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# The Young People's Socialist Federation.

by Louis Weitz

*Organizer*

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There are few Socialists who will dispute the need of organization among the young Socialists of America and elsewhere. Should any of them be asked why such organization is needed, the answers would certainly prove interesting. It would show us that the following reasons are among the most frequently given.

We need organization, first of all, in order that we may erase the false teachings of both our public and private institutions of learning. These false teachings, if permitted to grow into maturity, become increasingly difficult to blot out of existence. In fact, a young person's mind is freer from prejudice, and more willing to tread over new and unbroken knowledge. Therefore, organization will assist in eliminating the waste of time and energy, by refusing to permit false notions to gain entrance into the mind, and thereby saving the labor of first extracting the false ideas before putting in the true.

We need organization, secondly, in order that we may satisfy the desire among the young Socialists for sociability with their own kind. The desire for sociability must be satisfied, since it grows out of a physical and mental need. Any Socialist youths and maidens being no different from other people in this respect, they seek to supply this want. Naturally, they wish to associate with those of a progressive type similar to their own. As people can be judged by the company they keep, so people do seek the company which suits their own individual tastes. Consequently, growing into manhood and womanhood, side by side, in a social and personal way, they will be less apt to forget their ideals; and will also work with each other in a more comradely fashion.

We need organization, thirdly, and lastly, in order to prepare the members for the future. The glaring

lack of training and discipline of many members of the Socialist Party points out the crying need of such a regimen. Organization, if properly carried on, ought to be genuine introduction to the best methods of how to act as Socialists. Besides, the teaching of Socialist economics having freed the mind of many fallacies and misunderstandings concerning their own doctrine, they can thus easily spare themselves the present nonsensical and personal debates. Thus, progress will be greater, and the realization of our object will come sooner. Undoubtedly, under this procedure the senseless and sentimental ravings will end, and reason will then prevail.

It was to supply these needs that four years ago an organization was begun in New York City, which called itself the Young People's Socialist Federation. I shall relate the history of this organization very briefly, because those in it from the beginning are expected to write articles treating of this special phase of organization. The Federation began its existence under a rosy atmosphere and with exceedingly high hopes and enthusiasm. But due to the lack of a guiding spirit matters sunk into an almost intolerable state. And so the Socialist Party sent someone to see what he could do towards bettering matters. However, either through misinformation concerning the Socialist Party's attitude, or because of a natural youthful repulsion toward authority, little good came out of this.

The Socialist Party, for the time being, was helpless in the matter, on account of its own numerous activities. It, therefore, stopped its efforts in our behalf. In the meantime, the Federation again requested help, in the way of furnishing us with directors for the various circles. The Socialist Party took some slight heed and promised to elect a committee to help us in

our educational endeavors.

The committee being but slightly urged by the Socialist Party consequently neglected its duties. By this time our Federation was decreasing in membership and getting into deep water. Yet, due to the persistence of the few remaining members' tireless energy and dogged determination, a delicate period was tided over. The Socialist Party was now being appealed to more than ever before, and our position was clearly outlined to them. At last they gave us a hearing and promised to endorse our Federation, besides assisting in the running of our affairs. They have already endorsed our Federation.

The weakened condition of our organization and the fact that several Young Socialist Clubs were not in our fold, forced upon us the necessity for reorganization. After considerable difficulty we were able to get together these unfederationized clubs into one general meeting, in June 1911, at which the Socialist Party was also represented. Here a new constitution was endorsed, and a new set of officers was elected.

A general shake-up was then in order. But, again, we were hampered in our progress, because of the setting of the summer months — a period when great inactivity is the rule. Thus, up to the present time, we have been unable to accomplish as much as was anticipated. The beginning of the fall season will show a decided change for the better. In fact, all preparations are now being made toward that end.

The work is being carried on without much bragadocio, and by a process which is slow but sure. It is, after all, the only way to do things which bring practical, lasting results. At the same time these results will not and cannot be obtained without the hearty cooperation of both the members and sympathizers of the Federation.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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