

PARTY BUILDER

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N O T E

The appearance of this issue of the BUILDER was long delayed first by the lack of material and then by technical difficulties. It contains all material submitted since the issuance of the last number.

We have tried repeatedly to persuade comrades to report their experiences and ideas for the benefit of the rest of the Party but have not met with too much success. We reiterate that the BUILDER, which is scheduled to appear monthly, can appear only when there is material for it and urge again that comrades write for it.

- Editor

KEEP THE DOOR OPEN, RICHARD.

By Cleveland Branch

* * *

The door to membership in the Workers Party must be kept wide open. More than that, we must continue to go outside and persuade people to come in.

The occasion for addressing this not exactly super-theoretical statement to the membership of the party is what appears to be an inclination to turn inward on the part of the branches.

Reports of this turning inward have come to us in Cleveland not only from the center but from branches in other cities. The reasons are clearly indicated.

One factor is approaching unity. This in itself gives rise to much speculation, discussion, and so on. It also gives rise to a dangerous attitude of letting up on party building plans, projects and campaigns. The thinking here--insofar as anyone has consciously thought about it--is to postpone such work until we have a clearer idea of the eventual outcome of negotiations.

The shortsightedness of this policy is obvious upon a moment's examination. In the event of unity, a sub to LABOR ACTION will become a sub to the MILITANT; a WP contact or recruit will remain, by and large, the same in the united party we will then be working hard to build.

A second factor contributing to the tendency towards introversion is the current factional situation in the party. Political comment on this is not germane to our problem here. What is germane is to avoid "going overboard" in consuming time and energy in such internal matters.

This is not to say that both of the above matters do not warrant the careful and complete consideration of the party membership. We believe exactly the opposite, and are sure no one disagrees.

However, the two internal matters must be kept strictly in proportion. To keep them in proportion means simply that they must be subordinate to what is still the main job - building the revolutionary party. And party building means energetic recruitment and intelligent integration. This in turn depends on diligent and resourceful work by branches, fractions, and each individual comrade outside of the sphere of internal party matters.

Among the best contributions that the WP can make towards a united party is additional recruits now.

The best guarantee that our tendency within the united party will enjoy its democratic rights is the rapid addition to our numbers of more comrades trained in the atmosphere of free discussion, intellectual honesty, and objective, principled politics which is the proud tradition of our party.

And finally, the growth of the American movement--not alone through unity but through recruitment--will be as we all recognize,

beneficial to the international as a whole. All this in addition to our prime task in the United States, which goes without saying.

The section of last fall's Program of Action has, in the modest experience of our own branch, proven to be a practical guide to the problem of growth. The entire section is worth thoughtful consideration at regular intervals.

The essence of this section is that recruiting must be the criteria by which branch activity must be judged to be successful or unsuccessful. This applies to fractions, to study classes, to sub work, to campaigns -- even to socials. They must be made continuous recruiting vehicles.

With this perspective, with persistent individual concentration, and with a never-flagging recruiting consciousness, the party can grow steadily towards what it must become.

Our branch has found this to be the case. Now, more than ever, and in spite of other problems, the entire organization must keep the door wide open and keep new recruits coming in.

June 8, 1947.

A FUND RAISING STUNT FOR BRANCH SOCIALS

By Gerald McDermott (Cleveland)

* * *

Briefly described herein is a device the Cleveland Branch has successfully used to raise money and at the same time help insure the success of a social. Perhaps the subject seems "light weight" for the PARTY BUILDER, but successful socials help in recruiting and finances are always needed. Our branch has realized as much as \$35.00 at a time through this stunt.

The idea centers around a skit or short play to which the actors are "elected." Votes are cast with coins, one cent equalling one vote.

The social committee assigns before hand some "literary" comrade to prepare the humorous skit. The Kremlin, the United Nations, or the NAM can supply suitable subject material for humor that also has propaganda value, or an old time "mellerdrama" can be used. A copy of the script is prepared for each actor (four or five is a good size for the caste). Preparing the script involves only typing it out with carbon copies. The "actors" do not see the script beforehand.

The member of the social committee acting as "director" announces "the new socialist art drama." The ballyhoo includes "workers control of dramatic production" and "no longer is the caste dictated to you" etc. The roles to be filled are announced and the method of voting explained. A teller and collector from the social committee are on hand. Votes are cast by saying "I cast 25 votes for Comrade So-and-so," and putting 25¢ in the collection dish. Characters are elected one at a time. A running tabulation is kept and changes in the standings are announced frequently to encourage people to back their favorite candidate.

All this may sound a little silly, but with the role of Stalin or Truman or the Villian Slye to be filled, watch the 50¢ pieces clink in.

In writing the play, it is wise to include references to local situations, allusions to people who will be present, and so on. Parodies written to well known tunes can be included so that the actors selected are also required to sing. Perch a female character on a male character's lap somewhere through the proceedings, and so on. The result is highly entertaining as well as remunerative.

Social committees usually bite their nails over dreaming up new entertainment for each social, especially in smaller branches without extensive funds or facilities. Experiences of other branches in dealing with this problem might profitably be prepared and published in the BUILDER.

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TENANTS WORK IN DETROIT

By Miriam Evans (Detroit)

* * *

August 14, 1947.

Dear Comrade McKinney:

This is a report on the activity and formation of the tenants council organized by Comrades A and B and Sympathizer C.

When tenants councils were organized by the Wayne County CIO last winter, B became a member of her neighborhood tenants council. The council met regularly for a period of about four months. The attendance at its meetings averaged 40 people. B proposed building tenants committees be formed but nothing ever came of the proposal because of the wishy-washy attitude of the Stalinists who controlled this council as well as all the rest in the city. At the last two meetings of this council the attendance dropped to 15 or less. The last meeting was held in the middle of April. B volunteered as a member of the Executive Board of this council but the Executive Board never met. The council simply ceased to function.

In April, A and B began to work on organizing a tenants committee in their apartment. First they went around with a petition sponsored by the Wayne County CIO Council to the tenants in the building. The petition requests "that the power and facilities of our Government be used to prevent evictions and to maintain fair rent ceilings. We request the United States Government, the State Legislature and City Government to so coordinate their activities that the problem of housing can be intelligently met."

Most of the tenants in the building signed the petition. On the basis of this petition A and B asked tenants to attend a meeting in A's apartment. A and B got a special speaker from the CIO to address the meeting. They delayed the meeting until they could get a member of the Reuther caucus to address the meeting. They called Gus Scholle, President of the Michigan State CIO Council, and told him that they didn't want the Stalinists to control their tenants council. Scholle gave them the name of one of the members of the Michigan State CIO Council and this was the person who addressed the first building committee meeting. He has cooperated ever since that time in getting speakers, mimeographing leaflets, and giving information on what is going on in tenants work in the CIO.

There were about 4 people other than the comrades at the first building meeting. Information was given on the status of rentals under the OPA. The position of the CIO against rent increases was discussed. It was decided at that meeting to hold a second meeting at which those present were to try to get more people down.

The second building committee meeting was held about a month later. The member of the State Council recommended a housewife as a speaker for the second meeting. This housewife had organized a buyers strike last June in her area. And she had also organized a tenants committee last June 1946 when rent controls were temporarily lifted. She gave A and B copies of various rent laws passed during the past year and

and generally helped them in organizing the second meeting. She is militant, political and a possibility for a contact if she does not become too disillusioned with the policies and activities of the Reuther caucus in the UAW and liberal anti-Stalinist groups in this area. At the second meeting two outsiders showed up. Those present decided to organize a block committee meeting for June 30th. They discussed various method of trying to fight the pending federal rent law: flying squadrons, jury trial, and tenants committees in each building to act as flying squads, if necessary. Our comrades advised the tenants not to sign the lease. Mrs. X, the housewife organizer, also recommended that the tenants not sign the lease.

The next day after the stencil had been cut for the leaflet announcing the proposed block meeting, it was discovered that the UAW Housing Commission and the Wayne County CIO Council were preparing to renege on the fight to maintain the June 30 levels. The unofficial policy of both groups was that tenants would have to sign the leases if the pending bill passed. They argued that some rent control was better than no rent control, a 15% increase was better than a 100% or a 200% increase. They said they would have their hands full in February 1948 when the new law would expire. They also promised to really fight in 1948. One representative of the Reuther caucus from the State CIO had more or less the same position.

The leaflet for the block committee meeting was rewritten so that our comrades would not take upon themselves the responsibility of telling the tenants not to sign leases when the CIO was probably going to refuse any kind of aid to tenants evicted when they have not signed leases.

At the block committee meeting the block council was officially formed. Twenty-five were present. A UAW official addressed the meeting. A motion was passed to recommend to the CIO, Housing Commission, County Council and UAW locals that they oppose signing leases and any evictions of tenants who refused to sign leases. From the 25 a steering committee of 10 was formed to carry through this motion. The committee was also put in charge of organizing a mass neighborhood meeting.

After the first of July, the CIO came out with its official position against signing the leases and for CIO forming block and building committees. It was no longer necessary for the steering committee to carry out the first motion.

Two members of the steering committee drew up the leaflet announcing the mass meeting in the neighborhood. One liberal anti-Stalinist group was contacted and asked to help mimeograph the leaflets. With some valid excuse they said they would mimeograph the leaflet if no other group could get the mimeographing done. The representative of the Michigan State CIO agreed to mimeograph the leaflets, 2,000 of them, free. Four of the members of the steering committee and a paper boy passed out the 2,000 leaflets in an 8 block area. A went to the office of the Wayne County CIO Council and asked for money to rent a meeting place for the neighborhood meeting. The County Council agreed to give the money in return for being on the speakers list. This was agreed to and a hall was rented - a public school. There were three speakers: one from the UAW Housing Commission, one from the Wayne County CIO, and one from the Michigan State CIO. The steering committee drew up the agenda: Introduction

by the Chairman of the Block Tenants Council, 3-5 minutes; 1st and 2nd speakers, 5 minutes each; 3rd and main speaker 15 minutes. All the rest of the time was allotted to discussion and questions by the tenants. A motion was passed calling for another mass neighborhood meeting in the near future. A motion was passed supporting CIO policy against signing the leases. A motion was passed that the meeting go on record against signing leases, against evictions, and for fighting for rent control and building tenants councils. Comrades were present at the meeting to help ward off any possible attack by the Stalinists but the Stalinists were very cooperative and conciliatory. The three daily newspapers were notified the morning of the day of the meeting that there was going to be a tenants meeting. When the main motions were passed one of the sympathizers called in the report to all three newspapers of the attendance of the meeting, over 300, and the main motion against signing the leases. The comrades tried to get an in on the press through the union and people who knew reporters but it fell through. One newspaper printed the report. After the meeting all those who wanted their buildings organized left their names and addresses and phone numbers with the secretary. During the meeting the phone numbers of two members of the block council were given to the tenants.

The tenants council was enlarged and a motion was passed to add all building council chairmen on to the Executive Board of the tenants council. The Executive Board of the tenants council voted to print membership cards and present them at the next mass meeting in the neighborhood. The Executive Board discussed getting a sound truck for the next mass meeting. A newsletter was suggested and tabled to a later date.

Various CIO and UAW groups were contacted in arranging the second neighborhood meeting. The speakers and leaflets were arranged the same way as before. A UAW local donated a sound truck and driver free for one hour the night of the meeting. A small beginning was made in activizing the tenants by calling on some of them to pass out leaflets in their own buildings. A few volunteered to cover more than one building. One woman covered two and a half blocks. A newspaper boy was paid to cover one block. The rest of the distributing was done by comrades. 2500 leaflets were passed out. One UAW local offered use of their hall for the meeting but the public school was rented because it was more conveniently located.

Report of the meeting can be read in LABOR ACTION. Close to 300 attended. Main motion calling for a city-wide meeting on rent control organized by the CIO was passed unanimously. Part of the Addes-Thomas Stalinist caucus was out to do a job on the council and succeeded in disrupting the meeting. Despite that, 75 people signed membership cards. Comrades were not present at this meeting since no trouble was expected from the Stalinists. They could have been used in answering, but could not have substituted for a real tenants activist core which the council did not have.

From the first mass neighborhood meeting to date our comrades and sympathizer have helped organize about 15 building councils. UAW-CIO literature has been passed out at all of these meetings. Membership cards have been sold. Special speakers from the Wayne County CIO, Michigan State CIO, Tenants Councils, and lawyers have addressed the building council meetings and all have advised the tenants not to sign the leases. About 200 membership cards have been sold.

The Wayne County CIO Council wants to use the tenants council formed by our comrades as doorbell ringers for PAC. For one reason and another they are unable to take over the Tenants Council as they would like to. One reason is pretty obvious: there is a lot of dissension in their camp and demoralization. They organized a flop of a meeting that was supposed to include the area of the Tenants Council plus an area at least 50 times the size of the Tenants Council. There were 30 people present at their meeting. The Wayne County CIO in preparing the meeting tried to use it as a threat; notified the Tenants Council at the last minute. As time wore on they became a little more conciliatory. In a very typical slimy fasion this one representative of the Wayne CIO has been doing everything he can to discredit the Tenants Council only he has not succeeded because his efforts have been too brash and stupid. He is beginning to discredit himself in the eyes of the tenants; viz: at the small mass meeting organized by him one tenant proposed a mass meeting downtown, and he promised to bring the proposal to the Wayne County Executive Board meeting, but it sounded very much like just a promise when he went on to emphasize at that small meeting the importance of PAC and waiting until the November elections to do anything on rent control.

This Wayne CIO Executive Board meeting was attended by this tenant and another member of the Tenants Council. The aforementioned representative added rent control to the agenda. He let the two tenants speak. The Executive Board agreed to have rent control be part of the Labor Day meeting. He had obviously never intended to speak on the mass meeting proposal on rent control.

The Executive Board of the Tenants Council has set up a committee in charge of arranging participation of this Tenants Council and other tenants councils in the Labor Day Parade.

The CIO in this area has not taken the lead in organizing tenants work and that is having its effect on the tenants in and out of the tenants council. A lot of people who have signed membership cards are beginning to sign leases because they do not see any demonstration of strength from the CIO. Rent control is a hot issue now. How long it will be hot given the inaction of the CIO is hard to tell. It is quite easy to organize tenants councils now. The two comrades and sympathizer who organized this Tenants Council had never done any tenants work before.

The branch tenants committee met and discussed the work. The current problem of fighting the Stalinists and the relation to PAC has to be discussed fully in the branch tenants committee and at the center. Activizing the tenants is another important problem.

I have not discussed policy as such. I have only tried to give a picture of the organizational work involved in the formation of this Tenants Council. A discussion of policy is needed other than a strictly organizational report.

Yours,

Miriam Evans
Chairman Tenants Committee
Detroit Branch

THE PROBLEMS OF THE NEW YORK ORGANIZATION

By Irving Swanson

* * *

I. The problems of the New York organization are: (a) What kind of work is possible on the basis of the present composition and level of morale, (b) What kind of work will raise the morale and reactivate the inactive.

We will try to treat the above separately although they are both aspects of one whole problem. But before we can deal with the problem we must first analyze our membership both as to composition and the reasons for the low morale.

II. Non-Proletarian:

In the urgency of pressing industrialization we have tended to make industrialization mean the same thing as proletarianization. This is a far too narrow concept of proletarianization. On the one hand industrialization can remain a purely mechanical form of proletarianization unless it is filled with its political content, which is simply to live in the working class and in the masses in general, to participate in the things that affect and interest them, to make their problems your own. Industrialization is the best entree to the working class but not more. While on the other hand a person may not be industrialized, he may still be essentially proletarianized. That comrade who lives in a neighborhood and knows people in an every day sense, who is in organizations dealing with everyday but vital problems of the people, who lives in the people, that comrade is essentially proletarianized.

To further clarify what to me is the proper concept of proletarianization, let me say what it is not. That comrade who is completely submerged in the hothouse culture of purely "Trotskyist" politics and education, who is concerned solely with internal party affairs, who perhaps can get aroused over some international event but is apathetic about the unromantic but so vital domestic problems such as housing and the like, that comrade is not proletarianized.

With this understanding of proletarianization in mind the majority of our comrades can hardly be called that. A more scientific term would be sectarians. And it is mainly the older members who fall in this category. The importance of leadership in a revolutionary organization makes this fact doubly unfortunate. And it is precisely this sectarianism that is at the bottom of our low morale.

(Erber has made an analysis of the roots of this sectarian psychology in a document titled "Toward a Party Perspective" issued sometime in 1944. His document constitutes material for a highly desired understanding of themselves by our comrades and deserves to be reissued.)

III. Sectarianism revolves around the internal life of the organization. The members are thrown completely on the internal resources of the organization itself and on the members themselves.

But the be-all and the end-all of the Workers Party is to grow

outward. Its line, its perspectives are in that direction. And it cannot keep that line and those perspectives and be a sect.

But the terrible gulf between our aim, which is outward, and our usual life, which is inward, is demoralizing. The base of our little organization is much too small. This lies at the bottom of our low morale. This might be called the negative aspect of our low morale: the reflection of failure, and we are not supposed to lose courage. However, this low morale is at the same time of progressive significance in the sense that it is an expression of the impossibility of our comrades, especially the older ones, to reconcile themselves to being a sect, to living the inward narrow life of a sect. It is positive in the sense that it reflects an intense dissatisfaction with our present existence, even while it reflects the feeling of not having found the road out. The same people, the same ideas rehearsed, the same campaigns. No wonder our people are disheartened. When they stop being disheartened it will be to sink into complete resignation. They will then be ready for cultism a la MacDonald. Our conception of the party means training critical independent people, not fanatics. Training fanatics is required precisely by a sect. But critical and independent people implies, fortunately or unfortunately, sensitive people, who directly reflect in their morale the correctness or incorrectness of a line and its results. We are not afraid of our sensitivity. We must seize hold of the barometer value of our morale and its causes the beginning of all our plans, methods and activities to overcome the crisis in the New York organization. When we have understood the basic malady of our New York organization, the psychology of sectarianism, we will have the basis for a correct approach to the problems posed in the first paragraph of this article.

IV. What kind of work is possible given the present composition and morale, and which will raise the morale.

To begin with, it is necessary to fix our attitude toward industrialization since this issue is a touchstone on one attitude toward the entire problem of the city membership.

It is time to state clearly: the limit for industrialization has, for all practical purposes, been reached in New York City. This means the following:

(a) Stop operating on the basis that the only way to overcome the crisis in New York City is by industrialization and start looking for other ways and means our non-industrialized comrades can intervene in the life of the working class.

(b) The equation, as a practical guide, of work in trade unions to work in other mass organizations. There is no dispute here that other mass organizations are not as important as the trade unions. The trade unions, since they compose the bulk of the working class and right at the point of production and can be called permanent organizations, are real levers of social action and social power. But this aspect of the trade unions cannot be paramount for us at this time since we hardly do and hardly can play any role in influencing them at the present, and the future is another. Rather that aspect of the trade unions, that of being the largest centers of workers and being permanent, is the factor that should most concern us since we must look at the trade unions primarily from the

point of view of our people finding roots. In another way, we are looking at the trade unions from the point of view of what they can do to give our people roots and stability and not from the necessity of a workers party to influence the trade unions. When looked at from this point of view, it is possible to equate them with other organizations which are capable of giving our people roots, such as neighborhood organizations, AVC, etc. This in no way implies a de-emphasis in the work of our already existing trade union fractions nor a continuous attempt to augment our already existing fractions. But it does mean an end to looking at industrialization as the only cure.

On the other hand, the implications of operating on the basis that industrialization is the only cure are, I believe, the following:

(a) Following what is a sectarian policy that consists of making trade union work the whole of political work of a workers party; or that implies political work is meaningful only if it is carried on within the framework of the unions. Of course, the same people who say industrialization is the only cure also deny they are opposed to other forms of political work. They nevertheless cannot help but de-emphasize the other forms of work regardless of their statements. This idea of industrialization as the only cure has been one of the greatest retarding factors to our getting into other organizations, and keeping alive and doing something substantial on various issues, in the whole past year. This must happen when proletarianization is reduced to industrialization, as these people do.

(b) The industrialization-cure-all concept also leads to an approach in organization that depends solely on the devotion and spirit of self-sacrifice of the members and (1) not primarily on finding ways and means into the life of the working class and (a) as a corollary absolves the leadership from the main responsibility of finding these ways and means.

It is a completely inward approach. It is time to say honestly and intelligently: the success of our movement does not depend primarily on the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice of its members but rather (excluding the correct political line as granted) primarily on our ability to find the ways and means of bringing our politics right into the every day life of the workers! A sect can and does have devoted and self-sacrificing people. We have to find the ways our people can root themselves in the working class and stop these futile exhortations on being active, carrying out assignments, etc. Again let us remind ourselves of the direct relation morale has to being on the right or wrong road.

(c) The idea that industrialization is the only cure also implies a good-sized reduction in our membership. There are comrades who for one reason or another are strongly opposed to going to work in a factory. Can these people be called junk? Most of them will hardly be cadre elements but many of them are old-timers with a developed political savvy and who can be utilized. As one comrade remarked, "They can still be recruited." It is our task to find a way they can play a role in the party and thus help themselves and the party. We cannot afford a reduction of membership based on non-industrialization.

A question may arise. Then are you in favor of no standards, no norm of activity? Should central direction go by the board? No. Not at all. I am in favor of using a norm to define who shall be a member and one that will give the city organization a unified direction. But that norm must strike at the root of our trouble, our isolation from the masses, and must be directed toward overcoming that isolation; and yet be, in our present state, the lowest norm capable of achieving this goal. That norm should be, concretely, that every comrade must in some way or other, either through an organization or an activity, be in contact with non-party people. Failure to make this attempt should mean the reduction of that person to the rank of sympathizer since it will then be evident that his relationship to the tasks and aims of our party is purely platonic and that he is using the party as a personal relationships club.

This extended discussion of what I believe is involved in one's attitude toward industrialization has actually been a partial discussion of what kind of work is possible with our present membership, and which will fully utilize our membership, and through that create a healthy organization. To sum it up:

(1) We should recognize that the limit of industrialization has, for all practical purposes, been reached in New York City.

(2) We should look on the trade unions from that view which sees them primarily as mass organizations of workers and in that sense to be equated to other mass organizations such as neighborhood groups, etc.

(3) Membership in the trade unions or some sort of mass organization or activity to be the minimum norm for party membership.

V. I would like to continue the discussion of what kind of work is possible and will raise morale from another angle. In approaching the above problem we must bear in mind the "tired radical" mood of many of our people. This indicates a type of work that will be:

(1) capable of interesting the comrade involved; (2) of a continuous nature that carries itself along automatically and does not make the comrade depend on his own resources to keep the ball rolling.

To demonstrate what the above approach means, let us discuss some usual types of party activity.

(a) Classes. The classes are usually very badly attended. This is supposed to reflect the level of political interest of our people. This is no doubt true but it also reflects a justifiable tiredness with what amounts to the same old "educational," the same old lectures, that our people have gone through these many years. This is not to minimize the fact that this lack of interest in political education is a real danger signal pointing to the low state we are in. Our movement is based on ideas and a membership trained to study these ideas. But simple condemnation of our people will not alter the situation. The fact is that our people are in a sad dietary condition where they have had too much of the "spirit" of theory, and not enough of the "bread" of doing something concrete in the life of the people, to sustain them. We can predict that this lack of interest in political education will remain with us until we have a more "balanced" diet. Exhortations will do no good.

Something that might be done in the way of making our educationals more interesting might be to be a little bolder in arranging debates and symposiums, the use of outside speakers who will be offered our platform to give their point of view. The Sunday forums were well attended when the speaker was a "big name" or was speaking on a literary topic. We cannot cater completely to this mood but it should indicate something to us. The use of movies, etc. should be utilized.

(b) Selling papers and outdoor meetings. These are done in and for themselves rather than as supplements to neighborhood work or to some campaign. And since these activities, in and of themselves, rarely prove to be fruitful or even interesting and are not self-continuous since they can be called on and off at will, they are of that type that calls upon the internal resources of the comrades themselves, on their sense of responsibility, on their stick-to-itiveness to keep them going. Here too exhortation will accomplish very little. What is indicated by the work, for instance, of the Manhattan Branch is to stop considering sales of LABOR ACTION and street corner meetings as activities in and of themselves and make them supplemental to some neighborhood work the branch is carrying on. In Manhattan the branch holds a street corner meeting on rent control with the knowledge that the spreading of the rent issue will help the tenants council in that area in which our comrades are the prime movers. More than that, we had a table on the street from which we urged people to sign pledge cards against the 15% increase, to join tenants councils, and on the bottom an "I am interested in the Workers Party" to check off. I believe more could have been done. We should have asked a representative of the Emergency Committee on Rent and Housing, of which we are a member organization, to speak from our platform. I believe our pledge cards should have stated that we were a member of the Emergency Committee. We are in no opposition to the tenants councils, whether they are controlled by the Stalinists or not. What we want is to start people doing something. We will reap the harvest eventually.

To sum up: tying up street meetings and LABOR ACTION sales with another activity or campaign will give to this type of activity, which otherwise is a routine affair which most branches feel they "have" to do, a meaning and interest they do not now have. And the activity to which they are tied or which they supplement will impart a certain continuity and discipline to the street meetings and paper sales.

VI. This leads us to what we consider the ideal type of activity for a neighborhood branch since it means intervention in the everyday life of the mass, work of a continuous nature that imparts its own discipline, and that is capable of maintaining the interest of the comrades involved. We refer to concrete neighborhood work. We must look for issues upon which to organize this work, both as a branch of the Workers Party, and also to determine what organizations we want to join in the neighborhood as individuals. If worse comes to worse, these are settlement houses and neighborhood clubs to join. A Trotskyist is able to make political issues.

There are some comrades who will say: we have done neighborhood work for years. And they mean by this that in certain neighborhoods we have held many outdoor meetings and all on the same corner, sold and distributed papers also on the same corner, visited and revisited contact lists in the same neighborhood, etc. But this is not neighborhood work. It is simply propaganda work that is carried on in a specific neighborhood. It does not concretize itself in a definite neighborhood activity and always remains essentially propaganda. Neighborhood work means getting involved in tenants councils, various consumer problem organizations, political groups like the Liberal Party, PCA, etc. It is a definite activity that the party participates in alongside people in their neighborhood. This can be done as a party branch, as individuals or both.

In relation to neighborhood work in general and how to do it, the implications of the transitional slogans formulated for the purpose of creating a bridge between the full program and the existing level of consciousness of the workers and the key transitional slogan of the Labor Party which is to create a bridge organization between the party and the masses, the implications of all this are completely ignored when put on the lowly plane of neighborhood work. There, in the grass roots, we can appear in our own name with our program and recruit. Everywhere else we need bridges, except where we are in direct contact. This unwillingness to face the implications of our transitional program, especially the slogan "For a Labor Party" is going to cause many of us a headache should the form of Labor Party we have projected on paper fail to appear, but rather more diffuse, impure forms of liberal-labor coalitions based on electoral neighborhoods and not on the trade unions. To get off of this aside (worthy of extended discussion), I maintain that the implications of our transitional program indicate our looking for bridge issues and bridge organizations especially in the neighborhoods.

This does not mean that the branches should never appear directly as branches of the Workers Party. But it does mean we must try to base our agitation on a specific and concrete issue. However, the City Organization, more so than the branches, will appear as the direct face of the Workers Party. Here, too, it will do so as concretely as possible. We must be able to tell what to do and how to do it. Our plans and programs must have a real quality about them

and not be made up of broad propagandistic phraseology. Moreover, we must be in the forefront pushing for united fronts of action. We must be bolder in approaching liberal and democratic organizations set up to accomplish something on housing, the fare and the like and try to persuade them to organize united fronts with all organizations which will fight for the same specific thing. We must overcome a certain disbelief in the possibility of pushing these liberal type organizations, and a feeling of inferiority about ourselves expressed in the idea "that they won't join with us."

This then in my opinion is the type of work both possible on the basis of our present composition and low morale and which will raise that morale. It is based first on our membership, its needs and capabilities and, second, on our task which is to grow and gain influence in the working class of New York. This first and second are inseparable and interdependent.

VII. To carry out this line certain organizational steps should be carried out. These are not suggested as immediate measures but as aims.

(1) A steady attempt to get people who live in the area of a certain branch to be members of that branch and not be dispersed in other area branches. At the present time we have people who live in one borough active in the branch of another borough. We must try to overcome this situation since its disadvantages are obvious.

(a) Excluding trade unions, almost every other type of popular organization is based on a neighborhood area. It is almost impossible for one living outside the neighborhood to do work in these organizations and participate in the neighborhood issues which must be the concern of that branch.

(b) Even in such work as contacting, the fact that we can tell a person we live in such and such a street, went to such and such a school, makes a much more human approach possible. Otherwise we remain "missionaries." Perhaps even more important than looking like "missionaries" is the fact that the best type of contact work is possible when we are able to involve our contacts in some joint work with us. This becomes impossible when we do not live near the contact. Thus our only approach is on the basis of ideas. For the average person this is too rarefied.

(2) Legislative Committee. It is necessary in order that we can intervene in the issues as they arise that we have the facts and data on them in order to understand them and be able to figure out a concrete program of action. For this purpose a Legislative Committee should be formed, this committee to be composed of the technical people who know something about things like housing, fare, the laws, etc. who can supply the facts, the other part to be made up of some City Committee members, including the Organizer; the entire Committee to be in charge of knowing the facts and of figuring out the political means of intervening in the issues. The main argument in favor of such a committee is the simple fact that our people, because they do not know much about these issues, do not find ideas occurring to them on how to intervene, thus allowing the issue to pass over our heads. A Legislative Committee will help to overcome this situation.

(3) Composition of branch executive committees and City Committee. We should strive to have our executive committees, including the City Committee, reflect our orientation. We should place those comrades who are directly involved in the work in the neighborhood on the executive committee. Naturally this cannot be done wholesaley since these comrades may not be the most experienced organizationally and politically. But after we are assured of that experience, say to the number of two comrades including the Organizer, we should place these directly involved people on the executive committee even at the expense of others who may be active and may even be better from a general cadre point of view, but who are not directly involved in the external work of the branch.

The same with the City Committee. We should work in the direction of putting in people who are directly involved in the political work of the City and not merely involved in administrating the internal life of our organization.

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PHILADELPHIA ELECTION CAMPAIGN

By Jack Brad

* * *

August 11, 1947.

Dear Comrade Gould:

The petition campaign is over for us - 1201 signatures, we needed 516. Today we are finishing the legal touches and next Monday the 18th, we intend to file. The SWP filed a week ago with 2200 signatures, needing 1100. I believe they were wrong to jump the gun so quickly because their papers can now be very carefully sifted over. It was rather a pointless factional device to get in these before we did.

We are quite satisfied with the campaign up to date. By contrast with the SWP we conducted a politicalized signature campaign. We felt we could do this because of the small number of signatures required. Also, dialectically, our tiny forces could not permit the luxury of just a signature drive without political content since if the drive failed or is rejected by the Board of Elections, we had to safeguard our sparse energies.

For that reason we drew up a program early in the drive and distributed about 1500 copies in the house to house signature solicitation. Thus, everyone visited received a program and many also received LABOR ACTION and other leaflets. We obtained half a dozen subs*and developed some good contacts. After every soliciting assignment each comrade returned to the Hall to (1) list all names of people worth revisiting, (2) report on conversations and types of questions asked and response to our various approaches. The result was that there took place a constant exchange and pooling of experiences and many of the comrades developed a feel for contacting such as they seldom before had. The outcome is a list of about 180 names and addresses of all types of people to be revisited.

This takes us to the second part of our campaign which begins tomorrow and will run until about September 15. This will consist of visiting each of the people listed. Our first objective will be to obtain LABOR ACTION subs so that constant contact with the Party is established. We hope then to revisit those who take the LABOR ACTION subs with other literature and for campaign purposes. Thus a weeding out process will precede the actual campaign which will begin about October 1st. By that date we hope to have a substantial LABOR ACTION list in the district and a core of people who know about us in recent and active terms. This contact work we conceive as the foundation work and the real campaigning, which later plans should consolidate and expand. We have already increased our LABOR ACTION readers in the District from 14 to 38.

In our signature campaign we concentrated on three neighborhoods in the District. We were forced into spreading in this manner,

*By the last week in August, the total number of subs procured in the District was reported as 40.

against better judgment, because of our small forces and because we had only poor knowledge of the District. We worked largely in the Negro district of about 7 square blocks around the headquarters, a Jewish neighborhood of about 5 square blocks and the old mill district to the North where live a large concentration of textile, ship and transport workers, mostly of Irish and Polish extraction.

We found the Jewish District the least satisfactory. In checking with Goldman (SWP) we discovered that his experience was identical in all respects. The Jewish workers were suspicious and cynical, dominated by the Republican Party and in sharp fear of it. Those who were Democrats were violently so, in this one-party city. The garment trades workers we found were waiting for their unions to act. For them the union was the sole possibility for action. On the whole, but with a few exceptions, we found the Jewish workers most conservative of the three groups approached. However, we did get some good receptions on individual planks, such as that calling for a free city college and the rent anti-eviction program. A few responded to the labor candidacy idea.

In the Negro district we met some suspicion, which was natural, and also a good deal of illiteracy and transiency. The percentage of valid signatures ran about 50%, although we went house to house. (It ran only a little higher in the Jewish district where transiency was likewise high, as was illiteracy.) We did, however, get a good number of contacts and subscriptions and other responses. While work here was most difficult it did have its rewards and satisfactions. We found a great deal of sheer inquisitiveness about the Party. The idea of a labor candidate was only secondarily understood. The main question here was undoubtedly our rent-anti-eviction program and our housing and municipal improvements planks and, secondly, Jim Crow. The idea of a working class candidacy was not decisive.

We learned at a very early date to concentrate on the mill district. For a New Yorker this is a peculiar working class neighborhood. It is built off main avenues on which are located the huge textile and hosiery mills and the shipyards and fabricating plants of Philadelphia's near Northeast. Most of the workers here own their own homes, although mortgaging is very common and is increasing. (In Philadelphia 60% of the resident families own their own homes and while the proportion for the working class may be lower than this, a very substantial number of workers own homes and such ownership is a driving economic and social ideal in the class.)

These workers are mostly semi-skilled. Their homes and lives are relatively stable. A large number have lived in these homes since the depression and before. It is not only a matter of a permanent home but also of neighborhood. The struggle to maintain home ownership is one of the most constant driving forces since with every economic and family crisis this ownership is threatened. The home serves as the outlet for much creative and physical energies. The men spend considerable time in repair and improvements - a never-ending fight against deterioration.

This area was the scene of the great textile organization drives in the middle thirties and of the general strike in Textile in 1934. It had numerous and militant unemployed organizations. During the depression a local labor party ran candidates here. It is a pre-

dominantly CIO area, lying just south of the solidly working class areas of Kensington. The area consists of the 37th and 31st Wards and part of the 17th.

Here we found the greatest reception of the idea of a class party and a class candidacy and program. The call for a labor party was greeted everywhere with at least agreement. The idea of a socialist organization was, in many cases, openly accepted. It is here we made most of our contacts and where we expect to concentrate most. We have the advantage that a good number of ex-shipyard workers know the party because of its war-time activity and several of our members are well known.

There is in the neighborhood the Kensington Labor Lyceum, a union meeting place and center for various Stalinist-controlled outfits. We will, however, attempt to build up to meetings at the Lyceum.

The bulk of our signatures were obtained here and of these we found 90%-95% valid. Most of the workers are registered Republicans, largely in self-defense - to keep their taxes from discriminatory rise, for the petty favors of the machine which are so costly otherwise. The Republican machine here is tightly knit, carefully organized on a block basis with a wide network of committeemen. It is a deeply rooted organization, controlling the city and state administrations and patronage and having uncontested control for 75 years, except for the brief Roosevelt flurry in 1936. It will be remembered that Lincoln Steffens described Philadelphia as "corrupt and contented" and while the latter requires qualification, it is a fact that there has not even been a municipal reform movement here since the Civil War. Republican control is based on the heavy industry economy of the state. The Democrats are a second rate outfit of jackals who take the Republican leavings. In Philadelphia they have one representative on the City Council of 22. There is no equilibrium between the parties as there is in New York, for example. The working class is, therefore, constantly forced to the Republican camp by lack of an alternative. The reception to our campaign shows that a labor alternative is desired. The local labor leadership has, however, if anything become even more opportunistic than last year. It is now fooling around with supporting Republican candidates, having repudiated the Democratic leadership.

This campaign was begun three days after the Johnsonite split and organized in the midst of it. It should be remembered that in Philadelphia the Johnsonites had their stronghold, one-half of the branch. They took some 12 book members, leaving us with a branch of 13 book members, three of whom were unable to participate at all in the campaign. We do not have a full time organizer. From the beginning we saw in the campaign a means of involving sympathizers and, indeed, that they were our hope for success. Six sympathizers actually did help and this assistance was decisive for us. The comrades responded wonderfully, rallying to the Party solidly right after the split. The six sympathizers put in a total of 15 evenings' work out of a grand total of 69. This is aside from technical and financial help.

The next step is the filing and sweating out the 7 days until August 27, during which we may be invalidated.

Comradely,
Jack Brad

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TOWARDS A VIABLE YOUTH GROUP

By Peter Marlow (San Francisco)

* * *

There is nobody aware of the situation facing the movement and the world at large who will deny the manifest importance of organizing class conscious youth into the Party. Though we attempt to orient ourselves primarily towards the working class, we cannot afford to ignore the young veterans who have flooded schools and colleges all over the country, and who present such an imposing revolutionary potential, fascist or otherwise. While I do not pretend to be either experienced or educated in this line, I shall try to set down a few suggestions regarding a youth organization, since I myself am a college veteran.

The primary purpose of a youth group, to my understanding, is to prepare young people, who are not experienced in class struggle, for life in the Party at a later date. The demands upon the members are probably not as great as those made upon members of the Party, just as we allow our newer comrades more leeway than we do those who have long experience in the movement. This does not mean in any sense that a youth organization should take on the aspect of a mere discussion group, which in itself would be fatal. The organization does, however, attempt to give younger people a good, well-rounded education, both in Marxist theory and in the politics and program of the Party.

The college group of today, wherein lie our greatest possibilities, is quite different from the pre-war high school or even the pre-war college group. In the first place, there is the undeniable effect of the experience of living through a war (and a highly disillusioning post-war period) as these youth have. Secondly, there is actually a majority of veterans, at least on the campus here, and I presume that on large campuses all over the country the vets form a sizable lump of the population. They are the most conscious and potentially militant of the students, and it is towards them that we should direct ourselves in our efforts to build an organization around campus.

The vets can, however, still be called youth in many ways, even though they are more politically sophisticated (and more interested in politics) than were the college people of an earlier day. Most of the veterans on campus left high school to join the service, and have never had any experience with jobs in the real sense of the word. They are ignorant of basic "facts of life" known to any good trade unionist, regardless of his youth. We might say that they are young in terms of a "class struggle education."

For this reason it is my opinion that it is not desirable to set up a separate "campus branch" (on equal terms with the already established branch) for these students, regardless of the fact that most of them are over twenty. Such a group could easily degenerate into a more or less self-perpetuating, sterile group of undisciplined, intellectual dilettantes if it lacked the guiding hand of the older comrades in the already established branch (an assistance that could not very well be extended under conditions of separate and equal branches with a city committee). It is impractical to try to keep

mixing up the membership, transferring workers to the campus branch, etc., etc. So we must have a youth group, which will have some of the more experienced comrades on its executive committee, and which will be in a position to take advantage of the guidance and assistance of the established branch.

It seems to me, however, that the SYL is not fitted at present to handle this job. From what I have read of YOUTH ACTION, it is still back in the good old days, trying to get to the high school youth. It is unsuited to vets, who are far beyond it in years and experience.

We cannot very well give these people LABOR ACTION since it is oriented wholly towards the workers and has nothing in it that deals with the problems of students generally. It would neither appeal to, nor be an organ for, the expression of a youth organization. Also, a paper for young intellectuals should have more of a body of theory, particularly since the average student (especially the veteran) is trying desperately to build up a sort of intellectual facade around himself, and at this stage of his development is appealed to primarily by the things of an intellectual nature (e.g.; on a stand near the campus 16 NI's were sold in 3 days, a total not generally equalled by all the other stands put together in a whole month).

I propose, therefore, if the comrades now in charge of the SYL agree with me on the problems I have posed, that an effort be made to change the theoretical and political orientation of YOUTH ACTION to one more befitting the situation with which we are confronted. If possible, find a college vet to edit it. It might even be a good idea to change the name, omitting the word "youth" since none of these people regard themselves as such, however wrong they may be.

Also, if possible, a monthly theoretical organ for the youth should be published (I understand that such a publication exists, but since I have not yet seen a copy, I cannot comment on it). It should be a complement to the paper, and could be mimeographed if necessary.

I realize that I have only scratched the surface of this complicated problem, but I do feel that it is important to do something about it. I have possibilities at this time of organizing such a group on the campus here, but I should not like to recruit the particular prospects I have to an organization such as the existing SYL, since I feel that this group would be miserably disappointed. We could just take them into the Party, but that would greatly reduce our chances of building an organization around the campus, which would be enormously profitable in the present situation.

May 28, 1947.

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TOWARDS A NATIONAL YOUTH CADRE

By J. Falk

* * *

The radical movement has long recognized that its youth sections are an invaluable reservoir for Party cadres; that the youth organization itself is an irreplaceable training school in the theory, politics and organization of the movement; that the youth organization in itself serves a special and significant role in the fight for Socialism. Unfortunately, we do not have a significant youth organization; one which can make the necessary material and political contributions to the Party. Such a youth movement must be built. It has become in recent years a problem of paramount importance for the Party.

This lack was theoretically recognized at the Active Workers Conference two years ago. However, the "drive" to initiate a socialist youth league never passed the resolution stage. The attempt to build a youth movement remained, until recently, more of a noble gesture than a serious effort. The national office of the Party did not provide the necessary incentive, directives and suggestions to the local branches of the Party. The result has been a failure to fulfill the objectives of building a youth movement, set by the 1945 AWC.

Though the original push for creating a youth movement must come from the Party National Office, the actual work of building such a movement is, in its initial stages, the responsibility of local Party branches. Neither the Party National Office nor the semi-artificial Bureau of the existing SYL can adequately substitute for what the local branches must do. Not until we have built a respectable number of local youth groups can we really think in terms of a functioning national youth organization: a national movement with a genuine national bureau and local youth leaderships of high caliber, which can rely on its own initiative and resources. Once this point is reached, local branches can relax their close supervision over their youth sections allowing them to function as units of an organizationally autonomous socialist youth league. Until then local branches must be responsible for the education of their youth units and the supervision of their activity. This presupposes the closest attention to the work and the maximum cooperation to those engaged in such work.

Last July the Party was reawakened to the need of building the SYL. The imminent defection of the Johnsonites then, no doubt had a sobering effect on the Party leadership when it could not turn to a youth section to help fill the gap. The P.C. decided to embark on a campaign after the summer to reemphasize the importance of youth work to its branches, and to implement this with directives and suggestions. This drive has already begun.

In conjunction with the party drive, the SYL plans to publish its first printed programmatic pamphlet, print membership cards, publish a regular monthly discussion bulletin and to enter into correspondence with various branches on youth work.

It would be utopian to have the perspective of building a mass

youth movement today. This is not the period in which such a goal can be realized. Students have become depoliticalized today as compared with ten years ago. The average student has been "bourgeoisified" by the present "boom." He feels relatively secure, is extremely career conscious, is busy planning his "future" and frightened by, if not antipathetic to, militant socialist ideas. A revolutionary socialist program cannot meet with mass sympathy from this quarter under such circumstances. Neither can we make a noteworthy dent among the working class youth, for essentially the same reasons. In those cities where we have Party branches (primarily industrial cities) which can reach teen age workers; we will find it disproportionately difficult to recruit them to a socialist youth organization and even more difficult to hold them. Young workers today are well off as compared with ten years ago when five million unemployed youth were competing for 25¢ an hour jobs. These young workers have developed a false sense of security which would diminish their receptivity to revolutionary socialism almost to the zero point.

Though the objective conditions are not conducive to building a mass youth movement now, there is nothing in the world which prevents us from building a cadre today for such a movement tomorrow, provided the Party takes the task seriously. Despite the general apathy of American youth towards socialist ideas, we must remember two things:

(1) This apathy is not universal. It is a general characterization, not a description of all young students and workers. There are hundreds of islands within this sea of apathy on which we can build a socialist youth cadre.

(2) The very apathy betrays an uneasiness. Young people, though still planning their "futures," actually do not look forward to this future with the same smugness and confidence as the youth did twenty years ago.

A cadres of several hundred young people in this period can be built and can become a tremendous force once the illusions of American youth are shattered by the realities of economic crisis, conscription, etc.

In order to build this youth cadre the local Party branches doing youth work should orient themselves towards the most politicalized youth. What this means is student work, and more specifically campus work. The long range perspective is obviously to build a mass working class youth movement, but we must orient ourselves now towards what is possible at the moment and necessary for the future. Considering the objective conditions and the size of our movement, the creation of a cadre of politicalized students is the indicated objective for party branches engaged in youth work.

Specific suggestions to the various Party branches on how to most effectively work on the campus, in the high schools and in neighborhood clubs will be discussed in future articles and in letters from the National Office.

Just a few words here on the AYD, the Yipsels and working with veterans on the campus.

AYD

The AYD is a Stalinist front organization. It was inaugurated by the CP and its politics are determined by the CP. However, the AYD membership has not become nearly as Stalinized as its sponsors would like. There are many young people within AYD who would listen to us seriously and who could be recruited if properly approached and worked on. There are even anti-Stalinist youth within AYD who have joined that organization for lack of another youth organization within which to function.

A simple thing like a series of objective, propaganda leaflets, with an interest blank on them, distributed to AYD'ers, could easily produce a salutary result. Assigning a younger comrade to visit neighborhood AYD chapters to discuss politics (without hiding his political affiliation) could be equally fruitful.

YPSL

Wherever possible contact should be made with the SP youth. Many Yipsels have become sorely disillusioned with the reformist politics of the Socialist Party and repelled at the prospect of unity with the Social Democratic Federation. A left wing has developed within the YPSL which could be pushed in the direction of revolutionary socialism. It is true that most of these left-wing Yipsels have accepted; at least tentatively, most of the typical anti-Bolshevik arguments of Social Democracy ("Dictatorship of the Party," "Kronstadt," Bolshevik immorality, etc.), prejudices and conceptions which can be easily enough dissipated if we can arrange discussions and debates with them.

VETERANS ON CAMPUS

Personally, I feel that comrades on the campus are devoting too much time to veterans. Contrary to the sentiments expressed by Comrade Marlow in an article printed in this issue of the BUILDER, I think that there is little "revolutionary potential" among campus vets. It is true that they are more sophisticated and in a sense more interested in politics than the "legitimate" college youth. But their interest is by and large dilettante-ish. From my own impression, partially confirmed by the experiences of other comrades, the average campus vet is more willing to discuss, but less willing to join a Socialist youth or adult organization. If most of the energy expended on campus veterans were directed towards younger, less "worldly-wise" students, I am sure that the results would be more conspicuous.

Veterans work on the campus should not be discontinued but de-emphasized.

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YOUTH ACTIVITY IN NEWARK

By Barry Milton and Dick Drake
(For the Newark Branch)

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We believe that a brief discussion of the Newark Branch's experience in youth activities this summer may be of particular value to other branches of the party which are engaged in youth work as well as to members of the Socialist Youth League.

At first we had planned to enter the newly organized Student League for Industrial Democracy and work in this organization as the youth comrades had done in other parts of the country. However, we soon learned that the SLID had failed to be reborn locally and decided it would be worthless to devote our time to forming a group whose hazy program would not assure us of any contact material.

Our next move was a visit to a meeting on the Taft-Hartley Bill held by the Teen-Age group of the American Youth for Democracy. Although we concealed our identity, during the discussion period we presented the party position on the anti-labor bill and concluded by emphasizing the necessity for an independent labor party. Much to our surprise we were very warmly received, and what was even more astounding to us was the non-Stalinist attitude of many leading members and the general democratic spirit in which the meeting was conducted. We realized that our evaluation of this organization as purely the YCL in new garb would have to be revised and that the AYD might prove to be a very fruitful field of political work.

We attended the next two meetings of this group of the AYD, and during the discussion period of each we continued to hammer at the fallaciousness of the AYD approach to various questions and substituted them with more militant and concrete alternatives. In our talks on the floor and in personal conversation after the meetings, we explained that we sympathized with the many democratic goals of the AYD but seriously questioned that organization's actual desire to achieve them. We pointed specifically to the question of totalitarianism. We agreed that the AYD had made some fine efforts to combat fascists (picketing Smith, etc.) but, we asked, has the leadership of the AYD prevented the membership from seeing other totalitarian forces in America and throughout the world?

About the time of our attendance at the third consecutive meeting we picked out what seemed to us to be the most outspoken and radical members and began to approach each one personally. We explained to them that we were Trotskyist youth, confident of our socialist tradition and program, and were anxious to meet with them and discuss our political differences. They all very willingly agreed and we proceeded to hold a meeting several days later.

Present at the meeting in addition to a number of AYD'ers were several odd youth whom we had had contact with previously. After we had cleaned the air of the usual fascist accusations, we discussed numerous questions, among them the need for a revolutionary party and international socialism. Most of the youth responded very enthusiastically and were eager to continue our meetings on a weekly basis.

After we had held two meetings with them, word leaked out that they were participating in discussions with the "Trotskyites." It was not until fully a month after we attended the first AYD meeting that a motion was brought up in this club's executive committee that a state official be invited to discuss "Trotskyism" before the membership. A few of the people who met with us were on the executive committee, and they bitterly opposed this motion on the grounds that any AYD speaker on this subject would be "prejudiced." Their request that a Trotskyist also be invited to officially present his point of view was overruled by a very slim majority.

At their next meeting the State Educational Director delivered a very sloppy and ill-prepared, particularly venomous attack upon "Trotskyism." When he had completed his talk and we arose to reply, we were interrupted by the speaker who, incidentally, had very conveniently taken over chairmanship of the meeting, and were told that this was a "question" period not a "discussion." We thereupon proceeded to ask him several questions, the answers to which came from his imagination or were a complete denial of fact. It was at this point that one of our friends challenged the validity of the speaker's talk. Every effort was made to hush his dissident voice, but he only became more angry with these methods. He called for a motion permitting us to present a reply to the speaker. This motion was seconded by several members. A brief discussion was held, during which several members arose and denounced the speaker for his failure to reply to our questions and demanded that we be given time to deliver a complete answer. It was apparent that the motion would be carried by an overwhelming majority despite efforts of the speaker, the Stalinist club "advisor," and the State Teen-Age leader to quiet the club. It was amidst this confusion that the speaker seized his opportunity and adjourned the meeting. After this we had a long and successful talk with about a dozen AYD'ers.

On the basis of our experience in the AYD we want to urge the youth and the party branches to carefully examine the AYD in their respective cities. One very important point should not go by unnoticed. The AYD is divided into several groups, the most important of which are the Young Adult (19-21) and the Teen-Age. We have come to the conclusion after observing the two groups, that they are strikingly dissimilar. The older one, the Young Adults, consists of many old YCL'ers and is pretty well Stalinized. It is from this group that the CP does its recruiting. On the other hand, the Teen-Agers consist primarily of younger people who have been recruited during the past two years. Moreover, the Teen-Agers are by and large non-Stalinists who have a high respect for democratic rights. Therefore, we would say to characterize the AYD as just the old YCL in new garb or to say that its internal life is a reproduction of Stalinist meetings does not quite cover the entire organization. It is true of the Young Adults but not of the Teen-Agers. AYD is a far broader organization than the old YCL, and as a result of its watered program, it has attracted a wide variety of youth. Nationally the Stalinists control the AYD - they dictate its program and policies; but if the chapter on which we have been working is any indication, their control over the Teen Age membership is of a very slim nature.

Another important observation which we have made of the Teen-Age group is that precisely because of its democratic airs and the fact that it is the only real American youth organization in existence, it is inclined to attract independent radical youth, opposed to the AYD,

to drop into a meeting occasionally and have a short political talk. Two very good socialist youth who joined our discussion group came to the AYD for this reason.

It is true that many AYD'ers are recruited on a social basis, but the leading people in this group with whom we have had contact are serious, socially conscious youth, many of whom are openly critical of the AYD. These groups contain many youth who are potentially good cadre material. Wherever possible, every effort should be made to reach them.

August 14, 1947.

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