

FOR NC INFORMATION:

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
February 1, 1966

To the National Committee Members Assembled at the Plenum of
February 1966

Party Youth Policy in Milwaukee and Party Growth

Comrade James Cannon once observed that a revolutionary party knows when it must remain few in numbers, and when it must grow. We believe that the present conjuncture in the U.S., favored by a split within bourgeois political circles, over the design of American imperialism, opens up the possibility that the SWP can realize an important measure of growth.

Over the past five years the radicalization begun in the South has deepened. The black liberation movement, the student independence and anti-war movements, the widespread cultural and ideological ferment in all sectors of the social superstructure, and the encouraging fracture in the world Communist monolith in response to the continuing revolution over Asia, signify the advent of a period in which the SWP must grow or perish.

Moreover, socialist planning in the European Soviet bloc has encountered new set-backs, giving rise to what Karl Marx called "the old crap over again." These phenomena pose once again the urgency for revolutionary advance and Party organization in the advanced capitalist countries. And they underscore the absolute relevance in the Trotskyist critique for transitional socialist societies.

On Sunday, January 23, twelve youth - some workers, some students - gathered in the hall of the SWP to form the Milwaukee Young Socialists. Such a meeting could no longer be delayed in view of past refusals by the Party and Youth leadership to recognize a youth affiliation in Milwaukee. Seven youth paid initiation fees to the Milwaukee Young Socialists.

The meeting was held in response to a formal call by three youth members of the SWP in Milwaukee; and the meeting was conducted under their direction. Many in attendance have been active in the student anti-war movement and have supported the Party's position in the broad, divergent anti-war movement. On the occasion of the Milwaukee Conference for the NCC, these youth were host to the Party-Youth delegates in attendance.

We are convinced that the time has arrived when the Party prohibitions against the formation of an affiliate section of the Youth in Milwaukee must be rescinded. No serious purpose is served in a continuation of the ill-founded 1963 restrictions imposed by the Secretariat upon youth activity here. On the other hand a continuation of the ban creates an unnecessary difficulty in giving real weight to the concept of democratic centralism.

Legalization of youth work in Milwaukee, now, would constitute a genuine step toward implementing a broad policy of Party growth and recruitment. And it would also favor normalization of internal Party affairs.

The recent exodus of assorted petty-bourgeois dilletantes and proponents of varied state capitalist notions in the Marxist movement should make possible a normalization of relations within the Party, in respect to disciplined minorities, those who share the central views of Comrade A. Swabek, and the workers' group in Milwaukee.

We find it difficult to believe that there is any evidence to support further argument the Milwaukee Party members and youth are guilty of insubordination, today. And a recent experience of the Party in Philadelphia, where a declassé lumpen individual perpetrated unpardonable acts against the Party comrades there, underscores the tenuous basis upon which the restrictions against youth work in Milwaukee were constructed.

In any event, even a sentence imposed by a bourgeois court has a point of termination. We respectfully urge the Party plenum to take a step forward by extending reasonable relief to the Milwaukee comrades. And the pressing date for the Youth Conference in March makes it additionally urgent that Milwaukee Young Socialists shall take their place among comrades.

Fraternally yours,

S/ Myrtle Kastner
for

James Boulton
for the Milwaukee EC

March 1, 1966
New York, N.Y.

Dear Gus,

Enclosed is an extra copy of the majority letter
and documents.

Comradely,

ES:ba
enc.

Ed Shaw