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ORGANIZATIONAL REPORT

Report on the state of the organization prepared by the Executive Committee of the W.E.B. DuBois Clubs of New York for discussion at the June 8 Organizational Conference.

(Note: This is a copy. All misspellings and errors in punctuation are in the original.)

The New York DuBois Club is at a critical point in its history.

We are at a critical point because the direction that we chart for ourselves in the next year will determine whether or not we are to progress in the direction of becoming a mass inter-racial socialist youth organization, or whether we will stagnate and eventually degenerate into irrelevancy.

We are at a critical point because at the same time that we are stronger than we have ever been, we are also characterized by some of the most unbelievable and deep-seated weaknesses.

In New York City the membership, level of activity and influence of the DuBois Club is greater than it has ever been. Some of our successes and initiatives in the past year have indicated a potential for growth which if even partially fulfilled could enable us to become the youth organization in the city within a year or so. But the ability of our organization to sustain itself and grow has not kept pace with our sensitivity to mass trends and our ability to initiate and organize actions involving masses of young people. In fact, in several areas we have actually declined organizationally at a time when our members were involved in the most intense political activity and when the over-all level of activity of the movement was at a peak. (We are referring now primarily to our college clubs, which at the present time constitute the main base of the N.Y. DBC)

There are three basic reasons why even in this period of expanding DBC activity and influence we still lead a very precarious existence:

1.) Overinvolvement with coalitions, especially the "peace coalition."

The DuBois Club throughout its history has had the broadest approach of all the left youth groups toward building coalitions around issues affecting masses of people in a given constituency. But too often we have let ourselves become subsumed within the coalitions. Sometimes we have become involved in several coalitions in a given area, and functioned almost exclusively as a cadre organization. Usually, this has resulted in total destruction of the DBC as an independent force. For example, at Queens College this past year the DBC members became active in and gave leadership to the Anti-Draft Union, the Spring Action Committee, the Freedom & Peace Party and a recently formed, unnamed coalition dealing with racism on campus. Another DBC member spent most of her political time working in the Demokratia. As a result, DuBois Club activity came to a standstill. It became literally impossible for the club to meet without conflicting with a coalition meeting. This was not the only problem with Q.C. DBC, but it was a major factor in its decline.

We should be aware of the fact that the approach that killed the Q.C. DBC has also had a detrimental effect on most of the other DBC's in the New York area. Few DuBois Clubs maintained an independent organizational identity within the strike coalitions. While we generally gave excellent leadership to these committees, and as individuals did a great deal of actual organizing work which enabled this action to become the most massive and highly developed in recent years, and while we were usually highly regarded by other active members of the strike coalition, we nevertheless did not reap the organizational growth which usually accompanies such intense activity. This occurred because there was no reason for anyone to join the DuBois Club--we weren't doing anything independent as an organization. A few people might have joined because they liked our

ideology or our method of work, but mass break-throughs were and will be impossible without independent initiatives and activity as a central thrust of our program.

We are not saying that we should not get involved in coalitions. We should. But we have to be more critical of which coalitions we enter and how many we enter at a given time. Even when it has been appropriate to enter a coalition, we have often gone about it in the wrong way--that is, by dissolving ourselves into the coalition.

We should generally shun or give minor attention to coalitions of the left only (i.e., a coalition of us, SDS, PL & YSA). In these cases it is usually best to organize the activity ourselves, in our own name, and not get bogged down in the frustrating and useless in-fighting which usually plagues such coalitions. Our job should be out organizing the masses of young people around our program, not wasting our time arguing with others on the left about the best approach. We should also be aware of the fact that factionalism and conscious organizational attacks are at an all-time high in the movement today. Too often we get hung up in this self-defeating bag. We should make a point of avoiding inter-organizational squabbling and factionalism.

We should enter into and build coalitions which have or can have some genuine breadth. But when we do we should try to stick to the policy of having one representative in the coalition to represent us and fight for our position.

There is no reason why we should pump all of our leaders or members into a coalition. Not only will this halt all independent initiative on the part of the DBC, but it will also have the destructive effect of turning the coalition into a front for our program. It may also create on our part a manipulative attitude toward the coalition.

We should see as our primary responsibility the job of building a DuBois Club movement and the DuBois Club organization. Some people have argued that building the DBC is in conflict with our prior responsibility to build the movement as a whole.

We do not believe that these two tasks are in conflict. We think that we can have the healthiest and most profound impact on the movement as a whole through a strong DBC organization. And the movement as a whole would suffer a tremendous loss if the DBC were to go out of existence. Our purpose as a DuBois Club is not merely to bring more of a socialist perspective to other organizations. Our purpose should be to make the socialist trend dominant in the movement. We should be the organizational embodiment of that trend in the movement. That is why our organization and independent program are essential. And that is why building the DBC and our program as a top priority is not in conflict with the movement. It is in fact the way we can make the greatest contribution to the movement.

During the time of the Student Strike we practically ceased all independent DBC activity (as a matter of fact, only one college club has even met since the strike--this is an indication of the seriousness of the crisis we are in). But people defended this development by arguing that we raised the issue of racism successfully within the strike and that this vindicated our approach.

We usually did raise the issue, and where we did, it constituted an important contribution to the movement. But the role of the DBC is not simply to raise the issue in other coalitions, not even to raise demands. We have a program of struggle around these demands and a strategy for victory. That program in outline is 1) to raise the demands, 2) to wage an educational campaign, 3) to build support for the struggle, 4) to confront the administration and 5) to move into the arena of direct action of both a militant and a mass character in order to force a yielding to our demands. Yet on not one campus did this occur, though it had been our official program for months. We are convinced that had we followed this line of action, not only would we have exerted an ideological influence on the movement and on the campus as a whole, but our membership would have soared and we would have turned this city upside down!

We have to avoid the pitfall of dissolving ourselves into coalitions which are formed essentially around our program. At Brooklyn College for example an expressed reason for establishing a Student-Faculty Coalition Against Racism was, according to one DBC leader, because "There exists no single organization on campus whose main purpose is to struggle against racism". If this isn't the DBC, then we don't know what is!

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At Hunter College, prior to the strike, though the DBC was the only left political organization on campus, we took a tragic step backward by dissolving ourselves into a Strike Committee which we organized and led. As a result of this, and because of a general crisis of identity in the club as a whole, some members began to question the need for the organization. Not seeing any difference between our organization and the Strike Committee, they decided to end their membership in the DBC.

At Cooper Union, too, while our "influence" in the movement and in the Cooper Peace Union (the group that organized the Strike) increased, our membership declined.

In light of these experiences, we should learn some lessons which we can apply when we enter into coalitions in the future. Next year, in most cases we should develop coalitions on campuses to struggle to change the racist practices of those institutions.

In general we should:

- 1) Begin by organizing education and action projects in our own name. This will identify us with the issue, gain us respect as the initiator of the struggle, and in general, enable us to enter the coalitions from a position of strength.

- 2) Seek to form broad coalitions around the issues among already existing organizations.

3) Structure the coalition so it is a coalition of representatives of different organizations, including a representative of the DBC.

4) Continue to play an independent ideological and educational role within the coalition and, when necessary, an independent programmatic role.

In areas where we are the only or main organization on campus, we should carry out the action in our own name.

This approach will enable us, we believe, to build the movement while at the same time building the DBC.

2) Lack of a well-rounded program--including educational, social and cultural activities as well as action-oriented programs. Most of our clubs have not developed a well-rounded program designed to meet the varied needs of youth.

We should realize that young people will want to associate with a socialist youth organization for many reasons. They will participate with us on many different levels--in some activities and not in others. We should have a program geared toward winning the broadest range of young people to our organization.

We should also realize that our ability to develop a well-rounded program geared to meeting the educational, social and cultural needs of young people will be hampered as long as we are over-involved in coalitions and don't consider it a priority to make enough of our time or resources available to develop our independent activity in these areas as well as in the political arena.

3) Anarchistic structure, lack of leadership and lack of clearly defined lines of responsibility. As a socialist organization we should appreciate the role of organization and leadership. The capitalist class is highly organized. Its leaders are highly trained. We will never overthrow it if we adhere to anarchistic forms of organization.

One Du Bois Club this year had no elected leadership. Another had rotating chairman (a la sds)-with no defined lines of responsibility. Meetings never got called because no one was "authorized" to call them. Most of our clubs met regularly throughout the year, but not all of them. Most clubs did not have an Exec. which functioned regularly to give leadership and stability to the organization. The lack of a solidly functioning Exec. was a major problem in the High School Division. The Trade Union Department and the Black and Spanish Dept. never even developed a functioning exec. This led to, and can only lead to, negative developments. On the one hand, it leads to personal, individual leadership. If this person should falter, then the entire club (or division, whatever the case may be) would falter or even cease to operate. In addition the lack of leadership body leads to a lack of leadership. It is difficult for people to develop leadership qualities and techniques unless they participate in a leadership body.

Our anarchistic approach also manifested itself in a general lack of attention to the question of dues, renewing membership, and signing up new people. Some people in the DBC seem to persist in thinking that being "broad" means that you have no formal membership. The Vice President of the Queens DBC has no membership card. Some members of the N.Y. EXEC. even had no membership cards. Every other organization collects dues regularly signs up new members and gives members responsibilities-but not us!

We must recognize that these weaknesses in structure and leadership have created serious political problems. We must have a conscious approach to remedying them. The City-wide Staff must assist local clubs and divisions in this process. Though the above-mentioned reasons may help to explain why the DBC is now in a precarious position they do not really clarify the source of this crisis.

The source, we believe, can be found in two ideological weaknesses which affect the Du Bois Clubs. One is a lack of a clear understanding as to exactly what the nature of the DBC is. The second, despite our generally more advanced position on the question of racism is a lack of deep appreciation of the crucial nature of the issues we were attempting to raise and struggle around this year.

There has been in the course of the year, a great deal of internal growth around this second problem, and I believe that next year we will be able to translate our ideas into concrete programs of struggle and begin to move. It is always difficult to make new departures, and when we began projecting a new line of struggle for the movement, especially the white radical movement, it was perhaps inevitable that we ourselves would not fully comprehend the importance of the issue and that we would vacillate.

But on the first question, on the nature and role of the DBC, there is a great deal of confusion, and we believe it is growing.

While there may appear to be a surface consensus on this question, it is apparent that when we begin to probe beneath the surface we find that very few people have taken the time to question and think over the nature and role of the DBC and the premises upon which it is based.

This type of probing, I think, is essential in order to resolve the crisis that the DBC finds itself in. It is hoped that the Ideological and Political Conference planned for June 21-22-23 will be a step in that direction.

The rest of this report will examine different structures and relationships within the DBC:

(1) The High School Division: Last September we decided to abolish borough-wide high-school chapters and instead to form a citywide division. This was done after seeing that it was difficult for local, high school chapters to develop either a meaningful political program or a stable leadership in isolation from other high school students and the cityside organization.

Our move to form a citywide division proved to be basically a correct one. The High School Division developed a program against racism in the high schools which created a level of activity which was in advance of that which had existed in the high schools beforehand. Over 200 signatures from over 25 high schools in every part of the city were collected demanding the inclusion of black and Puerto Rican history and culture in the curriculum. A demonstration of about 100 people was held in front of the Board of Ed. on Mar. 19 to press for these demands. A mass struggle was precipitated in White Plains in which the DBC gave leadership, especially to the white youth there. The High School Division made significant strides in attracting a following and membership among black and Puerto Rican youth. An inter-racial leadership is also developing.

Certain organizational problems, however, prevented the regular and consistent functioning of this division. All of the problems described above that affected our college clubs were true for the High School Division too, though the problem of over-involvement with the coalition was less acute. The High School Division was less reluctant than the college clubs to take strong independent initiatives, though appropriate follow-up actions that could lead to victories around our demands have not as of yet been developed.

The greatest weakness of the High School Division was its lack of stable leadership, a functioning exec., and regular meetings. This led to a certain degree of demoralization, as meetings were called and cancelled, or didn't take place for long periods of time.

Our perspective for the H.S. Division should be to continue it and, in the near future, to simultaneously begin to organize local high school chapters wherever there are 5 DBC members in a given school willing to organize a club. A top priority must also be to guarantee to the Division as a whole a stable and regularly functioning Executive. In addition, attention must be given to signing up members and collecting dues on a regular basis.

Because of the inherent problems involved in high school organizing (lack of experience, rapid turnover, strict parental and administrative control, etc.) we have to put special emphasis on developing high school leadership. Toward this end we propose that over the summer, in conjunction with the National Office, we organize a week-long ideological and leadership training school exclusively for high school students.

(2) The Citywide Staff has functioned reasonably well, but with some serious problems. Firstly, there wasn't a sufficient division of responsibilities, especially a separation of administrative tasks from those of political leadership. To a certain extent this kind of overlapping is inevitable in an organization like the DBC, but too often administrative and technical responsibilities became the joint responsibility of all the staff, leading to inefficiency and an inability to get out in the field more and give more consistent political leadership to the organization. In order to reduce the possibility of this happening again, there should be one person on staff to handle the administrative aspects of running the city-wide organization. This would free the other

two full-time staff members to do more travelling and to be more in touch with local movements and developments.

The volume of administrative work which must be done by the staff is enormous. This year the organization as a whole did not do its share to help alleviate the problem of handling this technical work. We must not duplicate the situation where we elect political leadership only to have them typing, collating, addressing envelopes, putting out mailings, and running the mimeograph machine. The whole organization must take on more of a responsibility to help with the technical work of running the office. All members should try to volunteer some time to help out in the Citywide office.

The policy of having a 3-man, full-time paid staff should be continued, with the positions and responsibilities structured as follows:

- 1) Chairman: Over-all political and financial responsibility; main spokesman for the organization; representative of the DBC in coalitions.
- 2) Field Director: responsible for implementation of program; travelling; organizing new clubs.
- 3) Organizational Secretary: responsible for office management; membership; literature.

This full-time staff should be supplemented by 2 elected, part-time, non-salaried staff members:

- 1) Education Director
- 2) Fund-raiser

These part-time staff members should see their jobs as serious political responsibilities, and as their main political work. Each should work with a volunteer committee of 5-6 people to handle the work involved.

The responsibility of the Education Committee should be to develop citywide education programs (both internal education classes and seminars and externally-directed programs like forums and lectures). The Education Director would also assist local clubs and divisions with the development and implementation of educational programs on a local level.

The Fund-raising Committee would be responsible for raising the funds to sustain the Citywide Organization (rent, salaries, printing, etc.). This would be done through periodic mailings, visits to adults, cocktail parties, and organized events such as concerts, theatre parties, dances and book sales.

In short, what is being proposed is a 5-person staff. Staff meetings would be held in the evening, or at some other time convenient for all staff members. This expanded staff with the division of responsibilities outlined above is essential to the effective functioning of the organization.

(3) The New York Executive has been a mixed picture of accomplishments and failures since it was begun in September. It was conceived as the political leadership body of the N.Y.DBC and as an interim policy-making body inbetween Area Council meetings. This past year it served to develop political perspectives for the organization to prepare discussions for the Area Council around the following programs:

- a) Fall education program
- b) Program on racism
- c) Approach toward student strike
- d) Approach toward SACB hearings

In this respect it served a valuable purpose.



But it had some major weaknesses. First of all, it didn't function as a real leadership body of the organization. Many of the members on this body were not active in a club or division-- and some weren't actually bona fide (i.e., card-carrying) members of the DBC at all! They were chosen with the aim of guaranteeing a leadership body for the DBC that would have a sufficient Black, Puerto Rican and working class composition, but in fact, they were artificially chosen. Several dropped off rapidly and did not function on the Exec. after the first or second meeting. Many of those that did remain on did not represent an active constituency. For some, the only relationship they had to the DBC was as a member of the Exec.

We must structure the Exec. so that it is a real leadership body of the DBC. To do this, we believe it should be composed of the 5 staff members, the head of the Trade Union Dept. and the High School Division, and the chairman of each college and community club. This would make it a 15-20 member body. It should meet regularly, once every two weeks. Regular attendance at meetings would be mandatory for members of the Exec. This is essential if it is to be the real leadership body of the organization.

(4) Area Council has functioned as the basic policy-making body of the N.Y. DBC. It has met regularly on a monthly basis. Attendance at Area Council meetings has been a responsibility of all members. This has been a good policy, we believe, because in addition to providing a convenient and democratic way for determining our policies, it has also, through the discussions involved, served as an important vehicle of political education. It should not serve as a substitute for full political discussion in the different clubs and divisions, but it does provide an opportunity for people from different areas of work to come together to formulate overall policy for the organization. Area Councils can also provide a means for overcoming some of the provincialism and localism that exists among many DBC members. It can serve to win new people to the organization and to tighten the ties of individual members to the organization as a whole. A weakness has been that meetings are often too long and burdensome. The present nature of frequency of Area Council meetings should be continued, and attempts should be made to prepare for them more carefully.

(5) Black and Spanish Department: Originally named the "minority Youth Division," this structure was viewed as a way of making black and Puerto Rican youth feel more at home in a predominantly white organization and as a way of giving them a collective base within the organization. The Division was also viewed as an intermediate stage in the struggle to win black and Puerto Rican youth to the organization, taking into account the national consciousness prevalent among large sections of the black community and the reluctance of many black youth to be a minority in an interracial organization. It was also justified on the grounds that the DBC had not, as yet, enacted a meaningful program to struggle against racism.

This Division suffered from a lack of program, a lack of a solid political perspective, and a lack of leadership. Since the DBC as a whole had no strong citywide program, it was difficult for this Division to develop a program of its own to relate to a weak and non-existent citywide program. Also, with members drawn from all over the city-- from high schools, colleges and trade unions-- and having no common geographic area of work, it was impossible to develop a meaningful program.

Several attempts were made to work out a perspective, but in general there was not a widespread interest in the Division, and attendance at meetings was never very large, even though some meetings were publicized well. Having no program or perspective, attendance at meetings even for

Those committed to the Division became irrelevant to political work. Also, to many black youth who functioned in interracial structures of the DBC, such as the H.S. Division, or the Trade Union Dept., it became an extra burden to attend these meetings. Having tested the Black and Spanish Department in life and having seen it fail, we recommend that it be abolished. This will also eliminate the last vestige of parallelism from the DBC. Its abolition puts a heavier burden on white youth in the organization to take our program against racism off the token plane and put it into the arena of mass struggle-now.

6.) College Council- was originally viewed as a leadership body of the College Clubs to discuss common problems and program and to coordinate activities on a college level. It functioned sporadically throughout the year. It lacked consistent leadership, and meetings were called and cancelled and also not called for long periods of time. Most of the members of this body were in positions of leadership in their local clubs and viewed the College Council basically as another burden which was more or less irrelevant to their local work. This was unfortunate because common problems do in fact exist in N.Y.'s colleges, especially within C.U.N.Y. The sharing of experiences and the implementation of a common, coordinated program can strengthen local struggles and heighten their political impact.

On the other hand, the N.Y. DBC this past year has had a somewhat top-heavy structure, with too many citywide meetings for the same small grouping of people. In view of the fact A) Area Council meetings bring together members from the different colleges, B) that the newly-proposed structure of the N.Y. EXEC. will bring together the chairman of each club on a bi-weekly basis, and C) that the new division of staff responsibilities should allow staff members to spend a greater amount of time in the field, including working with the college clubs, we believe that the College Council is basically unnecessary and that it should be abolished.

There was one additional function which the college council was supposed to serve and which must be picked up by another body if it is to be carried out. That was the job of organizing new college clubs. Originally it was conceived that if we had on or two DBC members at a particular college where there was no DuBois Club organization, that these members could attend College Council meetings, get more of a feeling for what campus DBC's were doing, and then use this experience as a basis for organizing a DBC at their particular campus. It was also felt that the College Council could assist directly in the organizing work. Being basically unrealistic, this strategy did not work last year. Individual DBC members from campuses, where there was no DBC did not attend the College Council meetings (Although this was usually because they were not informed of them.) No new college clubs were organized last year although in some colleges without clubs there were as many as five DBC members. The potential for organizing new college clubs is here, and can be realized if we devise an effective means of doing it. There is no reason why DBC's cannot be organized at the Community Colleges, at NYU, Hunter Bronx, Columbia, etc. The best and most realistic way of doing this is to have the Field Director work on establishing contacts with these different campuses by A) setting up literature tables there B) getting speaking engagements there, C) distributing leaflets there about citywide activities that the DBC sponsors and D) finally pulling together a meeting of members, contacts and interested people on a given campus to actually organize a chapter.

(By the way, it was this type of organizing that never got done last year, basically because of our inefficient division of labor on the staff.)

7) Trade Union Department,

Last year's temporary retreat from community organizing was not meant to be a complete abandonment of work among working youth. We established a trade union department which was supposed to be an instrument for organizing young workers. However, due to the general inactivity of this department during the last year, we did virtually no work among working youth. This dept., like the Black and Spanish department, could not work because it found it difficult to develop a program. The core of 10-12 people who participated in meetings were far flung and concrete program could not be developed while the whole thrust of the citywide organization was towards campus and HS activity.

We have to re-evaluate the desirability of the Trade Union Dept. The department in its present form is ineffective because young workers are unlikely to be attracted to a dept. of an organization that basically has no relevance to them. The whole DuBois Clubs is backwards in terms of sensitivity to and understanding of the problems of young workers and trade unionists. This was expressed in our inability to mobilize our own members to support striking U.A.W. workers and in the casual attitude that some of our campus people took when they were asked to mobilize support for two Black DBC members that were running for union office in the ILGWU, the most reactionary and racist union in N.Y.'s largest industry.

During the past year there was a degree of overlapping between the Black and Spanish dept. and the trade union dept. If we begin to develop community clubs there will be an even larger degree of overlapping. What is needed now is a small trade union committee that meets infrequently to evaluate what is happening in various trade unions, and rank and file movements, to define our position on the issues involved, and to make recommendations for action and education for the whole DBC to the executive committee. The Chairman of the Trade Union Committee should be a member of the Exec.

8) Community Clubs. Building among working youth is of crucial importance if we are to build a mass socialist youth organization. This is because colleges and high schools are areas of relative instability and with a high turn-over, and because most young people in the city are not students.

The fullest understanding and appreciation of a class analysis of society cannot be achieved if we do not generate struggle among working youth, particularly white working class youth. Nor can many meaningful struggles be won without the assistance of the working class, including young workers.

The lack of a base among working youth affects your ability, for instance, to launch effective struggles against racism on the campus. In many ways, the key ideological difficulty in convincing DBC and other campus activists to struggle against racism is convincing them of the self interest of whites in that struggle. Therefore, one of the main tendencies in this area is for the white students to get hung up waiting for Black students to act as opposed to bringing the issues to the broad masses of students, Black and white.

Black students also hesitate to enter joint actions due to distrust for whites and a lack of understanding and appreciation of the self interest of whites in the struggle. This feeling is reenforced by the memory and experience of the mad rush of whites to the black communities and the lack of visible evidence of consistent radical organization among whites, including the struggle against racism, in their communities.

Community clubs will not solve all our problems, but they can contribute greatly to our ability to overcome some of the ideological difficulties in all areas of work. They certainly can strengthen our efforts in the H.S.'s. If we can develop struggle in white communities and multiracial communities that parallel the magnitude of the struggle developing in the black communities, we will certainly gain the respect of black militants and open the doors to the formation of new and meaningful alliances.

Presently there are quite a few DBCers and ex-DBers who find it difficult to relate to the organization because they are not students. There are also some who are attracted to the DEC but cannot fit in and who could relate to community clubs.

One of the key weaknesses of previous community efforts was the lack of a consistent program. Consequently our community clubs and organizers tended to vacillate from one issue to another. In Shorefront, our most recent experience, people started with a housing program which was dropped, and moved to the draft, then to supporting Dubin, and then no program at all.

We must begin to place more emphasis on developing programs and perspectives for community clubs. The central question around which our community DBC's should revolve, we believe, is the question of unemployment and underemployment. Generally there are two levels on which we should launch this struggle: job discrimination and job creation and training. In almost all communities in N.Y. there is some construction going on. We must begin to confront the building trades unions and demand that they cease discriminatory policies. At the same time, rank and file workers in the unions can take up the fight for the creation of more jobs. These are the kinds of programs that can be implemented and organized around in the communities as well as in the trade unions. In this way we can work towards building trade union-community unity.

With this kind of perspective we should urge every working youth in the DBC to join a community club or help to form one.

There are presently two community Du Bois Clubs being reorganized: on the Lower East Side and in Brooklyn (in addition to the Shorefront Club.) We are also considering the possibility of organizing an Upper West Side Club. These clubs will be composed and led by people who live in the area. They will be developing their own programs to meet local conditions. During the summer, DBC people from high schools and colleges should help get these clubs off to a good start by working in the communities with the people who live there.

9.) Progress in Building and Interracial Organization. In the past year, except on the high school level where healthy but minimal progress was made, the N.Y. DBC made little headway in building an interracial organization with a substantial Black and Puerto Rican membership. This was true despite the fact that on most campuses we were the ones that injected the issue of racism into the student strike, responded in the most advanced and relevant way to the assassination of Dr. King, and generally developed a reputation for being among the most serious and dedicated elements on the campus in the struggle against racism. Though a few black members were won to the DBC on the campuses, we generally did not hold them--because of some organizational weaknesses, but mainly because of ideological weaknesses. The most serious of these was that we did not, in general, give much more than lip-service to our program against racism.

While for a period of time we were legitimately delayed because we were involved in ideological discussion on the matter and were groping for an organizing focus and set of tools around which to base our activity, after a while, our procrastination became indefensible.

At Q.C. an early start was made around a petition drive to get Black and Puerto Rican history and culture taught as an integral part of the curriculum. Over 2000 signatures were collected, but then the campaign fell apart when DBC people became involved in other groups. The DBC organization developed no program around the petition and practically ceased all independent activity. (In the Spring semester, the coalition which had organized the Student Strike adopted the DBC's full-blown program on racism.)

At Brooklyn College, a petition campaign around racism in admissions, curriculum, and faculty, etc. was initially rejected by the DBC. After the death of Dr. King, a nameless coalition (led and organized by guess whom?) formulated and circulated a nameless petition demanding that the University cease its racist practices. This petition eventually became the basis for the direct action that was initiated at B.C. in the middle of May.

At CCNY, a petition drive was begun and over 1500 signatures were collected. The club had the agreed-upon perspective of 1) placing the petition as a two-page ad in the campus papers during the week of the strike, 2) arranging for a delegation of students to see Pres. Gallagher to present their demands to him, and 3) moving into the arena of direct action (rallies, sit-ins, etc.) to force Gallagher to meet the demands. This perspective, while never abandoned, never was acted upon. Money was not collected for the ad and it was not placed. Plans for direct action were abandoned. The campaign never moved into the phase of confrontation and direct action.

Similar problems beset the implementation of our program at Hunter College and Cooper Union.

Why were we basically unable to give more than token attention to the area of work which we agreed would be our main priority? In addition

to the general organizational weaknesses which we faced, I believe that the reasons were as follows:

A.) We did not understand the urgency of the issues

B.) We did not understand the vote of the DBC

C.) We lacked confidence that we could win the masses of students--black and white--on the campus to struggle around these issues (hence our hesitancy to act.) In general we did a poor job of explaining the issue to whites and educating them about their self-interest in the struggle vs. racism.

D.) We had a paternalistic and chauvinistic attitude toward the black students and their campus organizations. Too often, especially in the early part of the year, some DBC members could be heard commenting that the black student organizations were bourgeois, that they weren't interested in political action, that they were purely social. After a while, it became obvious to most that this was a false evaluation. Black student organizations all over the city (and all over the country) began initiating struggles against institutionalized racism on the campus. (In N. Y. C. these initiatives were taken at CCNY by the Onyx Society, at Hunter (Park) by Toussaint, at Columbia by SAS, at Queens by Black Concerned and SEEK Action, at L.I.U. by SOBU, and at Brooklyn by BLAC, to name a few.) Then, because of the weakness in the way we had raised the demands initially (by not explaining the self-interest of whites in the struggle vs. racism,) many DBC's adopted another paternalistic (and basically Trotskyist, I might add) stance: "We can't move unless the black students move." This weakness was finally overcome at Brooklyn College, after many weeks of hesitation. It was an extremely healthy development that the club decided to move, and although not enough educational work had been done in advance, their action raised the issue in a way that could not be evaded.

We should all be proud of the initiative that we took at B.C. But we should also be aware of the fact that it created resentment on the part of BLAC, who along with the Puerto Rican Alliance, did not participate in the action. And this resentment was created by the fact that we weren't raising the issues properly. Although we understood that our role was to generate opposition to racism within the overwhelming majority white community, we came off looking a little too much like moralistic do-gooders wanting to help our poor underprivileged brothers. In short, we came off more liberal than socialist. This is the basic reason why the struggle failed to develop into a mass struggle, why the community did not become involved, and why, at least for now, the movement is on the defensive.

We should understand that if we raise the issues properly, there will never be resentment on the part of black youth and a feeling that we are trying to usurp their leadership in the black liberation struggle.

On the other hand, our initiative at B.C. was genuinely appreciated by BLAC and the P.R. Alliance. They saw that our commitment to struggle against racism was more than verbal, that we were serious, and that we could be trusted. I believe that the events at B.C. have laid the basis for a solid alliance between white and blacks on that campus.

On all other campuses, blacks were reluctant to form coalitions with predominantly white DBC's before the DBC had shown its commitment, through deeds, to the struggle against racism. While we should in the future attempt to achieve working alliances with black student organizations on the basis of common self-interest, we should not refrain, in the future, from taking initiatives on this question.

The DuBois Club should never be satisfied with a token Black and Spanish-speaking membership. Minority participation in the DBC must also become numerically substantial at all levels of leadership. We cannot view ourselves as the white organization with the highest level of struggle vs. racism. The DBC must fight to become a genuinely inter-racial organization with substantial black and Spanish membership and with solid ties with all-black organizations.

Only through inter-racial organizations can whites wage the most determined and relentless struggle vs. racism. An all white organization can not live with racism as a daily problem and struggle against it on a consistent basis. While the basically white composition of our college clubs has been to some extent, a reason for their sluggishness, it is not excusable on that basis. We must recognize that the black leadership and membership in the DBC generally see as their prime responsibility the organizing of blacks into the struggle. They have neither the time nor the patience, nor should they have, to put the bulk of their energy into urging the white members of the DBC to act. We should all be aware of the fact that the DBC will not be able to even retain its present limited black membership and leadership unless the white members of this organization recognize the crucial nature of this struggle and move into action - now!

On the other hand, partially due to the progress that we have made as an organization on this issue in the past year, but mainly due to the efforts of our black membership and leadership, the DBC has developed fairly extensive contacts and fairly good relations with most of the Afro-American student organizations in N. Y. C. A number of people from these organizations are interested in the DBC because of its revolutionary socialist orientation and because of its programmatic relevance to them. This relevance is due primarily to the fact that we have a concrete program and strategy for struggle that is based on the needs of people in the here-and-now and also in the long run. Black youth are and will continue to be attracted to the DBC. The main obstacle, right now, however, to their joining in members, is the continued backwardness of the white membership of the DBC on this question.

#### 10.) Relations Between Local Clubs and Divisions and The Citywide Office

There is a general belief within the DBC that the N. Y. office is necessary and desirable, that it helps give political leadership to the organization, that it provides necessary services to the organization, and that, especially with regard to weak clubs and divisions, its assistance can mean the difference between existence and non-existence. Getting people to come around the Citywide Office and to attend Citywide activities can also give members a feeling of strength and unity.

But there is also a widespread belief that the citywide staff is too bureaucratic and not enough out in the field or in touch with local movement developments. In addition some people have expressed the feeling that the citywide staff often tries to impose its judgements and eprceptions on local clubs and divisions without regard to the opinions of those people most familiar with local conditions and most directly involved in local activity.

There is also strong feeling on the part of the staff that they do not receive enough assostance from the membership and that much of the membership does not regard the citywide staff and the citywide office as entities that should be supported by the entire organization.

There is truth to all of these feelings. But we must understand that the desire of the present citywide staff has not been to remain in the office, but to be out in the field. This was made difficult, however, by an ineffeciant division of labor and secondly (and more importantly) by a lack of help from the entire organization and membership in relieving some of the overwhelming administrative and financial work involved in running a citywide office. How many members, for example, have come down, regularly or irregularly, to help put out a mailing? Only a handful! How many clubs have fulfilled their agreed-upon obligation to hold one fundraising function each semester and give the proceeds to the citywide and national offices? Only one. In these kinds of responsibilities, local clubs and members have been seriously negligent. This state of affairs must be reversed if we are to get the most political mileage out of the citywide organization.

In the area of political program -- While there have been several citywide actions which were extremely successful (such as Stop the Draft Week, the New York Athletic Club demonstration, the Muhammad Ali demonstration, the Orangeburg protest and the rally against racism in Central Park the day after Dr. King's assassination), there have been several that were unsuccessful enough to cause us to pause and consider what we did wrong. (Examples of this include the UAW demonstration, the Ron Lockman demonstration, the Citywide Conference Against Racism in Education at NYU, our abortive attempt to organize participation in the garment district rally to honor Dr. King and the City Hall rally to confront Mayor Lindsay on April 26)

There are several reasons why these activities were unsuccessful. In the case of the UAW demonstration, it was largely because the issue was new and because virtually no ground was laid, either on a citywide basis or at the local club level. There was insufficient ideological preparation. In this case and in several others we responded in an unrealistic way to the igrgency of the issue without taking into account the ability of people on a local level to comprehend the issues and move on them.

Our weak showing at the Ron Lockman demonstration resulted from two factors:



1.) an inability on the part of our membership to realize the significance of this case (reflecting a general weakness on the question of racism) and

2.) lack of a strong organizational identity on the part of many DBC members. Here was a case where a black member of the DBC from Philadelphia was being court-martialed for refusing to go to Viet-Nam. Ron had just recently been elected Honorary National Chairman of the DuBois Clubs, and at our convention we had pledged to do everything in our power to bring his case to the American people and to build a movement in support of him. (The pressure and publicity we were able to develop nationally around this case proved to be the reason, many believe, why Ron was given the comparatively light sentence of 2 1/2 years). But here in New York City, only a small number of DBC members turned out for the demonstration, not to mention the fact that we did a miserable job mobilizing our constituencies. The explanation can be found in the fact that the ties that bind DBC members to their fellow members are often not that strong. Could you imagine SNCC, YAWF or even SDS responding in such a haphazard way to the brutalization of one of their members? Our response to this situation is a reflection of the fact that too many DBC members regard themselves as members of their local club only, with no ties or commitment to a citywide or national organization. We must work to overcome this localistic view of membership in this DBC. If we do, our organization will be significantly strengthened (It is this lack of strong organizational identity, flowing from the ideological factors mentioned earlier, which is also responsible in large measure for the fact that DBC members in general do not sell DBC literature and do not render sufficient financial assistance or office help to the citywide or national offices.

Our attempt to organize participation in the garment district rally was a misguided effort. Not taking into account the situation on local campuses, and based partially on an unrealistic and romantic view of labor-student unity, it was an artificial attempt to forge citywide unity when because of an extreme variation in local conditions it was impossible to do so. It came as a result of pressure, basically from non-students, to make an "impact" and to organize an action which anticipated as its main base of support high-school and college students. While the experience of the working youth and citywide leadership of the DBC is an invaluable aid in formulating meaningful citywide program with a class-conscious approach, we must avoid the danger of making unrealistic assessments of local situations (when we don't have direct knowledge of them) and pressuring local people to unrealistically adopt programs which they know cannot succeed.

One final proposal which should help to overcome this problem is the structural proposal made earlier with regard to the staff, which should free two full-timers to spend more time in local areas working to build local movements.

On the other hand, there is the danger of falling into an extremely provincial

bag which says that "only actions in my community or in my school are relevant".

We must also avoid taking the narrow view that issues like unemployment or job discrimination or police attacks on the black community are irrelevant to campus organizing, or that to demonstrate at City Hall as we did on April 26 to demand an end to racism in education, unemployment, and police abuse "did not fit in" to the Student Strike. The main reason why this latter action was not as successful as it could have been was because we did not fight for its inclusion and relevancy as an integral part of the week of Strike activities.

Our weak showing at the Citywide Conference on Racism in Education was mainly a reflection of our undeveloped understanding at that time of the importance of initiating struggle around this question. Though the conference was fairly well prepared and directly relevant to local organizing problems of both an ideological and practical character, no more than a small fraction of our membership attended. Attendance was pitifully weak on the part of our white college students. Many of the questions discussed at that conference, such as how to explain the self-interest of whites in the struggle against racism, and how a predominantly white organization should relate to all-black organizations in the struggle against racism, were questions which, if better understood, could have aided, for example, the Brooklyn College students in the struggle which they initiated in later months.

11.) Education. This year we spent much time grappling with and experimenting with different kinds of educational approaches. We learned a lot from our experience. The first thing that we learned is that we have yet to devise an interesting, effective, creative well-rounded and meaningful educational program. We experimented with forums and lectures, 5-session classes, and an 11-session study group in Political Ideology.

The forums and lectures that we had included ones on New Politics, The Ghetto Rebellions, and on Dr. DuBois. They were moderately successful, forth in content and in attendance, and should be continued, we believe, on an approximately monthly basis next year.

The series of classes we had last fall, because of their nature, content and preparation, were generally unsuccessful, except for the one on Black History. They were supposed to be geared for our membership and other interested people, but very few of our members found these courses relevant to their own educational needs.

Taking this into account, and realizing the necessity to stimulate ideological discussion and strengthen ideological development within the DBC, we initiated a Study Group in Political Ideology which met for 11 sessions this past spring.

With required readings of approximately 100 pages per session, and with teachers who were all DBC members, the study group attempted to examine Fundamentals of Marxist Ideology (3sessions), Contemporary Issues and Movements (5sessions), and the role of the DuBois Clubs (3 sessions). The topics were controversial, the discussions were generally valuable, meaningful questions were raised and some answers arrived at, the teachers were generally well-prepared, and most of the participants who attended regularly thought the experience was extremely worthwhile. Most of the discussion leaders also benefitted from the experience of having to prepare and lead ideological discussions.

Two severe problems persisted, however, mainly due to the structure of the course. One was that attendance declined rapidly as many people withdrew from the course as local political activity and other pressures made increasing demands on their time. Another problem was that very few of the people did the reading on a consistent basis. This was mainly due to the fact that with all the other responsibilities that people had, doing the reading did not appear as a priority. Consequently, it never got done.

It is our feeling that Study Groups of this type are extremely valuable, but that in order to be effective, they can not span an extended period of time. In the future they should be organized on a more intensive basis (for a week or so during the summer and during Christmas, intercession and Spring) so that the participants will be able to get the most out of them.

Educational programs play a vital role in building and strengthening the DBC. The DBC must be highly ideological and creative if it is to make a contribution to the movement. But more than that, the DBC must be highly ideological and creative if it is to survive. Our education program must be well-rounded. It must concern itself with issue-oriented topics and with deeper, more long-range, theoretical questions. The most effective way for this to occur, and for it to reach as wide an audience as possible, is through local clubs and divisions. Our educational programs in this respect have been weak and often sectarian. Few of our clubs have developed meaningful and and creative internal and external educational programs. This must be a priority for our clubs and divisions in the future. Each club and division must elect an educational director to give leadership to the job of formulating educational program. These local educational directors should consult regularly with the Citywide Ed. Director in order to devise the most meaningful and effective program possible.

12. Membership - It should be apparent to all that the DBC has got to tighten up its membership and dues. Approximately 2/3 of the people who consider themselves members of the DBC and who in fact function as members (and even officers!) of the DBC do not have a membership card or pay dues.

This situation must be reversed, especially on the club and division level. A conscious attempt must be made to sign up members, issue them membership cards, and collect dues from them regularly. (If local clubs or divisions can't use all that money, collect it anyway and give it to the City-wide and National Offices!)

We also have no organized approach to renewing membership in the DBC. Membership is good for one year only, and we must get people to renew their membership when it expires. The Organizational Secretary should have the responsibility to tighten up this situation and lead the organization in a membership drive in the fall.

Being more aware of where our membership is and tightening up the situation will also enable us to increase our political impact and organize new clubs, in colleges and communities. We must consolidate that large proportion of our membership which is not presently organized into any functioning clubs or divisions, into active political units.

Having a lax attitude toward membership and organization is one of the reasons why we have not been able to fulfill our potential of growth. It is one of the reasons why our campus clubs have usually 10-25 members only. It is possible, in the near future, we believe, to organize campus DBC's of 50-75 members. (Organization alone, of course, won't bring this about. What is more important, and what we hope has not gotten lost in this Organizational Report, is vital DBC program and political initiative, and a rich and creative educational approach.

We must also have a more conscious approach to organizing new chapters of the DBC. We must send organizers to new campuses, for example, to start clubs. Many other organizations do this, but we still retain a spontaneous approach to organizing. If we have a large, strong club at B. C., for example, we should encourage one or more of our members there, to transfer, for example, to Hunter College in the Bronx to organize a DBC. The Citywide Staff should confer with local people to determine where this is a realistic policy.

Some people have suggested that a lack of discipline and pride in the organization is a major problem of the DBC. Some have suggested that to remedy this situation we should increase our requirements for membership. While recognizing that the description of the problem is somewhat accurate, we do not believe that the proposed solution is what is necessary or desirable. The DBC must maintain its outlook as and build its character into a broad-based socialist youth organization. But we must also arrive, through discussion and analysis at a more thorough ideological understanding of our nature and role and why we are an essential and vital part of the movement. This is what will give us the commitment, discipline, and pride which is partially lacking today.

13. Literature - Literature is an important vehicle for getting the ideas and program of an organization across to people. For a socialist youth organization, high quality and frequently appearing literature is indispensable to effective political organizing.

In terms of literature production and distribution, we have been weak. Our main publications now are Dimensions, a quarterly discussion-theoretical journal, and Insurgent, a quarterly (going bi-monthly next year) popular-style magazine. Too few of our members write for these publications! In fact, too few of our members write at all! Neither of these magazines can be dynamic or relevant if material for them is written primarily or exclusively by DBC staff. These publications must reflect the thinking and motion that exists in the various local movements. We must all take on the responsibility of writing up our ideas and experiences for these publications, and by contributing our art work, photography, poems, short stories, etc. to Insurgent. Some additional local people must also make time available to work on editing and production of these publications.

One literature comes out, however, we usually do a poor job of selling and distributing it. For awhile, 2 years ago, no regular publications came out of the National Office, and everyone bitched. "Publications are essential!" "We can't function without literature!" And now that we have them, what do we do? We keep them in our offices or in our homes.

We have got to sell our literature at all possible times; at rallies, demonstrations, picket lines, concerts and meetings; on the beach and at the ball-parks; on campuses in the high schools, and in the places where we work. This will help us build our program, spread our ideas, and build our organization. It will also help give us a regular source of funds, not a minor by-product. Anyone who doubts all this just hasn't tried it!

14. Leadership and Elections - Politically developed and responsible leadership is essential to the functioning of our organization. We have 5 Staff positions to fill at our June 8 Conference:

- (1) Chairman
- (2) Field Director
- (3) Organizational Secretary
- (4) Fundraiser
- (5) Educational Director

We must guarantee that the most capable people are nominated for and elected to these positions. If this is done, and if the proposals offered in this report are adopted and acted upon (and if the ideological clarity and purposiveness which is now somewhat lacking can be developed), then we will have advanced a long way in the job of laying the groundwork toward becoming the youth organization in New York.