches were merged shortly after the SYL unit was founded, and in the midst of the preconvention discussion, so that there has been no opportunity as yet to see if a program of planned forums, combined with literature and contact work, can be successfully carried out. Beginning March 23th, we occupy the most satisfactory hq. we have yet encountered. Until last August we were saddled with a big hq. that kept us in a permanent financial crisis, and that was too poorly located to attract many people anyway. In August we moved unto an office that was economical and very conveniently located, but with a seating capacity of only 25. Now we have a still cheaper office, a few blocks away, with the free use of a large meeting hall. For the first time in years we can run forums and socials in a fairly central location, and take advantage of an economical setup to devote money to other activities.

But the main problem will remain - that of mobilizing for branch activities members who are not primarily active in mass organizations, and who in age, length of time in the movement (and number of babies per couple) are the oldest anywhere in the CP. And tied in with this problem goes that of creating an atmosphere that will make it feasible to bring down and integrate new people. Failing this, any development in Chicago will be similar to that of the recent period, in which certain areas of work advanced only because they were insulated from any connection with the branch.

We can now turn to the various places where we carry on activity:

Trade Union

There are two UAW fractions, of three and two members. All industrial activity centers around these. There are several scattered union members in the branch, in addition, but these, for legitimate reasons, are not active as unionists, except for one comrade who is a delegate to the CIO Council.

All five of our UAW people have been entrenched in their shops for a long time. All are widely known in the shops, and our leading people are probably better known in the UAW nationally than any comrades in other cities. They have developed a large periphery of close and devoted supporters in the union, and a few advanced political contacts, but on the whole political education has been neglected. The tendency has been for the union comrades to avoid bringing contacts to meetings whose atmosphere wouldn't be "right". But this is only half the truth because nothing was done to assemble contacts in any other way.

Our larger fraction just lost a local election that was featured by the dirtiest smear campaign we've ever seen. Antisemitic propaganda, charges of corruption, printed stickers saying "Kick the Trotsky men out" etc. Most of the people in our group lost by less than 50 votes out of 1700 cast, and even this happened only through a technicality that cost us about 75 votes. Our position thus remains unquestionably strong and our comrades may have been done an indirect service by being freed of all union responsibilities for a while. They can try to develop some of the 75 people who worked in an organized fashion for their caucus.

The other UAW fraction is by no means as influential. Here we are tolerated (and needed) junior partners to a conservative Reutherite administration. We have a couple of dozen stewards and committeemen who share our criticisms of the administration, but up to now, if we were to split and run a third ticket, we would still come out third in this very large plant. The situation inside our administration caucus is that of an armed truce and there is now shaping up a fight that may enable us to combine with other militant elements to fight the extreme right wing of the caucus. We see it the local paper, and the comrade in charge, who has done a good job, has been helped by many articles written by our non-unionists.

There are several SYL members in Chicago interested in going into shops and every effort will be made to get them into UAW plants. This might serve to strengthen the fractions in general and also to stimulate political work in the shops.

Work and Educational League

This group has now been in existence for two years. It is composed of about half party members, the rest being sympathizers or personal friends. The central aim around which all activities are organized is European relief. Last year over \$600 was spent by this group, and five families were maintained, more than any WP branch has been able to support. League affairs have been of all kinds. In the past year they have sponsored a rummage sale, a lecture by Bruno Bettelheim on the concentration camps, a theater party for children, a lecture on sex education, a symposium on the artist and politics, several joint affairs with the WP, and some political talks by our people. Now a fiesta is being planned, the proceeds to go to Spanish families. On the whole this group has done very well.

AVC

The fact that Labor Vets Bulletin is issued by a Chicago AVCer has sufficed to make us a storm center in the whole Chicago AVC, but actually very few of our people are active there. In the UofC chapter we have one very vocal member, two others who provide strictly moral support and several sympathizers and independent radicals who have been drawn to us by our stand. We definitely play a role in this chapter, which is still one of the largest in the country.

Outside of the UofC, we have one comrade who is chairman of a small medical school chapter, and two others who hold membership in a chapter but do not participate in any activity. We also have several contacts in other chapters.

Negro work

Recently this work has gone down almost to nothing. But last year we participated in the picketing campaign initiated by CORE against a big Loop department store, demanding the hiring of Negro sales personnel. CORE is the Committee of Racial Equality. It exists nationally, but in most places merely as a small group of pacifists, SP'ers and militant Negroes. Chicago is the one place where it has flourished. Here it has hundreds of members paying the nominal dues, and a weekly attendance of 30 to 40 from whom real activity can be obtained. It has

conducted several successful campaigns and is well known to the Chicago Black Belt. Leadership here is in the hands of Negroes and white radicals, not pacifists. It is a motley group -- Yipsels, ex-Ochlocrites, but mostly just plain militants. Many CORE members have come to our affairs, a few to forums. It is only in the last few months that we have had almost no contact with them. This is one of the matters that must be corrected now that the convention discussion period is over. Furthermore the fact that the largest chapter in the country is not pacifist may alert our comrades elsewhere to the possibility of making CORE nationally a center for militant activity for Negro equality.

Independent Political Action

Everyone has read a bout the Independent Krueger-for-Congress campaign. While the S.P. unquestionably was the dominant force in the Steering Committee, this campaign was not just an S.P. front. Over 200 people in a single congressional district were active in the campaign. Of these a half-dozen were WP'ers. Our activities were strictly rank-and-file, but most campaigners became aware of our presence. Naturally our influence was greatest in the campus committee, and the good contacts that we made came from the campus.

The Steering Committee had so watered down their approach in the campaign that the results on Election Day (Krueger's vote was many times Norman Thomas' but only on a scale similar to the Wallaceite vote in other Illinois districts) were crushing to them. The committee continually emphasized how you could combine precinct work for Krueger with work for Truman or Thomas or Wallace or Paul Douglas and Adlai Stevenson. Thus the whole campaign came to be a campaign for one "good" man for Congress against two "bad" ones. On these terms, how many votes Krueger got was the all-important thing.

After the campaign the whole Campaign Committee membership was called together to decide on its future. The right wing SP'ers - Krueger, Diamond, Garfinkel - kept stalling any decision to continue the organization, despite motions passed to the contrary, and as a result the organization declined to the point where it had to be buried. This right wing group is now busily engaged in soul-searching to decide whether to make a career in the Democratic Party.

Meanwhile there is a new development - the setting up of Political Action Clubs based on the union workers. This is a project in which UAW people mainly are interested, and it is very important because it takes the initiative out of the hands of PAC Committee whose activity consists of sending out a mailing the week before election day, and instead actually organizes workers for political action (even if the wrong kind). Such a club has been set up successfully by Willoughby Abner of UAW, vice-chairman of the Chicago CIO Council, in a Negro congressional district. We are definitely going to try to do likewise, in collaboration with other UAW people, in some other districts.

Student Work

Activity among campus youths has undoubtedly been the most successful work in Chicago. At the U of C thousands of students have heard of the Politics Club, but also hundreds are acquainted with the specific political views of our comrades and the Workers Party to at least some extent. The SYL unit was set up in December, made up of 7 party members and 4 recruits. By the end of February the membership was 17, of whom 7 are U of C students. Almost all the rest live in the vicinity of the campus, which is the center for political activity on the South Side.

Up to now, the SYL unit has conducted an excellent series of talks and discussions of WP program, to consolidate the recruits politically. Not it must proceed to branch out more in its activities. The Politics Club has remained a center for much more varied activity. We have not been as successful as we hoped in drawing new people into leadership; still most of the SYL recruits were the product of the Club's work, and at the present time a number of people have been involved in Club work who are not in the SYL. The Club has a paper membership of 38, of whom over half participate in one way or another. So far, during this school year we have sponsored a Draper meeting on Wallace, a talk by Jerzy Glikzman, and a rally on Germany. These drew audiences of 125, 75 and 300. Next month we will sponsor a meeting on the "Fair Deal" and a joint discussion meeting with United World Federalists.

The magazine, Student Partisan, has settled down on the UofC campus to a sale of about 300 per issue, while more than that number is now sold on campuses throughout the country.

The Club helped to arrange a broad united ticket to take Student Government away from a CP-Wallace coalition. This was successful and 10 Politics Club members were elected to an assembly of 80. The new assembly is very heterogeneous and we have been of some influence in putting the assembly on record on the progressive side of many issues against the opposition of its more conservative members.

A year ago we had initiated many successful meetings on campus but we felt recruiting to be very difficult, because of the fact that every political tendency exists at the U of C - Wallaceites, Stalinists, social-democrats, pacifists, left-wing Yipsels, anarchists, and so we had no opportunity to recruit on a broad basis, then educate, such as at, for example, Buffalo U. or West Virginia U. This was a genuine difficulty, but we seem to have recruited enough now to feel confidence in continued expansion.

At Roosevelt, there is a great deal less political interest than at U of C, and there are also the disadvantages of any day school without a campus, whose students go home daily to distant parts of the Chicago area. Still the official "liberal" outlook of the school, and the fact that most of its student body is Jewish and Negro makes it a natural. But here we are actually weaker today than a year ago, because since September we have had no one willing and able to take the responsibility for leading

our activity there. However, two of our SYL recruits are Roosevelt students and our best comrade is returning there in September after a year abroad. Now that we have a real SYL unit we should be able to capitalize on any work done at Roosevelt during the next year.

Conclusion

It is obvious from the above report that many Chicago comrades are heavily involved in fruitful and important work. The job remains one of involving those comrades who are not in mass organizations, and one of integrating the various activities with those of a living branch.

PHILADELPHIA BRANCH REPORT

I want to summarize the status and activities of the branch and also discuss several related matters.

Most of the details of membership and finances are already known to you thru the weekly minutes, treasure reports, and the recent report on the social composition of the branch. The branch has been stripped of all dead wood with one exception, which I will mention later. All members are attending and contributing by and large to the best of their ability. We had a net loss of 6 members in the last year. Of these one was a serious loss in terms of potentialities. Irv Corson, the youth organizer, resigned because of a peculiar combination of indolence and careerism. The other losses were more on paper than in reality.

The social composition of the branch leaves something to be desired. There are no negro comrades. There is only one member under 30 years of age. There is not any single female member and only two women. This latter disadvantage is partially offset by the fact that the wives of several members are quite sympathetic and cooperative. Personal relations amongst the members are very good. The really critical issue is the lack of youth members. If several youth activists could be sent to Philly I believe progress could be made much more easily with the limited number of youth contacts which we have.

Branch finances are quite stable. The treasury consistently shows a balance in excess of one months expenses. We have no substantial debts with the N.O. These conditions exist because of a high level of employment among the members, and because of the conscientious work of the branch treasurer.

We have held weekly branch membership and discussion meetings. The educational portions of the meetings have been usually well conducted and instructive. Pre-convention discussion has been lively and not entirely limited to published documents. The educationals have stressed labor news and current events. We have, in my opinion, rather slighted restudy of the socialist classics. There is the feeling that the weekly branch meetings have cut too heavily into the available time of the comrades and after the convention

we plan to eliminate internal meetings on the weekend of a public forum.

The formal public activity of the branch has by all standards shown a decline. We have been holding but one public forum each month and also one social function (dance, theater party, &) monthly. Altho our publicity has been fair and our routine contacting for the function rather conscientiously carried out, attendance has dropped dangerously. One obvious reason has been the subversive listing. In an effort to solve these problems we have made a number of efforts to interest a number of individuals and organizations in symposiums, debates, etc. Here we met little success but the efforts are worthwhile since we meet new people and others become aware of our existence.

We have some roots in mass organizations. This represents a gain in the past period and was one of our goals. Three people are quite active in their unions, three in NAACP, and two in the AVC. We are known as socialists and/or radicals in these arenas. The branch is well informed of the activities in these organizations. Because of the concentration of our most active people in organization work there has been a noticeable drop in personal contacting particularly subscription work. Contact reports are on the agenda of each branch meeting but there has developed too much indifference to those who repeatedly report "no contacting". Under this heading I should mention that we have kept informed of activities in local labor politics.

Actually the activity of the branch has been limited to propaganda work. In addition to the aspects already reported on we have had the usual distributions of leaflets and papers. Literature sales have been very modest. The main slogans we have used have been the "socialist protest vote" and "Independent Labor Party" and "Neither Washington nor Moscow". We have also done more work than most branches on the loyalty purge issue.

Relations with the S.P. and S.W.P. are on a fair organizational and a good personal basis. We have no contacts with other radical organizations and just a speaking acquaintance with the Progressive Party (which is still very much alive here). We have done some little opposition work in the S.P. and more remotely in the S.W.P. I believe we should do more especially in the YPSL despite our handicaps here with our age differences.

The branch leadership has been on a real cooperative basis. The executive committee has shared its tasks and have carried the basic load of branch activity. In the executive committee fortunately outstanding weaknesses of one individual member or another are offset by special effort or qualifications of others.

We have been doing some limited relief work having sent several food and clothing packages abroad since the first of December and have plans to continue on at least this level. Some sympathizers are involved in this work. The Local ACEWR is not and has not functioned for almost a year.

One last category of comments on the status of the branch. On

becoming organizer I heard two main warnings. The first from local sources warned of national office indifference to the Philadelphia branch. The other from the NO warned that in Philly almost any has and could happen. The National Office has been almost without exception quite attentive to the Branches requests for information, assistance, and speakers. Later I am going to make suggestions on how these organizational matters might be facilitated but such suggestions refer to all branches and not to Philly alone. On the other matter--the branch has become quite "average and bears little resemblance to the colorful, exciting, but sometimes terrifying branch which existed in the days of the decline and fall of the Cramps fraction and of the Johnsonite rebellion. After those experiences I hesitate to raise but nevertheless raise the very small complaint that the branch is just a bit too "average", a bit too self-satisfied, and a bit too complaisant.

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I have some ideas which I believe would strengthen the organizational aspects of the organization. These are:

1. The continued issuance of the PC minutes to branches and the resumption of the issuance of organizational directives. These releases keep the branches informed and bind the branches into a more closely knit organization. The branches have more of a sense of belonging to a nationwide group .
2. There should be required regular organizational reports from the branches to the NO. These could then be digested and material from them reported part in Labor Action and part in the Builder.
3. There should be printed in the Builder material aimed at educating organizers and other branch leaders. What I have in mind is something analogous to the UAW's AMMUNITION. Much of this material could come from the branches themselves - in fact the Buffalo and Cleveland branches have done some pioneer work of this type. There should also be available a list of party and non party speakers who are available for specified topics.
4. If possible there should be a party leadership training school.
5. The Party has urgent need for a National Organizer who spends most of his time traveling from branch to branch staying several days or a week in each locality, observing the branch and leadership at work and aiding in recruiting. Thus the NO would have a report on each branch which is current and which is standardized.

I do not know just how feasible these suggestions are; but I do know that it is necessary to have a continuous driving organizational force from the Party center. That has to some extent been lacking in the WP. My proposals might eliminate some of these difficulties.

Frank Harper
February 5, 1949

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1. History: The newly reconstituted regular St. Louis branch has had a brief but interesting history. I will take this report somewhat beyond the October 15 date specified in order to include some recent events of importance. The activities of the St. Louis branch did not actually begin until April of this year at the time of the Gould tour. Until then the branch had been meeting fairly regularly but had not carried on any activity except for collecting and dispatching several relief packages. At the time of the Gould tour I came down from Chicago a week before Gould's arrival to arrange a meeting. The meeting was very successful. On the suggestion of Comrade Gould I decided to remain in St. Louis permanently to try to develop the excellent prospects opened up by the Gould meeting.

2. Branch Membership: Our greatest handicap is that we have so few resources to draw upon. The members have all been in the party a long time and the membership is stable. However we have only five members and three of these are almost wholly incapacitated by age and by various personal difficulties, family problems, etc. The branch organizer works nights and so is disqualified from most activity except on weekends. For these reasons it had been impossible to integrate the branch as whole into the activities which the two active members have promoted. The branch meets regularly but infrequently and takes up local matters to some extent but concerns itself mostly with educational discussions about problems and issues facing the party nationally.

3. Discussion Group: Our first step after the Gould tour was to form a permanent discussion group from the contacts who attended his meeting. This has been pretty successful. The group met regularly every two or three weeks all summer and fall and is continuing to meet. We have been fortunate in getting several good speakers from outside St. Louis such as Gordon Haskell, Felix Morrow and Jack Maxwell. More recently we have had some success in getting members of the group to volunteer to lead the discussions. The attendance has ranged from five to twenty. The meetings are held at the home of a very close sympathizer and refreshments are served after the discussion. The group is now so well established that we can count on a pretty good attendance with very little effort. So far the building of this group is easily our most successful accomplishment. The people who attend these meetings are largely students but they are mostly older students, veterans graduate students, etc.

4. Lechner Campaign: Martin B. Lechner a sympathizer of the party is running for the state legislature in St. Louis county on a program of independent labor politics. He filed as a Non-partisan in order to establish the legal right to do so. The campaign was somewhat of an afterthought but it has given us some good opportunities. The branch endorsed the campaign and I have been very active in it. I have attended all the "strategy" meetings, helped to draw up the literature, some some leaflet-distribution, etc. We invited Lechner to speak at one of our discussion meetings and while the attendance was small I think it served the valuable purpose of demonstrating that we are not interested only in abstract political discussion but also in concrete political action. The labor movement here did not support the campaign officially since they are determined to support only Democrats but favorable mention of it was made in several labor newspapers and a few members of the labor movement were on the campaign committee.

5. Washington University: This is where our best work has been done and where our best contacts are. We have made a good impression on and have formed a close relationship with several campus leaders particularly in the campus Y which seems to be the center for the best elements. Our first opportunity to do anything concrete here was the petition put out by the "Youth for Reuther" group. It was impossible for us to do any petitioning ourselves so we distributed the petitions we had among the energetic people on campus. They collected some signatures and sent them in along with a small financial contribution. They requested information on how to form a local group. So far they have not received any reply. We also attempted with moderate success to work up some interest there in campaigning for Lechner, working at the polls, etc. The Olivet strike gave us another opportunity to do some agitating. We worked very hard to get something going on this but were unsuccessful largely due to the fact that most of the people were involved in one way or another in the election campaign. In discussing these proposals we of course discussed party and the attitude of the party to these things. In spite of the fact that our success in all of these concrete measures was small they served a valuable purpose in giving us something to talk about, making friends for the party, and in helping to dispel the idea of Trotskyite sectarianism. I think that the main reason our success on campus had not been more striking is that we have no party member on campus who can carry on activity in a continuous and disciplined manner.

6. Union Work: There is very little to report here. We have two comrades in the union. However one of these cannot be very active because of her age and family problems and the other had not been in his shop long enough to have any influence.

7. Prospects and Perspectives: In my opinion the work of the past six months has been about as fruitful as could be expected. We have a well established discussion group which gives us a chance to present the theoretical ideas of the party to a small but select audience. We have made many friends for the party on the university campus and a few in the union movement as a result of our concrete activity. The problem is now one of trying to develop some concrete gains out of this activity in the form of recruitment. Unfortunately the prospects here are pretty bleak. One of the main problems is that we really have nothing to recruit anyone to. I am afraid that we will not be able to recruit anyone until we have a group of four or five who are ready to join. We have some good contacts but they all have a long way to go. I think it will be some time before any important recruiting is done in St. Louis. In the meantime we will continue to expand our present activity, try to broaden our list of contacts, and to draw those we have closer to us.

Andy Martin

REPORT ON THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA BRANCH

NOVEMBER 1948

I. Membership - At the beginning of November the branch had 27 members on the books. Of these, however, only 23 can be considered "active" branch members, the remaining four having special status. (extended sick leave, out of town, etc.).

On paper, the social composition of the branch looks fairly good. Ten members are industrial workers, seven of these in basic industries one in the building trades, one in the printing industry, and one a waitress. Fifteen belong to trade unions. (Office workers and professional unions in addition to the industrial workers). In addition to the ten industrial workers, six are professionals, three white collar workers, six students and one housewife. Only two employable members of the branch were out of work. (This does not count the housewife or the students.)

We say the composition looks fairly good "on paper". The reasons for this qualification will be given under the sections on trade union work.

A glaring deficiency in the branch membership is the lack of any Negro members, and the fact that even most of the industrial workers in the branch have not been recruited from industry, but rather have gone into industry from other fields.

During the past year the branch has not maintained its membership. That is, though we have the same number of members now as we did in September 1947, they are not all the same people. Two members have transferred out of the branch, and three have recently come here from other cities (San Diego and Baltimore). During the whole year only two workers and two students have been recruited and held in the branch. Three other people were recruited and dropped during the same period.

II. Trade Union Work- Our fifteen trade unionists are scattered in twelve different unions, five CIO, five AFL and two railroad brotherhoods, with two members each in the longshore and office workers unions. Eight have been in their locals for less than six months. Most of them are comrades who either have little experience in the labor movement, and/or people who find it either difficult or almost impossible to participate actively in union work.

This difficulty is encountered for a wide variety of reasons. These extend from the old problem of crushing family or other responsibilities, to the character of the union and the local itself, to inexperience and, saddest of all to a simple lack of energy or interest on the part of the individual.

During the spring of the year the branch lost its previous UAW concentration. There were many indications that the shop in which they were working was going to close down permanently. Added to this was the discouragement attendant on a considerable period of hard work which had shown little concrete result, as well as the physical exhaustion of one of the comrades. The comrade we now have in the UAW is in a new plant which is just being organized. He is relatively new to the party, and his excellent qualifications could be made much better use of if he were working with one or more politically more experienced people.

In longshore, one of our comrades has become widely known due to an attempt by the Stalinist leadership in the union to have him expelled on framed charges. He carried on a brilliant campaign in his own defense, and was able to rally the support of the whole anti-Stalinist sentiment in the local, from extreme right to extreme left. In addition, he was very materially assisted by the anti-Stalinist CIO leadership of the state.

During the longshore strike this comrade has been the most active on different committees, and has won further prestige by virtue of this activity. Unfortunately, neither he nor the other comrade in the union have been able to make concrete political capital out of these opportunities. This is due mainly to the extremely heavy family obligations of both comrades. Nevertheless, this has been the most active and consistent union activity carried on by the branch during the whole year.

It can be said that as far as the rest of the trade union membership are concerned their activity is either slight or non-existent. One comrade has devoted a good deal of time to trade union work, but the situation is such in her union that this has been done almost purely on a trade union level. Almost all other comrades attend their union meetings, but these meetings often consist of from five to ten members, most of them old timers who are completely sunk in trade union routine.

The prospects of further industrialization by members of the branch are poor, though a consistent, mild pressure has been applied by the branch on this question throughout the period. Among the male members of the branch, those who are not now in industry are either students, or have physical disabilities, or are confirmed professionals.

As far as the women are concerned, there is a special problem. In order to make industrialization attractive to them, an industry has to be found which employs a number of women and in which there is, therefore a real prospect of fruitful work for women. The Bay Area is not a center of the garment trades. The canneries employ a large number of women, but only during a few months of the year, after which they either return to housekeeping or find other casual employment. Most industries are not hiring women now, or hire them in such small numbers for special jobs that they are a tiny minority of the workers. In other cases, the unions have closed their books to new members. It is true, the branch has not yet completely surveyed the field. We are in the process of doing so.

Aside from these obstacles, the chief problem in getting further industrialization is, in our opinion, to demonstrate in practice the importance of industrial work to the party. The theoretical demonstration of this is simple, but not enough. A comrade who is asked to leave a relatively interesting professional job for industry quite naturally says: Yes, I understand why this is important. But we have ten members in industry right now. Yet not one of these seems to be able to bring a single fellow-worker to our forums or socials, leave alone to recruit them to the party. Not one of these has been able to build around himself or herself a group of sympathetic workers in the union who are prospective close sympathizers or recruits. Isn't it a little foolish for me to leave my present good or interesting job for a hard and unpleasant one just on the basis of a theory which looks good, but which so far doesn't seem to produce any

We can argue against this point of view, but arguments aren't enough to make people change their whole way of life....or at least some people. Until the comrades in industry now are able to produce some concrete results, it is doubtful that any significant further industrialization will take place.

III. Negro Work - At the time of the Active Workers Conference, the branch had just recruited two Negro workers as the result of a class which had been attended by from six to ten Negroes. Subsequently one more Negro worker joined. Since that time these three members have dropped out, and the others we had hoped to recruit are not longer prospects. They are all still friendly to the party in a vague sort of way. From five to ten Negroes attend our socials, and two or three sometimes come to forums.

The most immediate, yet least significant reason for this development was the fact that the comrade most competent and active in this work had to drop out of all party activity for purely personal reasons. The real reasons, however is in our opinion that the Workers Party with its present size, composition, and activity cannot hope to recruit and hold any but the most exceptional Negroes in its ranks.

We are a group which propagandizes for socialism. Though people, both Negro and White, may join this group because of its immediate appeal to them on some practical issue, they will not stay in it, for long unless they can achieve the same theoretical understanding and the same vision of the possibilities of the socialist struggle as that which animates the bulk of the present membership of the party. This statement will prove untrue only in the most exceptional circumstances. (eg. in situations where a very exceptional trade union fraction or housing project fraction or NAACP fraction is able to conduct and lead systematic and successful struggles over a considerable period of time).

Any branch of the party can go into a Negro neighborhood, make friends, talk to them about the struggle for equality and for socialism, form classes, hold socials; and recruit some people to the party. All that is needed is hard work, patience and a bit of horse sense. Yet these same qualities applied to a neighborhood of white workers will hardly ever produce the same immediate results. Why? Because only those white workers will attend such classes who have exceptional intellectual curiosity, who are interested in ideas, who are looking for answers to the general problems of the working class. These are, alas, few and far between right now. Once convinced and recruited, such workers are very likely to stick.

Yet Negroes will attend such classes who have the above qualities only in very limited degree. They are attracted primarily by what is said about their very concrete and immediate problem, as well as by the very concrete fact that they are welcomed into a mixed group and treated as equals there. Negroes who take no active part in their unions, who have never dreamed of themselves as active leaders of their race who are hardly literate and who have little ambition to become so, to whom the only abstraction which is real is the abstraction of racial discrimination yet who have never actively participated in any movement to combat it....such Negroes will gladly attend a class, and socials, and will join the party. Yet only those Negroes will stay in the party in its present phase who have the same qualities as those white workers who will stay in it.

The Negroes whom we attracted and recruited did not have these qualities. Though not poor, they could not understand the necessity of our heavy dues. The routine activity of the branch, insofar as it did not relate to their concrete problems, bored them. It proved impossible to interest them in even reading the party press, leave alone more basic material.

The branch could have done more ^{than} it did to integrate these comrades, that is true. Yet we are convinced that with the specific type of comrades we had recruited, no amount of special attention would have sufficed. A most significant example is to the point: One of these comrades, a member of the longshore union who went through the whole experience of the attempt to frame our comrade, and with whom special efforts had been made to educate him on the role of the Stalinists in his union, is to this day a strong supporter of Harry Bridges. The reason is simple. Longshoremen are a privileged group among the Negroes here. Bridges and the CP have been the most vociferous defenders of their position in the union against all elements who seek to discriminate against them or eliminate them. The CP has been able to convince large number of Negroes that any anti-Bridges movement is also an anti-Negro movement. They know that we talk and act the same way as the Stalinists on this question. But in this respect we are just a "me too" group in relation to the really effective power-group, at least in the eyes of the average Negro member. There are some Negroes who have been able to penetrate through the smokescreen of the CP on this question and who bitterly oppose it on the grounds that it exploits, in the worst sense of the word, the Negro membership. These men have come to this conclusion either on the basis of bitter personal experience or because they have an exceptional feeling of personal and racial dignity and the intellectual interest and insight which leads them to understand Stalinism from a much wider point of view than that of their own immediate economic interests.

When we are able effectively to lead large numbers of Negroes in concrete struggles, those whom we now attract but cannot hold will become good members of the movement. Until such time, however, it is our conviction that the best we can do is to establish an attitude of sympathy towards us among as wide as possible a periphery of Negroes. We must seek to recruit to the party only those whom we can hold, and that means only those who show the kind of intellectual interest in the ideas of socialism and the kind of determination to personally struggle for socialism that will keep them in a propaganda group.

Since our Negro members have dropped out, work in this field has been sporadic at best. No classes similar in duration or attendance to the one last year have been held. The perspective of the branch is to try to organize some kind of a forum-class in the Negro neighborhood of Oakland which will seek to establish the sympathetic periphery in an organized form. This might be called some sort of "front" organization which could be run by its members themselves with our assistance and guidance. The actual development of this perspective depends on finding suitable personnel who will devote the necessary time. In addition, our four members in the NAACP will seek to become active members, though the NAACP in this area is in such a slump that they are no longer able to keep their office open or to maintain their executive director on a full-time basis. 1037

IV. Other Mass Work (AVC, CO-ops, etc.)

Our participation in AVC during the past year has been confined mainly to two comrades. One of these has now returned to NY, leaving only one active member in AVC. Due to the very tenuous status of merchant seamen in AVC, those comrades who had belonged on the basis of their wartime merchant seaman status have also dropped out.

AVC here has not been a live and growing organization. It has hung on with mainly liberal professional or white-collar membership. It has engaged in very little activity. The internal fight with the Stalinists has absorbed much of the attention of the active membership. Yet such a fight cannot build an organization, and in an organization which isn't growing or vital even this fight tends to seem futile to an increasing number of members.

Our comrades in the one chapter had become very well integrated as leading people in the anti-CP caucus, and the remaining comrade maintains this position. The great majority of the anti-CP caucus, however, are hopeless liberals. The comrade has been able to make two real political contacts, and his views have had some effect on others in the chapter. His future activity will depend on the future of the AVC after the coming convention. The one bright spot in the AVC picture is the sympathy with which it is regarded by both AFofL and CIO officials here. In the near future AVC speakers will be invited to address many AFL locals in a recruiting drive. Should this drive have any measure of success, the work of our comrade could achieve much greater importance for the branch than it will have otherwise.

We have four comrades who are formal members of the NAACP. We intend to activate them in the near future, though as mentioned above, the NAACP itself has fallen on poor times.

We have several comrades in a buyers' co-op in one housing project. This project is one of the chief concentration points for the CP in the Bay Area, and they have made considerable progress. However, our members have also been able to make a number of friends, both Negro and white, and we hope that through the co-op and other organized project activity they will be able to recruit some members to the party.

One comrade in a housing project in San Francisco was able to help in the organization of a very lively consumers' strike against the high cost of milk. Though there are several shoppers leagues in the city, they are mostly small Stalinist-controlled groups who only come to life when an action such as the recent strike against purchasing meat swept the nation. When such movements begin, the Stalinists rally their forces and rush to the organizational control with their experienced cadres. Otherwise they sought, in the recent period, to make the shoppers' leagues simple adjuncts of the Wallace party machine. ("The IPP stand for the same things we stand for.") This has tended to drive away the non-Stalinist women. Our policy is to try to enter actively into such movement, but by their very nature they rise and decline periodically.

Most of the members of the branch are not active in any mass organization. Hence they have few contacts of either a general or of a closer political variety.

V. Literature

The branch carries on regular sales of Labor Action at four unions. (involving 11 meetings per month.) Some 15 members of the branch engage in this activity more or less regularly. In addition to these regular meetings, the branch has mobilizations for selling the paper at all large Wallace meetings and other mass meetings which will presumably attract workers and liberals. With all this effort, the sales of the paper remain low. During July we sold 127 copies; Sept-117; Oct-151. The constant complaint of our salesmen is that the paper does not build a regular clientele for itself. This makes it very difficult to get subscriptions as a result of our sales.

Our bundle of the NI has been from 70-85 for some time. Most of these magazines sell from the five newsstands and book stores in which the magazine is placed. (The stand near the campus of the University of Calif. in Berkeley regularly sells 20-30 copies.) The remainder are sold to members and contacts who come to socials or forums.

The lack of activity in the unions or other mass organizations reflects itself in an extremely low number of LA subscribers (and even fewer NI subs). In the past the sub lists here were kept up by the usual Sunday door-to-door sales. The re-subscription rate on these, however, is so abysmally low that we have, along with the rest of the party, abandoned this method of selling subs. However, we have not substituted another, better method for it. One or two or sometimes a few more subs per month come in through what contact the membership has with the outside world.

The branch has had a steady, slow sale of pamphlets, mostly at forums and socials. In the near future we are going to set up a regular lending library composed of books loaned by comrades and purchased via Labor Action Book Service. These will include both fiction and non-fiction of interest to socialists and their sympathizers. We hope it will be financially self-supporting. A charge of a nominal sum per week for books borrowed should make it possible for the library to expand, as well as facilitate the rapid circulation of the books among members and sympathizers.

The SYL at the university has recently assumed independent responsibility for the sale of Labor Action on the campus, as well as for the handling of all other literature.

VI. Education

At the time of the Active Workers Conference we had just concluded a relatively heavy and successful educational program in the branch. In addition to the class for Negro contacts, we had run a very good class on "Leaders of Revolt" and had conducted a number of internal classes on the program and principles of the party.

After unity with the SWP blow up, these latter classes gradually disintegrated. During the whole past year up to October the only educational work of the branch was in the discussions after business meetings. Since the beginning of October the educational director has arranged for and we have been conducting a series of classes on the great revolutions. (French just concluded, coming 1039

up: The Paris Commune; The American Revolution; The Civil War; The Russian Revolution to the rise of Hitler.) One session of these classes is being held each week on the campus for the SYL and their sympathizers, and the other one for other members of the branch and their contacts. The latter class has attracted only a small number of members. Several sympathizers who had shown interest and had promised to come have failed to show up.

For some time the Educational Director has been promising the branch a selected reading list of books which are important for the development of socialist revolutionaries, and which are also available. We hope to have it in the near future, and to use it to stimulate individual as well as group study of these books.

We have had a constant series of educationals at our branch meetings which have varied widely in interest and subject matter. Our most recent one was on the meaning of the elections. Others have been on slave labor in Russia, the struggle in Indonesia, the Berlin Crisis, the policy of the party in the UAW, Palestine, etc. Formal discussions are invariably set aside when some matter comes before the branch which arouses practical or theoretical interest.

VII. Forums

The branch forums have had their ups and downs. By summer the downs had got so bad that the branch thought it better to abandon the attempt to hold such forums for a time. Our experience has been that these forums which dealt with the immediate struggles of the labor movement were the least successful in attracting non-members. As we represent no force in the labor movement, workers don't seem interested in what we have to say about these struggles. They can get that in their own union meetings. However, during the past two months we have held forums on the international situation and the national elections (after the results were in, fortunately.) We have taken a leaf out of the Buffalo book, and the forums end promptly at 10 pm with coffee and following in the hall. Both were relatively successful with from 35-45 people in attendance. Most of the non-party people, however, came from around campus, with a sprinkling of workers.

We have concluded that we can hold fair forums which might become better and better if we concentrate mainly on propaganda and educational subjects, rather than trying to "intervene" in the class struggle events by way of a forum. Yet the outstanding fact is that the success of the forums depends on the number of comrades who develop good contacts. The forums do not draw on our general mailing list to any great extent.

VIII. Socials

During the early part of the year and through the summer, our socials also failed to attract our periphery. One reason for this was the fact that we were driven from one hall to another because of the mixed composition of the socials. Finally driven into private homes, we found that the only comrades who have a home large enough for a social live much too far from the center of town to draw any but the hardest sympathizers. Our past two socials have been relatively successful. We are making a serious effort to enliven them, again trying to ape Buffalo as best we may.

LX. Student Work and the SYL

We feel that the prospects on the campus are very good. The visit of comrade Falk has led to a long-drawn-out attempt to organize a politics club which will be similar to the ones we are active in elsewhere. To some extent a concentration on this has led to less activity on behalf of the SYL itself than would otherwise have been the case. So far this politics club has been constantly in the making, but has failed to jell as a real attractive force for socialistic students.

It seems unnecessary to go into the detailed reasons for this. Perhaps the most important one is the lack of experience and self-confidence of our student comrades. This will grow in time. Of the six students in the branch, five are at the University. One of the most active and competent members has been unable to participate in the attempts to build the politics club, but has spent a good deal of time on the Student Workers Federation, a new attempt to organize working students for economic demands. This organization has just taken on a new lease on life. At the same moment, the Stalinists have been "freed" to some extent from the Wallace campaign, and are beginning to pour into it in force. We hope to prevent their capturing it, and to build it into a significant organization on campus.

X. Finances

The financial resources of the branch had been gradually contracting through the spring and summer. At one time a number of the comrades were unemployed. When they got back to work, they failed to resume their previous heavy contributions.

Last month this was corrected, and the income of the branch materially increased by a forthright discussion of the problem in the branch. Only a very few comrades are now paying less than they "should" according to the best party standards.

However, with all dues and 70% of pledges going to the NO, it leaves little for the branch. So far we have been unable to locate a site for an adequate branch headquarters at less than \$100 per month, which we can't afford. We maintain an office which costs us \$35, plus phone bills.

With the slash in support for organizers from the center, we lost the services of our organizer for an additional two to three days per week. The ability of the branch to pay him was further reduced by the prospects of having to raise \$300 for the expenses of our convention delegation. After the convention, should the branch income remain the same, we should be able to make it possible for him to lay off from one to two additional days per week. (At present the organizer has to work four or five days a week.)

XI. General

The problems of the branch should, from the above, be obvious. In a word, we aren't integrated into the labor movement or any other part of the community. A few members have from one to three or four political contacts whom they can bring around to socials and forums, and whom they can hope to recruit. The rest of the branch, work in and work out, does not talk socialism or the Workers Party to anyone

except each other.

We have made efforts to get the contactless comrades to visit a list of people selected from our mailing list. These were selected because one or another comrade thought they had possibilities. The idea was to assign them to comrades, to have them visited and either to make them real contacts or to eliminate them from the list. Week after week the contact director has to report to the branch that none of the assigned people have been visited for a variety of reasons, most of them unacceptable.

It is obvious that an effort to build up a periphery and a membership on such an artificial basis is a last resort. Here again the weight of the solution of the problem has to bear on the industrial workers in the branch. Aside from the students, they are the ones who are naturally among people whom it should be possible to approach. If they can achieve the self-confidence, or rather the confidence in their ideas which will make it possible for them to actively and consistently approach their fellow workers, the whole picture for the branch will change. When a number of such workers start coming around, plenty of opportunity will be opened up for all comrades, including those now totally isolated, to do their stuff. The fact that two or three or four members of the branch have been able to do this to one degree or another certainly proves that it can be done.

Even though the activity of the branch is as described, its morale cannot be said to be low in any dangerous sense. The fact is that every event of world-wide or serious local effect on the working class movement arouses the membership not only to interest, but to action. When the draft was proclaimed, the branch membership insisted on holding a demonstration on the campus against the draft which was highly successful. Mobilizations to sell the paper at big meetings generally got a considerable turnout, and are conducted with vigor. In fact, any activity proposed which seems to offer real possibilities of "dramatic" mass work receives a response from most of the membership. Even the regular paper sales, which are not successful in a significant way, are carried out loyally and regularly by a large percentage of the membership.

Yet there is no escaping the fact that the branch does not see a clear perspective to steady growth in numbers and influence. Most of those comrades who carry the main burden of the work which is being done tend to perform out of a sense of duty rather than one of optimism. This situation will change, we are convinced, only when the party nationally and locally shows that it is capable of a real orientation to the working class of America which receives some response.

Explanatory notes with regard to branch census:

1 Total membership figure:

The actual figure for membership in the branch who are full members in good standing, who are active in the branch (minimum activity - attendance at branch meeting or good excuse for not attending) and whose future status is not immediately in doubt as of this writing is twenty-two (22).

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The status of the other five is as follows:

- a. 1 member on indefinite sick leave. Pays no dues and is completely inactive for an indefinite time.
- b. 1 long-time member now 14 weeks in arrears in dues. Whether or not he will pay up in time for the convention is questionable.
- c. 1 member just passed his probationary period with flying colors, but his future status is in doubt due to personal reasons.
- d. E Carlo -- a non-dues-paying member who attends no meetings and has a most peculiar status.
- e. 1 member at large attached to this branch who is being requested to pay dues and etc. via this branch. He lives so far away he cannot attend meetings.

2. Membership in CIO

Of the above (e) is the member listed as being in the Newspaper Guild. What activity he can conduct can in no way benefit the branch.

Of the two members in the United Public Workers, one is almost completely inactive. In any event, there is some question as to whether this union should be published by name or other designation in any official statistics.

3. Membership in AFofL

The member of the SUP is also counted as a member of the Painters. He is now working at the painting trade, and will continue to do so until the weather stops painting, after which he doesn't know what he will do.

Of the office workers, one is completely inactive in her unions.

The Teamster doesn't drive a truck. He works in an old distributing plant in which the teamsters have a 2nd class local.

The member of the printing pressmen is a woman who works as a press tender, and can't hope to develop too much influence in this union.

4. Independent Unions

One of these is (b) in the list of doubtful members.

5. General branch membership information.

Of the doubtful members listed above, four are men and one a woman.

(c) of the doubtful list informs us he will continue in the SYL whether or not he remains in the party.

The figures on mass organizations are also a bit deceptive. Two members are counted both in NAACP and the Co-op. All members of NAACP are inactive, are just formal members.

6. Question of status of three members with regard to convention

Three members have transferred to this branch since the time of the convention call. These are Maurice from Baltimore and Lorrain and Arline from San Diego.

With regard to the first, I believe he had left his branch before August 10th (date of convention call). If so, am I correct in assuming that he will be credited to this branch both for voting and for the membership on which the number of delegates are counted?

The other two comrades left their branch after the convention call, to the best of my knowledge. However, their branch no longer exists, and thus will have no delegates to the convention.

This kind of a situation is not clearly covered in the constitution. Both of these comrades were in good standing at the time of the call, and both are still in good standing. One of them moved to the Detroit branch for a short period of time, but intends to remain here. Unless they are counted as part of this branch for the purpose of representation and voting, they will be disenfranchised.

At the present time it does not appear that the addition of these two members will change the number of delegates from this branch, though conceivably it might. We request a ruling from the PC on the question, so that there will be no doubt about it. We realize, of course, that in the event of a challenge, the final decision will have to rest with the convention.

Comradely submitted,

Gordon Haskell
Organizer, S.F. Bay Area Branch
W.P.