

City Convention BULLETIN

Local New York
WORKERS PARTY

#2

JUNE 14 - JUNE 15, 1941

1. Report of Education Director P. 1
2. Report of Literature Director P. 7
3. Report of Negro Director P. 13
4. Discussion Articles

REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL WORK

At the last City Convention the Program of Action stated that the educational work of the party must be intensified and expanded, as compared with the preceding period, that "the distinguishing feature of the coming period must be one of education and consolidation of the party."

This statement was amended to read further: ".... to be carried on simultaneously with the extension of the work of the party in the masses," because some comrades of the convention and of the outgoing city committee expressed the fear that the party was going to become turned in upon itself, ingrown, a discussion society --- and neglect active work for self-education.

There need not have been cause for anxiety on this score. Although it is undoubtedly true that educational work was intensified and expanded, the far-from-impracticable program of action on educational work has been only partially carried out; one of the most important new goals set there, the organization of branch study groups, was a failure (with the exception of one branch). Although educational work was set forth as of primary importance, neither the branches nor the city organization really worked on the basis of that belief. Whether rightly or wrongly, it is a fact that in the party, in the case of any choice between devoting time and energy for education or for activity, the former almost invariably went by the board. A number of successes and improvements can be recorded, both over the preceding period and over the educational work of the movement in the past; but our educational work has fallen short of both our expectations and necessities.

Carrying Out the Program of Action

The following section of the report follows last convention's program of action point-by-point:--

CITY WORK

(1) Shachtman lectures of Labor Action Institute.-- This series of five lectures was quite a success, financially and in the number of non-members attending. The attendance of party members was not good. Average attendance was 166 (211 at top); average attendance of party members was 60, of YPSL 56, of non-members 50 (73 at top).

(2) Winter term (four classes) of Labor Action Institute.-- Also by and large successful, financially also. About \$125 net profit was made on both lectures and school together. Although better attended by party members than any school session before the split, party attendance was not as good as should have been expected, considering the emphasis laid upon it inside the party. Fifty to sixty party members registered at the school, about 5-10 others attending unregistered; about 40 Yipsels; about 15 non-members. The regularity of attendance of the students was a great deal better than previous school terms also, helped by the fact that promotion for the classes inside the party did not stop with

the first session.

(3) Internal party forum. — This idea was proposed to the convention as an experiment. It was delayed for months, first by the L.A.I. classes, and then by a series of other city-wide special meetings. When the first forum was held, a debate on German fascism, the reaction to the particular forum was not good, but in spite of that the forum should have been developed further. Instead, it was let slide.

(4) Aid to and cooperation with YPSL. — Several steps forward were made with respect to Party-YPSL cooperation in educational work. Soon after the Party convention the YPSL started a little educational campaign on Marxism, utilizing party speakers, on two subjects (historical materialism and role of the party). The city education department supplied the speakers to the YPSL. Financial aid was given the YPSL in publishing their songbook, out of educational funds. A joint meeting of party branch and YPSL unit educational directors was held. Educational programs issued by us for the use of party branches were passed on to and partially utilized by YPSL units. The YPSL, of course, participated in the activities of the L.A.I. and city-wide classes. Although this is a good deal further than Party-YPSL joint work on education has ever gone, it must be carried still further, as the next section of the report proposes.

Three other specific city-wide activities were carried on by the city education department.

(a) A class on trade unionism, led by Coolidge, was carried on prior to the opening of the L.A.I. Although pushed and publicized in the branches the response was very poor, and especially poor as far as the trade unionists and workers in the organization are concerned. Attendance was about 7. It must be put down as a failure.

(b) The meeting organized for Coolidge on his return from his tour, in Harlem, was organized by the city in conjunction with the Harlem branch. It was a successful meeting.

(c) The May Day leaflet put out by the party.

The city direction of the work went through three stages; for the first half of the period, up through the end of the school in February, it functioned well; through March it was spotty, shading off into a near lack of direction in the past month and a half or so. During that first three months, the city direction consisted, in addition to the city director, of regular meetings (bi-weekly) of the branch educational directors, which were useful in carrying through the projects under way and also in discussing and elaborating methods of branch educational procedure. But at no time was there a real educational committee functioning outside of the director, as there has not been since the formation of the party and before.

One of the reasons for the cessation of directors' meetings was the inability of some to attend. For a while after, they were replaced by individual conferences between the city director and the directors of most of the branches. For about three months and a half after the convention, an Educational Letter of at least one page went out every week with the city letter.

BRANCH WORK

(1) Personnel of branch educational directors.--This was the first point of the program of action. It was discussed with the leading comrades of the branches before the branch elections following the convention. With the changes that have taken place since then, there has been some appreciable improvement in the quality of the branch educational directors, with respect both to political ability and efficiency.

(2) Branch educational programs.-- The educational work of each branch has been an almost exact function of the general activity and organizational level of its functioning. What is said below does not hold for all. Those branches which were most active and best organized also carried on the best educational work. By far the best work was done by the Lower Manhattan branch next come Upper West Side and Brownsville. The following remarks, however, do apply to most of the branches.

In respect to branch educationals there has been one of the most substantial improvements in the educational work of the party. Some of the reasons for this were better branch educational direction, discussions held at branch directors' meetings on methods, and some material put out by the city educational department. As compared with the period before the last convention, the regularity of programs (one at each branch meeting) has improved very greatly even when lapses occur comrades are conscious of the fact that it is a lapse, and this has not always been the case.

New methods of putting across educationals have been/ increasingly; the routine of speaker-and-discussion has been deviated from more often than party branches have been accustomed to. Two mimeographed quizzes were issued by the city educational department, one on the contents of a month of Labor Action, one on the curriculum of the school; both were used in generally good educationals. A greater number of branch members during each educational was also involved, partly because of these new types of programs (educational discussions on N.I. articles held by most branches); socialized discussions without presentation of any length; panel discussion; program on problems of contacting discussing answers to common contacting situations; cooperative analysis of an article, passage or quotation used as a butt for refutation; program on Marxist terms; discussions on articles in internal bulletins. these were the kinds of programs which were used successfully.

While the meetings and conferences with branch directors were going on, at least one meeting each month was devoted to planning (by means of suggested subjects and procedures) the educational program for some weeks ahead. Another good change in branch

educational programs was the far greater extent to which branches used their own speakers and discussion leaders instead of improvised orators. This was partly due to the type of program used too.

Another question that arose was the relationship between the two types of education program, that directed primarily to expected contacts, and that directed primarily for the education of the party members (open and internal meetings). The branches adopted different ways of meeting the problem, in some cases incorrectly. The Lower Manhattan branch carried on internal educationals as a rule, and had decided on a schedule of one open meeting a month when their headquarters was given up. The Upper West Side also worked on the basis of one open, publicized meeting a month. The Brownsville branch utilized their forum as the open meeting, on a night other than the branch meeting. The Bronx branch, however, worked on the basis of open meetings as the rule, with each weekly publicized or not at all; it would be better to hold them less frequently and with far better preparation for each.

(3) Study groups.--In a very definite sense this was the most important point in the program of action. Although never done before, it was proposed because it was realized that the education in Marxism of the individual comrade could not be accomplished only by stimulating his own reading and self-study and not by absorption of other people's speeches and lectures. Two or three branch directors' meetings were spent on it, going over the situation in each branch in detail; follow up conferences were held with the directors; two branches were specially visited on the question. The result was --- that only one branch (Lower Manhattan) organized a study group, and it held two (Economics and Lenin's Writings on War), meeting after an activity assignment. In the other cases, it went only as far as the setting of a night, the failure of comrades to show up and the dropping of the project. The project of study groups in each branch was therefore a failure; but the question arises whether it could have been successful under the circumstances where the comrades are expected to spend three nights a week on activity, including the branch meeting itself. It is doubtful whether even the Lower Manhattan branch would have carried it through but for the fact that the members live in the neighborhood and could combine it with activity. No solution for this dilemma is in sight; the next section of the report contains a proposal which is, however, only an ersatz version of study groups.

(4) House gatherings.-- This has remained a good idea through the last two programs of action. Nothing has been done about it, and now the summer period is not the best time for it. It should still be on the agenda.

(5) Neighborhood forums.-- The program of action proposed two. One has been carried through, in Brownsville with some success. The other was supposed to be in Harlem, but the branch there did not function well enough to make it possible.

Proposals for the Next Period

A large part of the statement in the last program of action still holds, in particular the remarks on the objectives of educational work, in particular the remarks on the objectives of educational work in this period and in types of procedure. In addition, the past dependence of the quality of educational work on the organizational state of the branches may point to the hope that the proposed reorganization should hold a great deal. Specific proposals follow:

(1) An outstanding fact is that, in spite of the theoretical importance attached to educational work, the effectives thrown into the work were completely inadequate. It is customary to remark that educational work needs a full-time director. The first proposal is very modest: it is that educational work be given at the least a full spare-time director, that is, one who devotes his party time primarily or solely in that field. The city educational director has not been such a full spare-time director, in view of his responsibility for six regular once-a-week party assignments or meetings outside of educational work, not to speak of irregular tasks. The next educational director must be a comrade who is not given any other assignments in the party.

(2) Another anomalous situation can be remedied. With our membership we still have four separate educational departments presumably functioning in New York (Party and YPSL local and national). As a matter of fact, two do not function at all and the other two inadequately. Among the four departments, in none is there a single comrade devoting himself to that work more or less fully. It is no wonder that educational work is not conducted efficiently and effectively from the center.

The four theoretically-existing educational departments should be practically merged. One step in this direction can be taken by us, in cooperation with the city YPSL educational department. The YPSL can help our own work greatly and vice versa. The two should be immediately closely joined and even coalesced (with due allowance for separate needs) with respect to (a) direction-- joint functioning of the city education committees, joint meetings of the directors at least once a month; (b) output of educational material-- outlines, branch educational programs, outdoor speech outlines, propaganda material, suggestions for educational procedure, etc. (c) On a branch scale, street meetings should be joint as a rule, forums should be held jointly, and occasionally indoor educationals likewise. The YPSL seems ready to agree to this proposal.

(3) The central job in the next period will be the street meeting season and the mayoralty campaign. Previous programs of action have gone into detail on the tasks of the educational department with regard to the street meeting work-- propaganda material, dressing up of meetings, use of the press as the central task of the meeting, pointers on organization.

(4) Side by side must go continual improvement of the branch educationals, along the lines already started in some branches. Since the street meetings will to a large extent fill the role of open branch meetings, greater emphasis can be laid on utilizing the the branch educational period for party education. The detailed recommendations on the organizations of branch educationals made in the last program of action hold as much as before.

(5) In lieu of study groups, we propose that a course of Marxist education, based on the text The Principles of Marxism, can be conducted by every branch, by turning the alternate educational periods at branch meetings into such a discussion class. This proposal must be carried out.

Paul Temple

LITERATURE REPORT

A. PROGRAM OF ACTION

The last convention determined four methods of branch literature activity: 1) House to house canvassing with the aim of developing regular readers; 2) Regular street sales; 3) Regular sales at union halls and factories; 4) Newsstands. With this perspective of developing local branch initiative, city wide functions which were so prevalent in the previous period were reduced to a minimum.

1. House to House work

This activity, which was the major work of the branches, resulted in a substantial increase in the circulation of Labor Action. Whereas previously the branch bundle totalled some 275 copies weekly, the average now is some 500 of which 230 are 1¢ copies. The innovation of the 1¢ Labor Action helped make the increase possible but there only two branches took advantage of it with a regularity - Bronx and Brownsville. Many copies were distributed free, others sold at 1¢. In addition, many branches developed a small number of regular readers. In spite of all the deficiencies in this work and the lack of enthusiasm, to the degree that the work was carried out it did increase our circulation considerably. I believe this activity was more fruitful than neighborhood work in the past, during the winter month period.

2. Regular Street Sales

The Lower Manhattan Branch was the only branch to carry out this work to any degree. Other branches similarly located in "radical" neighborhoods neglected it entirely.

3. Union Halls and Factories.

Again only one branch, Yorkville, was active in this work. Covering Labor Temple sometimes several times a week, they sold as high as 12 copies weekly. Of late they have neglected this work, but we are sure it will be resumed in the coming period.

Factory coverage was completely neglected by all the branches. In particular, the Bronx had an excellent opportunity but never got around to it. Efforts were made at first to stimulate branches by giving them advance notice in the City Letter of special articles in the coming issue of Labor Action which pertained to specific union or industry problems, but aside from occasional coverage of a few meetings of Food locals, little was accomplished.

Aside from city wide activity, the only industrial coverage was the sale by members of the food branch to union contacts. In addition one comrade in Yorkville took from 25 to 35 Labor Actions for sale and distribution to his union members; another in Lower Manhattan did likewise. We are sure that more comrades in similar situations could have done likewise, even if to a more modest degree.

4. Newsstands.

While there has been an understandable decline nevertheless branches failed to utilize this medium to its utmost. Promotion of stands could have been coupled with house to house work, many readers and contacts being visited irregularly.

The Bronx Branch still sells from 15 to 30 regularly, Lower Manhattan, Brownsville, and the Upper West Side selling lesser amounts.

B. CITY WIDE ACTIVITIES

1. Industrial Distribution

Perhaps the most important work of the period was the distribution at an important Logn Island factory. Beginning with 500 weekly the distribution was soon increased to 1000. In spite of difficulties in obtaining comrades for this work and theresultant slip-ups on occasion we can say that a fairly good job was done. Credit must be given to those comrades whose regular weekly pledges, aside from all other party obligations made this work possible. While few concrete results are evident now we can predict that continuation of this work will bear fruit in the future.

2. Shachtman lectures and Labor Action Institute

While I have no record of sales of literature, a good number of Labor Actions and New Internationals as well as various pamphlets were sold. In general almost all outsiders, especially at the school, purchases literature.

3. Street Sales.

One important Labor Action sale was held with the T.W.U. bus strike issue at Times Square. About 250 copies were sold. Some 100 copies of this issue were distributed by the U.W.S. to the union members.

In addition about 1000 copies of the pamphlet, "This is Not Our War", as well as hundreds of back numbers of Labor Action were distributed at the Madison Square Garden meeting of the T. W.U. was distributed to the periphery.

4. Negro Issue of Labor Action.

New York bought 1500 additional copies of this special issue and they were distributed to the branches engaged in Negro work.

5. Three Months Subs.

This campaign was not successful, and here the Literature Agent must assume a major share of the responsibility for failure to actively direct the work. In some measure however, this was due to the lack of a campaign in the press. Totals by branches are:

Brownsville	16	Upper West Side	6
Bronx	2	Harlem	1
Food	7	Yorkville	1
Lower Manhattan	6		

Total 34.

6. May Day Issue.

New York took 4000 additional copies, all paid for, and these were distributed to the branches at 1¢/

7. General Functioning.

Several meetings of literature agents were held at first. These however proved to be, for the most part, duplication of the work of the organizers-contact directors meetings. As such they served little function, due to the nature of branch work, and were discontinued.

Due to the regular payment by branches, New York was able to maintain excellent financial relations with the National Office and reduce the previous debt on both the Labor Action and the New International. This should be marked, as the past has always been characterized by accumulating debts. In the last few weeks the branches have fallen down on payments due to the heavy burden of the May Day issue, but the debts are being gradually liquidated. Credit must be given to the Bronx branch which has constantly paid for its bundles in advance.

C. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

Here New York has done badly. The YPSL takes a regular bundle equal to or greater than the party. From the branch bundle orders we gather that not every member gets a copy. The New International must receive much more attention in the coming period. If New York, the core of the party does not expand the circulation, it is hard to see how the N.I. can continue as a 32 pager.

D. PAMPHLETS

New York put out 10,000 copies of "Jim Crow on the Run". Street sales in Harlem netted about 580 of the first Saturday, 250 the next. The Harlem Branch has sold about 500 more and other branches in Negro neighborhoods have taken large quantities. The obvious failure of the members to respond to the mobilization puts in jeopardy future pamphlets. The sale of the new pamphlet "Plain Talk on War" must show a definite improvement.

Several hundred copies of "This is Not our War" were available free to the branches but remained in the office until they were finally distributed at the A.P.M. meeting.

E. INTERNAL BULLETINS.

Here it is difficult to understand the lack of circulation. Less

than one for every 3 members were taken by branches.

F. REGULAR SUBS.

Virtually no subs came in during this period for either Labor Action or New International at most a dozen of each. Here ex-members and contacts could have been approached, and those who did not want to receive them in the mail could have arranged to have them delivered.

H. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Branch Activities

A. Street sales

The chief field for distribution of the press will be the street meetings. These should be organized so that the sale of the press becomes the main feature of the meeting. More plugging will result in a doubling of our bundle order.

Group sales on the streets can be a very effective medium if they are dramatized with poster and effective and intelligent slogans.

B. Contacting

This work must be continued with those who are established as contacts or readers. First of all, these readers are the fruit of a long period of work which can not be wasted by neglect now; secondly our time on the streets is probably very limited and we will be forced to return to the previous form of work to a large measure.

C. Industrial Distribution

This will have to be organized on a branch basis to assure greater regularity. FWW comrades are required for this work, and it is the best way we now have of reaching workers in industry. We must expand in this field the reception by the workers shows that they read our press with interest.

G. STATISTICS - Labor Action-New York Bundle Orders.

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>&REGULAR 3¢</u>	<u>1¢</u>	<u>NEWSSTANDS(SOLD)</u>	<u>NO. OF</u>	<u>RE MARKS</u>
Dec.	1403	467	909	6	5 issues.
Jan.	1029	869	467	4	
Feb.	1130	2175	569	4	Incl. 1500 of
March.	1433	1145	611	5	Negro issue
April	1025	4690	452	4	Incl. May Day issue

PAYMENTS TO NATIONAL OFFICE

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>REG. & 1¢</u>	<u>Newsstands</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Dec.	\$49.76	\$8.56	\$56.32
Jan.	39.56	4.50	44.06
Feb.	58.89	6.66	65.55
Mar.	54.44	6.58	61.02
Apr.	33.55	8.10	88.67

Note: May Day Issue included in industrial bundle).

NEW INTERNATIONAL- NEW YORK BUNDLE ORDER

Month	Regular	Newsstands (Returns not included.)
Dec.	194	150
Jan.	140	94
Feb.	142	47
Apr.	130	163 (32 pages)
May.	130	
TOTAL	936	553 (4 issues)

Note: These not true figures because of lateness of returns).

PAYMENTS TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE

Month	Regular	Newsstands
Dec.	\$18.59	\$9.00
Jan.	28.31	
Feb.	10.25	5.00
Apr.	33.35	11.42

NEWSSTANDS

Some promotion should be carried on in the areas canvassed- leaflets or cards with blurbs on the paper and listing of the stands in the neighborhood.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The 3 month sub drive is on. New York has a quota of 75 for the next 2 months. With a little effort we should be able to get double that figure - an average of 1 sub per member. Contacts and readers should be pressed for subs. This sub will be continued as an introductory one. only ; that is to those not previously subscribers.

NEW INTERNATIONAL

The sale of the N.I. will be primarily to our contacts. But our circulation would increase if every member bought a copy. In addition, every branch must see to it that at least 2 libraries in its territory receive the N.I.

LITERATURE AGENTS

The branches should elect lit. agents who will not only be responsible for getting the press and turning in money, but who will take an active interest in promotion of the press and will discuss branch problems with the City Literature Agent. In the past several lit. agents were rarely seen by me - they thought it sufficient if they picked up their bundle. Better working relations must be established.

SUMMARY

The past period has been one of individual, indoor work with only small but nevertheless real results. The next period however, must mark a change to the outdoors with extreme concentration

LITERATURE REPORT

PAGE 12.

on the sale of our press. In the time still left us we must spread our ideas as widely as possible. Our paper is still our voice. Let it be heard!

G. Zola, Lit. Agent

With the termination of the New York election campaign and the holding of the first City convention the New York Local turned to a concentration on neighborhood work. In the case of four branches, Bronx, Brownsville, Harlem and Upper West Side this consisted largely, if not exclusively, of activity among the Negroes. For the first time in our local movement we began really serious work in this field. The gains achieved have been modest but they have been far overshadowed by the lessons we have learned, not this time by theory and thesis but through actual experience. We can begin to understand success, point out the real weaknesses in theory, practice and personnel, plan with confidence for more efficient and effective work in the future.

What we have done

Many more comrades than ever before have actually engaged in work among Negroes. They have become aware of the Negro world, have begun to study and to understand Negro problems, have entered into personal contact with Negro workers. In itself this has been invaluable.

The neighborhoods in which we have carried on Negro work have varied and the results obtained have to a considerable extent reflected this variation. In the Bronx the neighborhood was inhabited by a fairly economically stable group, for the most part employed, heads of families, many of a so-called middle-class type. There existed, besides the invariable Negro churches, a branch of the NAACP although somewhat middle-class too, and apathetic. The area worked in by the Upper West Side and Brownsville branches differed from this in that, outside of some atomic churches (and a lodge of Elks in Brownsville) no Negro organizations existed. The economic state of the area was far less stable, a majority of the residents being transients and roomers, unemployed or on relief, many being examples of the lumpen-proletariat, individualistic, demoralized. In the Harlem area of course, every form of organization and of person in the Negro world can be found.

These four branches followed (until the time of the Harlem Bus Boycott) more or less the same pattern in their activity, house to house canvassing in the Negro neighborhood. All acquired, after months of concentration on a relatively small area, a list of "contacts" of some 50 to 100, and a Labor Action route on which from 15 to 25 L.A.s are sold each week. Sales of the N.I. have been practically nil, partly the fault of failure to try to sell, largely the expression of the level of the contacts. All branches have held forums, both with branch and City Office speakers, on topics primarily to interest these Negro contacts. And all (with the exception in the last two months of Harlem) have discovered that though contacts will come in small numbers to such meetings, they rarely become regular in their attendance, more rarely still join the party. However, through canvassing, meetings and forums, each branch has reached probably several hundred negroes with the party position, and through them and their friends undoubtedly several hundred more, of whom we, at present, hear and know nothing.

All the branches have found it extremely difficult to discover any activity (as distinct from propagandistic talk) in which to participate and around which they might mobilize Negro support. This was due, partly to our weakness and isolation from the Negro masses, partly to our failure to develop constructive relations with the existing Negro organizations, including the church groups; and partly to our traditional tendency to concentrate on propaganda around major political issues to the neglect of the organization of struggle for immediate, though minor, demands. An effort was made to utilize the Odell Waller case as a focus for Negro work. In each branch some open meetings, public forums were held, but no action, independently or in cooperation with other groups, was found possible.

The Upper West Side branch, in the late winter, held special meetings, conducted special canvassing and literature sales in connection with the demand of the Negro inhabitants of the Lincoln Square area for their admission into the proposed new Lincoln Square Housing Project.

The bulk of this work has been carried on by relatively few active members in each branch, although the number learning something and participating to some extent in the activity includes virtually all on the rolls.

THE HARLEM BUS BOYCOTT

The Harlem Bus Boycott broke about the middle of March. Under the initial pressure of Comrade Pelham, but nevertheless after an embarrassing delay, the Harlem Branch secured the opportunity to cooperate with the organizations running the action. These were the Greater New York Co-ordinating Committee, the Harlem Labor Union, and the National Negro Congress, operating jointly through the United Negro Bus Strike Committee. For two weeks or so our comrades reported to the Strike Committee and marched on the picket lines under its direction. The Upper West Side and Yorkville branches under the instructions of the City Committee sent comrades to strengthen our forces in this work. Our activity on the picket lines was supplemented by front page stories and special columns in Labor Action. The greatest part of our activity during this period went into support of the picket lines rather than into sales of the paper and other literature.

Toward the end of the strike the National Negro Committee suggested to the City Committee the issuance of a penny pamphlet on The Lessons of the Bus Boycott. The pamphlet, written by Comrade Johnson, was issued by the City Committee in record time (5 days) in an edition of 10,000. A party mobilization for the sale of this pamphlet was called in expectation of a Victory Demonstration organized by the United Negro Bus Strike Committee. Although the parade was cancelled, the mobilization was held (as described in the Organizer's report). At that, and subsequent sales by the branches, New York Local disposed of some 3500 copies of the pamphlet in about a month, while the YPSL took an additional 2000 of which most have been sold.

The response of the comrades to the picketing was only fair. The bulk, both of the picketing and of the contact work flowing from it was carried out by not more than ten comrades, while perhaps twenty in all from the three branches were enrolled on the picket lists kept by the Bus Strike Committee. It is a sign that the comrades have not yet grasped the fact that to make the most of such opportunities imposes an obligation upon all, and that effective action involves more than mere symbolic support; it requires actual, determined and persistent work.

Despite the weakness of the party's participation, the results exceeded all expectation. The effect upon the Negroes involved was enormous. The name and position of the Workers Party received widespread and most favorable publicity. Exceedingly valuable contacts with the second-line leaders of the strike as well as with a dozen militant pickets were made. One new member was recruited into the party as the direct result of our participation (and one into the

YPSL). At virtually every meeting of the Harlem branch since, some Negro contacts made on the picket lines or in connection with the action have attended.

For the past ten weeks, Comrade Johnson has held weekly discussion meetings at the home of a contact to which most of those who have attended meetings of the branch have been invited. However, due to the constant variation in the audience and the irregularity of attendance, it has not yet been possible to create out of this affair an organized class or discussion. Eight contacts in all have attended, some a number of times, together with two to five party members.

Since the last City Convention, New York has shared with Philadelphia and Baltimore the time and talents of the Negro Organizer, Comrade Pelham, in the same proportion as New York's share of his expenses. This has amounted to about one week in every five. Neither his time nor his talents have been adequately co-ordinated with the work of the New York branches. Special meetings at which he reported on his travels and experiences, to which contacts might especially be invited were not held, nor was the work during his absences properly focussed on the time of his return to each branch. With the appointment, ten weeks ago, of a Director of Negro Work for Local New York, some improvement in co-ordination has been made. There is still a long way to go in this direction. The former Negro Work Co-ordinating Committee, composed of representatives from each branch doing Negro Work, held periodic meetings. At the time of the Harlem Bus Boycott, these were supplanted by individual conferences with the branch organizers and Negro work Directors. With the accumulation of contacts, concrete experiences, with the immediate problems of the recruitment and integration of Negroes into the party, it is clear that this Co-ordinating Committee must be revived.

Perhaps the most obvious weakness in the past period has been the absence of deliberate and systematic education and training of our comrades in Negro problems and Negro work. Although all the branches have held meetings and forums on topics connected with Negro work, they have been directed almost exclusively to the contacts who might be brought to the meetings rather than to the education of the comrades themselves. This will require special attention in the coming period.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. Concentration and co-ordination of work.

A. The New York Party Negro Co-ordinating Committee to be revived. This Committee should be composed of one representative from each branch doing Negro work, a representative from the YPSL, and the New York Negro Work Director.

B. In concurrence with the City Committee proposal for the re-organization of the New York branches the Upper West Side branch is to be given up. The best contacts secured thru its past work in the area are to be turned over to the Harlem branch.

C. The Bronx and Brownsville branches are to continue their Negro work, with increased attention to the most careful selection of the area best suited to our forces.

D. The Harlem branch is to be strengthened, both by the addition of active comrades drawn from the other branches and by the transfer of those comrades unable to participate effectively in the

work. The Harlem branch must become the major concentration point for Negro work in New York.

II. Education

A. Internal

1. Special training of comrades for leadership in Negro work

In the absence of Negro comrades whom the party might train to take over leadership in this field, the party must concentrate on training white comrades for this work. This involves not only their assignment to do Negro work, but constant attention to their systematic training both political and organizational for leadership in this field.

2. General education of comrades in Negro work.

While certain selected comrades must acquire special training for leadership, all comrades should become acquainted with the Negro field so that they can speak intelligently and confidently of Negro history, Negro problems both general and specific, etc. This required reading regularly of the Negro press, of books by and about Negroes, and personal contact with them in their daily life.

3. Discussions of the Negro Question

All branches doing Negro work should conduct periodic discussion on the Negro Question. This must be done whether there are Negro members in the branch or not. Education on the Negro questions is an indispensable aspect of the theoretical preparation for the American revolution and is necessary for all members and sympathizers without exception.

At the same time, a well-prepared discussion of the regular party schedule of work, is one of the surest ways of integrating Negro members into the party. What must not be done is to treat these discussions as the special business of the Negroes and those interested in or concerned with negro work.

Suggested Subjects:

- a. Position of Negro in American Society Today.
- b. The Negro in the Civil War.
- c. The Position of the Negro in the Local Industries, particularly in the War Industries.
- d. European Imperialism and Africa.
- e. The Negro in the U.S. Armed Forces.

B. External

1. Open Meetings

Branches doing Negro work should hold one open branch meeting a month. Topics discussed must be of interest to such contacts without becoming mere repetition of platitudes with which The Negro is probably even more familiar than the party members. Branches might consider holding periodical reports on "Recent Events in the Negro World".

2. Negro Class

In order to provide an opportunity to present and develop systematically the Marxist position, a regular class or discussion group should be organized, probably by the Harlem branch. The topic might be such as the following: "The Way Out for the Negro", "The Only Way to Solve the Race Problem," Etc.

3. Lending Library

The Harlem Branch should take steps to start a lending library for the use of Negro members and close contacts.

III. Local Campaigns of Action.

A. Branches doing Negro Work are to assign members to investigate and report on all the Negro organizations in its area, including not only the NAACP, the National Negro Congress, but the church groups, Y's, forums, etc. in which Negroes meet. Members must become acquainted with the leadership, composition, influence, etc. of these organizations. They must be in constant attendance at their meetings so as not only to be aware of what is going on in the neighborhood and to become acquainted with and by as many Negroes as possible, but to be able to take part in all proposals, large and small for activity against Negro discrimination.

B. As the result of such acquaintance with the Negro organizations and of the development of relations between members of such organizations and ourselves, Local campaigns of Action should be planned wherever possible. These might revolve around such local problems as Jobs for Negroes in the local stores, for the lowering of rents, in support of a rent strike, against the high cost of living, etc.

IV. Integration of Negroes Into the Party.

The branches must consciously and systematically cultivate good social relations between the party and Negro members and contacts. Such is the historical background of race relations and the present isolation of the party from the general mass movement, that no possible opportunity must be lost to make the Negroes feel integrated and at home in the general life of the party. To this end —

- a. individual comrades must take care to include Negro members and contacts in their social lives as they hope to be included in the social lives of the Negroes.
- b. branch socials (in homes or halls), picnics, outings, etc. should be held jointly with Negro groups and organizations wherever possible.

V. Co-operation with YPSL.

The forces both in the Party and in the YPSL doing Negro work are small, scattered, isolated and inexperienced. To overcome these handicaps as much as possible we must plan for and secure the maximum co-ordination and cooperation between the Party and the YPSL. This should express itself through:

- a. Exchange of information, experience, contacts, etc. not only through a YPSL representative on the Negro Co-ordinating Committee, but directly between party branches and the various YPSL units.
- b. Joint planning of activity, socials, outings, educationals, Negro training classes & discussion groups, etc.

Submitted by

TOM BROWN
CITY NEGRO WORK DIRECTOR

PROPOSALS FOR REORGANIZATION OF BRANCHES

Adopted by the City Committee

On the basis of experiences in the past year, the City Committee recommends to the convention the reorganization of the branches so that the work of our small party can be conducted in a more effective and concentrated manner.

The proposals are:

1. The strengthening of the Harlem and Yorkville branches as the two Manhattan concentration centers.
2. The organization of a new branch in Queens, L.I.
3. The organization of a Central Branch.
4. The dissolution of the Lower Manhattan and Upper West Side branches.
5. The maintenance of the Bronx and Brownsville branches in their present locations.

These recommendations are the result of considerable discussion in the City Committee, and consultation with leading and active comrades in the various branches. Briefly, the reasons for each of the proposed steps are:

1. Harlem and Yorkville were selected as our Manhattan concentration centers by the last city convention. However, an inadequate number of qualified comrades were transferred to these branches; many of those sent in were not fit for the work of these units.

In Harlem, our work showed considerable improvement, but the branch is seriously handicapped by the lack of sufficient activists, and the fact that a number of comrades do not and cannot engage in Negro work. We have made a number of valuable contacts in Harlem, and the prospects of effective work are excellent. What is needed is more active comrades, and the transfer of those who cannot do Negro work into other branches.

In Yorkville, the branch functioned poorly in the past period. However, the decision of the last convention to make this neighborhood a concentration center is still valid. Yorkville is an important gentile working class district which is the stronghold of the fascists, and where there is widespread anti-fascist feeling among the workers. In the present period especially, our party can do effective work in this neighborhood, but what is required is a reorganization of the Yorkville branch, including the sending in of additional active comrades.

2. The purpose of the organization of a Queens-L.I. branch is to have the comrades located in that general territory, aided by additional comrades to be assigned to the branch, concentrate on the large industrial establishments. This will include regular coverage of several important plants with Labor Action and pamphlets, and direct contact with the workers employed in Long Island. In addition, the branch will supplement this main (industrial) activity by neighborhood work in a Queens area in which industrial workers live.

Despite the many difficulties in the way of effective functioning of such a branch, it is both necessary and possible to organize the unit with prospects of good results.

3. The organization of a Central Branch, meeting at the City headquarters, is called for, first, by the need to have a party unit which can act as a shock troop to cover important central and lower Manhattan mass meetings and other central functions; and second, to concentrate party members who cannot engage in the usual branch activities in a single unit where their party activity can be centrally directed. The Central Branch will also be responsible for the contacts already made by the Lower Manhattan branch.

Comrades who cannot or have not been active in other Manhattan branches and are transferred to the Central Branch will be given work in accordance with their experiences, abilities and available time. If they fail to carry out this work, steps will be taken to reduce them to the status of sympathizers. The City Committee believes that thru a Central branch comrades now inactive can be drawn into necessary party work which is now being carried on inefficiently or not at all.

4. To carry out the above three points, it is proposed that the Lower Manhattan and Upper West Side branches be dissolved. As the organization report has stated, these two branches have functioned more efficiently than the other branches in the city. However, experience has shown that the neighborhoods in which these branches function are not as fertile as Harlem or Yorkville. In order to do effective work in the latter territories, it is necessary to dissolve the Upper West Side and Lower Manhattan branches and transfer the activists to the concentration branches. (Some of the comrades will also be sent to the Queens-L.I. branch and the Central branch).

5. It is proposed that the Bronx and Brownsville branches continue to work in the same general neighborhoods as in the past period. The incoming city committee, however, will have to give further consideration to the precise concentration points of these branches, and in the case of the Bronx, to the problem of efficient branch functioning.

If the above proposals are accepted by the city convention, it is proposed that the reorganization of the branches be completed within three weeks. The first meetings following the convention would be on the basis of the old set-up of the branches. The following week the branches would meet according to the re-assignment of members to be made by the new City Committee.

The reorganization of the branches is the essential first step to the greater efficient and effective functioning of the party. It must be followed by the formation of responsible executive committees in each branch and systematic work by every party member. Above all, the incoming city committee, to be elected by the convention, will have to give aggressive and inspiring leadership to the party as a whole.

The main lines of the perspective set down for the last city convention still holds for the next period. This may be summarized as: internal tightening-up based on branch-centered activity, intensified educational work and continued efforts to extend our forces and influence in the factories and trade union movement. Every

phase of party activity must be conducted with the aim of spreading the party press outward from our own ranks, by sales and distribution.

I. MAYORALTY CAMPAIGN

Our public activity for the entire next period will center around the coming mayoralty campaign, under the slogan, "Vote for the Anti-War Candidate!"

The campaign activity will take place in the branch neighborhoods, through petition gathering, sales of L.A. featuring the campaign, street meetings, campaign rallies in each branch territory.

Labor Action will be the chief agitation instrument. Additional special campaign literature will be issued.

The detailed plan of the campaign will be worked out by the incoming City Committee.

II. INDUSTRIAL WORK

The industrial work of the party shall continue in the direction we have already taken:

1. Industrial training of comrades, particularly in metal trades, including comrades who are now white collar or unskilled workers.

2. Systematic placing of comrades in large plants and important industries, with planful concentration on given plants and industries.

3. Organization of fractions in unions where we have two or more comrades. The frequency of meeting of these fractions should be decided by themselves.

4. Regular mass distributions of Labor Action in front of large concentration plants.

III. EDUCATIONAL WORK

The general proposals and remarks on the objectives and methods of educational work, contained in the last Program of Action, are still fully valid. Specifically for the coming period:

1. Agitation and propaganda: The central job will be the street meeting work based upon the mayoralty campaign. It must be emphasized against that the main task, and the test of the success, of a street meeting is the sale of our press and literature. A speakers' bureau should function to achieve the most efficient distribution of our available outdoor speakers among the branches.

2. Internal education: Improvement in the character and regularity of branch educational programs along the lines already started in some branches. Especially:

- (a) An educational program at each branch meeting. With the street meetings supplanting open branch educationals to a large extent, the branch meetings can be directed even more toward the education of party members.
- (b) At least one educational each month based upon an article in the current New International.
- (c) Each branch shall organize a course on Marxism, based on the text published by the party, and conducted as a discussion class -- to take place at every other branch meeting as the educational program of that meeting. The prime objective of this discussion class is the encouragement of independent self-study and reading.

3. Direction: Steps should be taken toward unification of the educational work being conducted or planned by party and YPSL, local and national, especially with a view to making possible the greater concentration of given comrades on educational work alone. On a branch scale also the educational and propaganda activities of the party and YPSL (street meetings, forums, also internal educationals) should be held jointly as far as is possible and mutually agreed on.

IV. LITERATURE WORK:

1. Quotas:

- a) For Labor Action Bundle Order: 2500 per week. For N.I. bundle order: 200 per issue for next two numbers, after which the quota shall be reviewed by the City Committee.
- b) For L.A. 3-month sub drive: 75 for the next two months.
- c) Every branch should see to it that at least two libraries in its territory receive the N.I. Every party member and YPSL must get the N.I. and L.A. regularly.

2. The sale of the press should be the main feature of each street meeting.

3. Continuation of contact work with those who are established as readers or contacts.

4. Branch Promotion: The branches should carry on some promotion of the press in the areas they concentrate in or canvass with leaflets or cards bearing a blurb and listing the newsstands in the neighborhood carrying it.

5. Selection of branch literature agents who will take an active interest in promotion of the press and who will establish closer working relations with the City Literature Director.

V. NEGRO WORK

1. Revival of the local party Negro Coordinating Committee, consisting of one representative of each branch doing Negro work plus a YPSL representative and the city Negro Work Director .

2. The reorganized Harlem branch, strengthening of which is proposed by the City Committee, shall be the major concentration point for Negro work in New York. It shall take over the contacts made by the Negro work of the Upper West Side branch. The Bronx and Brownsville branches are to continue their Negro work, with increased attention to the selection of the area best suited to our forces.

3. Systematic political and organizational training of selected comrades for leading work in this field. In addition, the party branches should arrange educational and discussions on Negro work for all comrades.

4. The branches doing Negro work should hold at least one open meeting a month (in addition to street meetings) on topics of interest to Negro contacts.

5. A regular discussion group or class should be organized by the Harlem branch, on a subject permitting a systematic presentation of the Marxist position on the Negro question. The Harlem branch should start a lending library for the use of Negro members and contacts.

6. Branches doing Negro work are to assign members to investigate and report on Negro organizations in their area and become acquainted with the character of these organizations. They should attend their meetings regularly in order to become aware of what is going on, become acquainted with as many Negroes as possible and seize opportunities for participating in any action against Negro discrimination. Local campaigns of action on such problems should be planned wherever possible.

7. It is important that the branches systematically cultivate good social relations between the party and Negro members and contacts. Branch socials and outings should be held jointly with Negro groups wherever possible.

8. A maximum of cooperation between the Party and YPSL on Negro work must be organized for joint planning of activity, socials, educational, training, etc. and for exchange of information, experiences and contacts -- not only thru a YPSL representative on the Negro Coordinating Committee but directly between party branches and YPSL units.

£ £ £ £

WE MUST CHANGE OUR ORIENTATION

The zero hour draws near. A tremendous amount of work must still be done.

We are at present a tiny propaganda group trying to act like a mass party.

The preservation and strengthening of the Party must take precedence over everything else. Whether there is fascism or a successful proletarian revolution after the war depends chiefly on how successfully we can preserve and strengthen the Party, and make the Party known among wide masses.

In order to make the best of the opportunities still open to us, it is imperative that we orient the Party toward the realization of the following three objectives:

1. The strengthening of our forces
 - a) qualitatively, by intensive internal education;
 - b) quantitatively, by concentrated contact work among a handful of best contacts.
2. Rooting of our forces in industry and trade unions.
3. An agitational campaign, chiefly by leaflets, to get the name of the Party and a few transitional slogans linked in the memory of large masses of workers.

It is necessary to drastically curtail or abolish all activities which interfere with the realization of the above 3 objectives.

The above conclusions flow inescapably from the following considerations.

TRYING TO ACT LIKE A MASS PARTY

Consider a typical branch in the New York Local. It has about 20 members. 8 are excused from all branch work because they are engaged in national or city work, or because of illness or occupational reasons. Of the remaining 12, 3 can engage in only part of the branch work for similar reasons. Of the remaining 9 "active" members, about 5 or 6 appear regularly for activity.

Now the recent national Plenum has adopted a Program of Action. Let's suppose this typical N. Y. branch were to attempt to carry out this Program. The first point is Labor Action. Each branch is instructed to increase its quota, and to distribute the additional papers at union halls, factories, and to unionists at their homes. All together, these activities require at least 1 evening a week per active member. The Program of Action further makes it obligatory for each member to engage in general house to house sales, try to get subs, etc. This activity is to reach 50 to 100 families per week. Popular pamphlets will be issued, about 1 every 3 weeks. Let's save time by selling the pamphlets together with the paper. This makes 2 evenings a week for each active member of the branch.

Recognizing the importance of education, the Plenum further decided: "Each branch shall organize a class dealing with current issues and/or the fundamental issues and problems of the movement. Such classes shall be held

irrespective of the size of the unit." In obedience to this directive, the typical branch establishes a class. This makes 3 evenings a week per member.

Contact work, to be successful, requires the establishment of close associations and personal friendships with contacts. This requires a 4th evening.

The weekly open air meeting makes 5, and the branch meeting makes 6 nights a week for each active member.

That is not all. Recognizing the necessity of defense, the Plenum decides: "Every branch throughout the country shall assign members to join and function in the Workers Defense League" (emphasis in original). Also, "The National Office and also the Local organizations or branches shall make every effort to issue printed or mimeographed leaflets on the issues of the day" etc. And, "Wherever possible, public forums shall be organized and lectures given regularly, as long as possible."

The intensification of trade union activities of members, envisaged by the Plenum, will undoubtedly require considerable time. Several comrades must devote evenings to industrial training courses in preparation for getting into industry. Some time will also be necessary for the reading and study required for the efficient progress of the branch's study class.

In addition, 5 of the active members are on the branch executive committee. They have to have committee meetings, keep the various records of press routes, contact files, financial books, send out mailings, put the paper on the newsstands each week, etc.

Can the branch perhaps draw on some of the functionaries, now doing nothing in the branch, to relieve the burden? It seems not, since we are informed in Bulletin #8 that it is necessary to organize a better functioning Negro Department, that the Finance Department needs more people, and that the problem is to gather together "comrades who will be in a position to devote a very large part of their time, if not exclusively, to Educational work."

The Plenum announces the preparation of an Organizational Manual. Such a manual will surely be useful, but can it succeed in doubling the number of days in a week?

WHAT IS ACCOMPLISHED?

What is the result of trying to do so much more than we have the forces for? 6 months ago the City Committee adopted a Program of Action. Let us look at some of the plans.

"The work of the branches . . . must have the objective of building a neighborhood periphery around the branch, looking toward immediate recruitment." -- Peripheries obtained have been tiny, and mostly vague sympathizers. Recruiting zero, or very nearly so.

Negro work --- A few hundred vague sympathizers have been acquired. Almost none are party material. Those who joined the Party did not stay long.

Internal education --- city wide lectures and classes, poorly attended by Party members. Internal Party forums --- only one was held. Branch study circles --- how many such groups now function in the city organization?

At every City Convention the outgoing City Committee points out the shortcomings, the failures, the lack of self-sacrifice, the lack of discipline, the absence of aggressive leadership. Each time a program is presented to overcome these evils.

But these evils continue right along.

A branch is engaged in activity. Along comes the City Contact Department with a huge list of contacts and instructions to cover all of them within 2 months, because these are very good contacts. The branch starts on this work to the neglect of L. A. sales. Presently a crisis is reached, the L.A. office puts on some pressure, and the branch starts "mass" press sales to the detriment of the contact work. When the City Educational Department tries to organize study groups, this takes lots of time and the press and contact work accordingly suffer. A pamphlet comes out, with instructions to dispose in 2 weeks, so the branch neglects other things for a couple of weeks and concentrates on the pamphlet. As a result of all this the Negro work becomes non-existent, so a representative of the Negro Department visits the branch for a discussion on how to do Negro work. Thereafter a few Negro contacts may be visited, but L.A. sales take a dive. And so on ad infinitum.

THE ZERO HOUR APPROACHES

Mass raids on "aliens" are taking place. The Fight for Freedom Committee has raised the slogan "Arrest the 5th Column!". We know from recent history that, after a short interval for working up the public opinion, Roosevelt acts in accordance with the slogans of such committees. It is likely that the Canadian, rather than the English, example will be followed in this country. This means for us only a few more months, at most, of legal activity.

U. S. imperialism is moving at full speed toward total participation in the war. The working class, poisoned by its present ideology of "national defense" and aid to Britain, will go along, despite its current militancy. The more "advanced" workers, those who have some background of socialist ideas, are now, on the whole, either in the vanguard of those yelling for war, or in the Stalinist camp.

Those workers who are not for aid to Britain, and who are receptive to our propaganda, are precisely elements whom the radical movement has not touched in the past. Although such elements agree with our slogans, experience has shown that the gulf between their way of thinking and ours is too great. If any of these join the Party, they soon drop out. Seeing the drive toward war, even those who oppose the war but lack a Marxist understanding will take a fatalist attitude: "It's no use, we can't do anything about it." Or, if they want to do something about it, they will join the America First Committee. An inordinate amount of effort and personal contact is necessary to assimilate such elements. Our list of prospective recruits, therefore, has dwindled to an infinitesimal handful.

OUR INFLUENCE UPON THE WORKING CLASS

The Program of Action adopted by the national Plenum says that the current national tour of Comrade Shachtman may be "the last great opportunity, before direct and formal American participation in the war, for the Workers Party to state its case against imperialist war to the wide mass of workers." (My emphasis - M. W.) Let's stop kidding ourselves. On the basis of the most optimistic estimates, the total number of workers who are reached even remote-

ly by our national tour constitute less than one fiftieth of one percent (1/50 of 1%) of the adult working class population of the country. This figure includes not only those who attend Max's public lectures but all their friends and relatives. And even if a hundred thousand leaflets were issued throughout the country announcing the lectures, far less than 1% of the adult working class population would be reached. This is not exactly a "wide mass".

The decline in our membership during the past period has been accompanied by an even greater decline in the available time for Party activity. We now have far fewer unemployed comrades; and the increase of overtime is cutting sharply into the evening activity of many comrades.

We are a tiny propaganda group, not a mass party. As a party we are observers, not participants, in the class struggle, and it cannot be otherwise under the circumstances.

The revolutionary upsurge of the American working class, which will take place in the not too distant future, can hardly be said to be the result of the present activities of the Workers Party. At the same time we must never forget that UNLESS A CLEAR MARXIST PARTY IS IN EXISTENCE AND ABLE TO SERVE AS A CENTER OF CRYSTALLIZATION FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE, THE WORKING CLASS WILL BE DEFEATED AND FASCISM WILL TRIUMPH. THEREFORE THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PARTY, IN QUALITY AND QUANTITY, MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER EVERYTHING ELSE.

The distribution of the Party's time and effort among various types of activity must be based on both the objective situation, the moods of the workers, etc., and on the subjective situation, the strength and striking power of the Party.

When the SWP was formed at the end of 1937, we had over 2,000 members nationally (including the youth). We had a considerable sympathizing periphery. More important, there existed a considerable number of workers who were receptive to our propaganda, and who also had something of a radical or socialist background. The main line of agitation at that time was the fight against fascism. It was relatively not so difficult to recruit and assimilate such workers into the Party. Consequently it was fruitful at that time to engage in "mass" sales of the paper, do considerable contact work, run forums, etc. And we had plenty of time. There were several years ahead of us. That period is symbolized by the Madison Square Garden demonstration in which the revolutionary party placed itself at the head of 50,000 workers.

The situation now is entirely different. We have one third the forces we had several years ago. We have hardly any real sympathizers. Those workers who are receptive to our propaganda are not, by and large, recruitable, due to their background. It is easy for the Negro Department to tell us that the only way to get and keep Negro workers in the Party is to establish personal friend-

ships, invite them to your home, get their confidence, form Negro discussion groups to meet in homes, etc. If the entire Party membership of Local N. Y. did this consistently for one year, we would, maybe, obtain a dozen Negro recruits. But the Party would have time for no other activity whatsoever. The same is true of white workers to almost the same degree at the present time. You are not going to get a raw worker, even if he agrees with our general propaganda, to share the sacrifices and risks of membership in a tiny group, without numbers, influence or resources, and subjected to the growing pressure of all the instruments of a war-mad ruling class. And very little time remains.

We have carried over, by inertia, an orientation which was good several years ago, but which is not applicable today. Continuation of this attempt to do everything all over the map with insufficient forces can only result in repeated failures and resultant demoralization. Even if inefficiency and laziness in the Party were completely abolished, our forces would still be far too small.

WE MUST CONCENTRATE

Due to the lack of forces to cover effectively all of the working class, we must concentrate upon those sections of the workers where the results will be the best (at present the militant unionists, etc.). And due to the lack of forces to engage effectively in all the various kinds of activity that a mass party engages in, we must concentrate upon those activities which yield the best results for our basic aim, viz., TO CREATE A SITUATION WHERE THE PARTY WILL BE ABLE TO ACT AS A CENTER OF CRYSTALLIZATION FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE WHICH IS TO COME.

To achieve this basic aim, the Party's activities must be directed toward the realization of the following three objectives.

1. THE STRENGTHENING OF OUR FORCES

A. INTENSIVE INTERNAL EDUCATION

The necessity of this has been emphasized in innumerable documents, reports, and programs of action during the past period. Yet, in practice, education has almost always been treated as of little importance. There are so many other activities a branch cannot do without, but when it comes to organizing a study group --- there is no time for it. To help resist the terribly incessant pressure of the bourgeois world in its death crisis it is imperative that the Party membership improve its knowledge of Marxism. We need only look to France, where the majority of our former leadership betrayed the struggle under the impact of events. We need but look North, to Canada, where our organization collapsed completely under the blows of the war. We are not immune. No one can predict what the future storms may bring; the ordinary rank and file comrade of today may find himself tomorrow placed by events in a position of responsibility and leadership. The job of thinking cannot be left to others.

B. CONCENTRATED CONTACT WORK

The average contact on our records is no longer worth the effort expended. 3 or 4 years ago he may have been friendly, and may even

have signed his name for the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. Today he is probably for all out aid to Britain. However, there remains a tiny handful, perhaps a half dozen or so in the territory of a branch, who can be developed into Party members if all of the branch's contact activity is concentrated upon these persons. By investigation of the better names on its list, the branch must pick out this handful, and assign a qualified comrade to cover each of them regularly, with the aim of recruitment. In this connection, the branch study circle can be used to help draw the advanced contact closer to the party.

2. THE ROOTING OF OUR FORCES IN INDUSTRY AND THE TRADE UNIONS

More results of lasting value have been achieved in this field during the past period than in most other phases of Party activity. This work must be continued and intensified.

3. AN AGITATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO GET THE NAME OF THE PARTY AND A FEW PARTY SLOGANS LINKED IN THE MINDS OF LARGE MASSES OF WORKERS

No possible amount of repetition or frequency of contact with a group of average workers, who are now receptive to our slogans, can make more than vague sympathizers out of them. The effect of our activity with such workers will only be felt in the future, when the revolutionary upsurge begins. But we can achieve the same results with far larger masses of workers.

Let each branch, or preferably the City Office, issue a leaflet, say every 2 weeks. Printed if possible. The leaflet should contain: a brief statement on some important current event; a few appropriate slogans, perhaps ~~xxx~~ with a brief explanation of each; and the name of the Party. The leaflet should clearly differentiate us from the Stalinists, and indicate our opposition to both war camps. Leaflets which are to be distributed in the vicinity of newsstands which carry L.A. should mention this fact.

On the basis of one evening's activity per week per member for such work, the N. Y. Local can easily distribute 20,000 leaflets a week. In 2 months 200,000 workers will have heard the name of the Party, and have a brief idea of what we stand for.

A campaign should be mapped out by the City Committee to cover in this way the best working class districts, in streets and door to door; large factories; large union meetings. City wide mobilizations should be held to cover the crowds which attend such events as the Madison Square Garden meetings of the Transport Workers Union and the America First Committee. The sincere anti-war workers who come to hear Lindbergh and Wheeler must be shown that the Coughlinites and Stalinists are not the only political organizations opposing the war. We dare not leave this field free to the fascists.

L.A.s should be used to supplement the leaflets, especially in the case of factories or union meetings where distributions are regular.

WE MUST CHOOSE

In order that the above program may be carried out, we must stop wasting

our energies on activities which yield so little in the long run. House to house sales of LA, where we spend 5 or 10 or 15 minutes at each door, and a branch reaches 50 families a week (usually far less), and give away most of the papers anyway, should be dropped. The kind of contact work, both white and Negro, we have been doing in the past, must go. Likewise the branch forum, where we talk to ourselves and to a few outsiders in very simple language (the outsiders go away and never come again).

Open air meetings, if held at all, should be of the roving variety, in a different neighborhood each week. Nothing is gained by shouting to the same group of hecklers every Friday. A branch hasn't got the forces to get involved in local issues, rent strikes, etc., so let's not start what can't be finished.

The high water mark of the Harlem pamphlet sales was 612 penny pamphlets sold by 17 comrades in one afternoon. During the same time they could have given out 4000 pamphlets or 4000 leaflets, reaching 6 times as many workers.

Attempts by us at forming discussion groups in Negro homes, or independent Negro organizations, have all failed, and could not have succeeded in view of our forces. We should'nt spend time and effort trying to do the impossible.

Where will the money come from, to pay for all these leaflets and free papers? Let us note that already at present the comrades pay for the bulk of LAs by special taxes on branch members. As for the rest, we are in a war and the finances must be raised. The same factor which has cut down the amount of time available for party activity, the industrial boom, has increased the amount of finances available to the Party. The bourgeois state taxes; we must do likewise. But let us not put the burden on the lower income brackets. The bourgeoisie will soon force us to sacrifice, unwillingly, for its war. The least we can do is to sacrifice now, willingly, what is necessary for our war.

We can either continue the old way --- planning dozens of activities and creating committees to direct them, with few rank and filers left to do the work; with competition between the various departments for the insufficient available forces, with no job being done as it should; or we can operate according to a definite plan, with limited objectives, with all activity directed in a disciplined manner toward those objectives.

We must choose either the old way, by which we would be dissipating our energies talking to an insignificant fraction of the workers, with practically nothing of lasting value accomplished; or a new way, concentrating on building and strengthening the Party in the most efficient manner, and making it possible for thousands of workers to find their way to the Party when the time for revolutionary action arrives.

The Party must choose between being a powerless observer of the revolutionary struggles to come (thereby assuring their defeat), and being the rallying center and leader of those struggles, with resulting victory.

H. W.

LESSONS OFFERED FOR OUR STUDY IN THE FIELD OF NEGRO WORK

There is probably little dispute, if any, as to the desirability of the WP doing work in the Negro field to the very limits of its ability. There is, however, considerable divergence of opinion as to how we should proceed. In large measure this is due to our relative inexperience in the work, and to the absence of any general or extended discussion on the subject. To promote such a discussion and clarification the following brief article is written. It aims to point out certain lessons drawn from our recent experience, expressed purposely in rather general terms. Further discussion of the points raised along with many others not touched upon here can be carried out in the Negro Bulletin, in the Internal Bulletins, and above all in the meetings of the branches engaged in Negro work.

1. NEGRO WORK IS FRUITFUL

Despite distrust and suspicion of whites, arising not only from their past experiences with the CP, but from their entire historical experience with the white man, Negroes in all sections of the city have given our party and its representatives a remarkably friendly welcome. They are looking for solutions to their problems. They are willing, in many cases even anxious, to listen to our position and progress of action. Virtually no hostility to us as radicals or as Revolutionaries is reported. The field is wide open before us. The Negroes are militant, openly asking what have they got to lose, and frankly hostile to American "democracy", its institutions and pretensions. The recruitment of Negroes into the party is entirely possible. It must be pushed energetically and fearlessly at once.

2. THE NEGRO FIELD IS COMPLEX.

Negroes are not only workers; they are, in addition and quite distinct from that, Negroes. We cannot approach them, therefore, dogmatically with formulas derived from our experiences as and with whites without running grave risks of serious error in interpretation and understanding. The Negro chauvinist is not the exact counterpart of the white chauvinist. The Negro shopkeeper or small employer is not the exact counterpart of the white petty-bourgeois. The Negro who says that he is not scabbing when he crosses the picket-line of a Jim Crow union is not to be confused with the white workers crossing the picket-line, etc. The racial oppression of the Negroes results in complex reactions which demand special consideration.

The Negro press is an illustration and expression of that combined development in the Negro of which we must be constantly aware. Side by side, in issue after issue, are stories, one praising the British for their aid to Ethiopia, one cursing the British for their brutal treatment of the West African Nationalists with a picture of Wallace Johnson; one pointing out to the Negroes the fraud of American democracy, and one calling upon all Negroes to support the church. Who is reactionary, who is radical? The churchmen and the supporters of British Democracy may be either. No single criterion such as we might be prone to use in judging whites will give us a true estimate either of the paper's editor or of its readers.

3. ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS.

Nothing could more clearly illustrate this than our experience in the Harlem Bus Boycott. In a few weeks the party gained a wider and better reputation, more and better contacts, than in months, even years of talk without action. This familiar platitude retains its validity with singular force when applied among Negroes. The latter is skeptical of phrases and promise, surprised and stirred by action in his behalf. Precisely this, in sharp and passionate language, was pointed out to the Harlem branch by a Negro visitor at an open meeting prior to our participation in the picketing.

And action for the immediate, day-to-day demands of the Negro is to him more appealing than the fundamental political line. Our comrades in Philadelphia report that at a meeting between some of our people and members of the Junior NAACP to plan an action against a Jim Crow war industry an officer of the Junior NAACP expressed such enthusiasm for our proposals that he was brought to a meeting of the Philadelphia City Committee. It turned out later that this Negro was a member of the YCL. Apparently it had not occurred to him not to collaborate with Trotskyites. It was the specific action, not the ultimate political line which held his main interest, gained his support. Judging from this and from analogous experiences with members of the National Negro Congress in Harlem during the Bus Boycott energetic participation in action for and with Negroes will win recruits, even among those in Stalinist controlled or influenced organizations, if not in the CP itself.

Finally, on this point. Among Negroes probably more than among any other group the estimate of the party is colored by the estimate made of the members of the party as individuals. The Negro's opinion of the party may even be decisively influenced by his trust and belief in the honesty, sincerity and devotion of the individual. Such trust springs most surely from common experiences in action, not in the cafeteria.

4. NEGROES MUST BE DRAWN INTO ACTION WITH US.

Neither the strength nor the reputation and following of the WP is such at the present time that we can hope effectively to carry on actions in behalf of the Negro by ourselves. Our relative success and gains for the party in the Harlem Bus Boycott compared to our failures to make any gains in connection with the Odell Waller case illustrates the point. We must aim to exhaust every opportunity of drawing Negroes themselves into action, through their existing organizations wherever possible or feasible, or through temporary groupings or committees set up perhaps for this specific purpose under Negro leadership, drawing support from the Negro community. It is far more important that Negroes themselves be involved in the action, support the action, than that the WP be in formal leadership without such support. When we cannot secure support for Negroes for actions if our choosing, we must discover and participate in actions however small and trivial of their choosing.

5. WE NEED NEGRO ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS.

Major success in work among Negroes requires that we have Negroes organizing and leading the Negro work. At the present we are very seriously handicapped in the midst of splendid opportunities by the by the lack of any available Negro comrades. We must therefore direct our efforts and our energies in the coming period to recruiting potential Negro leaders and organizers into the party. We must prepare now not only to win them but to hold them, to educate them politically and train them organizationally with the utmost speed for this specific work.

Lacking Negro leaders and organizers today we must develop our second best choice--selection and training of white comrades to carry out this work. This involves a deliberate, conscious, systematic process of education and testing. No amount of devoted Jimmy Higgins activity can substitute for specially trained leaders and organizers in this sphere any more than it can in any other sphere of party work.

6. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONS.

If to some it has appeared difficult to recruit Negroes into the party, to all it has appeared virtually impossible to hold them in the party. We need but to recall, as one instance, the experience with the five taken into the Upper West Side branch a year and a half ago. Of the five only two remain today even as contacts.

Many, if not the majority of white comrades are held within the party through the years because the party has become the center of their social and cultural lives as well as of their political lives. To hold a Negro it is all the more urgent to recognize both the difficulty and the necessity of similarly integrating his life with that of the party. This is not a question of pure politics, pouring it into the contact or new member in calculated doses, though it is of course a political question. No contact should be regarded as merely a name on a list; he is above all and must be considered above all a human individual. The sooner every party member acts in recognition of this fact and assumes, himself, the responsibility of sharing with the contact and new member every experience of our common daily lives, the sooner we will have taken the first step toward the solution of the problem of holding Negroes within the party.

Tom Brown