

PARTY BUILDER

F O R M E M B E R S O N L Y

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Most of the articles in this issue of the PARTY BUILDER were submitted for publication in the PARTY BUILDER scheduled to appear in April, 1948. Because of the reduced size of the National Office staff during the period from April 1 until recently, it was impossible to arrange for the appearance of an issue of the PARTY BUILDER before now.

We are now in a position to resume regular publication of the PARTY BUILDER so long as there is material submitted for it. The pre-convention discussion which is about to begin should suggest many subjects for PARTY BUILDER articles. Send in your articles and the BUILDER will appear.

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK CITY COMMITTEE
SUBMITTED FOR CITY CONVENTION HELD IN
APRIL 1948

I. The Situation in General

The situation in general in Local New York during the last year, is well known. The lowered morale, decreased activity, slackened sense of responsibility and lessened interest in political problems have been the subject of innumerable formal and informal discussions. Rather than a description of the situation, the task before us is to seek the cause and to work out proposals to overcome it.

2. The February 1947 City Convention

The 1947 city convention met to survey the situation and to take steps to end the growing stagnation. There was a general awareness that the solution "into industry or into the field" was now outlived. New basis of party activity had to be found.

The convention adopted a "20 month plan of action" which emphasized predominantly neighborhood work, like the rent campaign. However, all this was related to the 1948 campaign in a manner that made the elections - the goal - appear more important than the neighborhood work itself. The importance of the elections, likewise, was posed in a narrow framework of party organizational needs, rather than being politically motivated. As a result, the 20-month plan failed to inspire the enthusiasm of the membership and was rationalized into a sanction for reduced activity. A growing mood of futility began to make itself felt and a growing number of members took a "watch and wait" attitude.

3. The Unity Negotiations

The renewal of unity negotiations in March 1947, with their promise of a quick unification, suddenly broke upon a New York membership in the aforementioned state of mind. The immediate effect was to bring about a rapid decline in activity and lessening of interest in everything but the seemingly impending unity. The party shifted into a lowered tempo of activity, lower than at any time in the history of the New York organization, and a tempo which continues to date. This development can only be partially explained by the feeling that expressed itself as "since we will be in the SWP soon, it is of little use to exert ourselves building the WP." In large measure it also resulted from the personal aversion which nearly everyone felt about being in the SWP. For many comrades, unity seemed an easier path than building the WP, though the thought of life in the SWP was depressing. Such a conflicted attitude contributed, in large measure, to a growing demoralization and a slackening activity.

This tendency was further fostered by the revival of all-out factional activity by the Johnsonites. The irresponsible and disloyal factionalism of this group had been a disruptive factor in the work of the organization for a number of years. Several branches, as for instance Harlem, were practically paralyzed by the activities of the Johnsonites. The insidious character of this group, unlike any previously existent in our movement, filled many party activists

with a feeling of frustration and dismay. The interminable character of the dispute bored the bulk of the membership and resulted in a decreasing attendance at discussions of political questions.

4. The Summer Period - Low Point of Activity

The situation continued to deteriorate with the advent of the summer months. Mass sales of LABOR ACTION at the CIO and AFL demonstrations against the Taft-Hartley Act, provided occasions for participation in colorful labor activities but had little reflection in the morale of the membership. Picket lines at the Greek and Duth consulates in June and August were responded to by a fair percentage of the members, but again without visible effect on the continuing activities of the organization. Attendance at branch meetings declined to a point where many branches failed to hold regular meetings and some comrades began advocating twice-a-month meetings as normal procedure. It was at this low point in the life of the Local that the Johnsonites split. The loss of some thirty members had the immediate effect of further weakening of the organization, especially in Harlem and Brooklyn-Downtown. The latter branch was finally dissolved toward the end of the summer. However, the Johnsonite split also had a number of good aspects to it. For one, it put an end to the debilitating factional activity that had so long disrupted the activities in New York. It also contributed to resolving the uncertainty about the prospects for unity, in the minds of the membership and making clear to everyone, that the only task before us was the building of the Workers Party.

5. Stabilization on a Reduced Level

The period of decline came to an end with the very successful Trotsky Memorial Meeting at the beginning of September. The organization now began to stabilize itself. The stabilization was characterized by better attendance at branch meetings and more consistent response to party activities. However, this stabilization, which has prevailed to date, took place on a reduced level of activity, a level that is lower than any known in Local New York since the formation of the WP. The keen sense of discipline and responsibility, the spirited ready self-sacrifice and the quick response to political and theoretical problems, which once were hallmarks of the New York membership have all be adversely affected in the last two years. From a party of activists in which inactive members were not long tolerated, Local New York has gradually become an organization with an activist core that composes the minority of the members, and with the majority composed of semi-active and inactive members. Stabilization on this basis will mean a party that much more resembles the Social Democratic type (as the SWP always has in this respect) than a party with the high standards we have always maintained in the past, and which we have always associated with a revolutionary party. The mere absence of a sense of crisis or of a lack of resignations is no cause of satisfaction when the "stability" of the organization represents a serious retreat from the traditional norms of our movement. The stabilization that has been achieved must be regarded only as a holding operation that must give way to a new advance which will reestablish the level of discipline and activity that once was the special pride of the WP.

6. Objective Difficulties

a. Nature of New York Industry

Much of the difficulty of Local New York stems from the nature of the industry that predominates in the city. New York is primarily a commercial, financial and light consumers' goods center. This situation leaves its mark upon the character of the population, the nature of the labor movement, and, inevitably, the composition of our party.

b. The Stalinist Movement in New York

New York is the only American city with a Stalinist movement of mass proportions. Since the Stalinists appeal to the same groups in the population that we do, and since they build their party along the same lines, we are confronted with a mobilization of Stalinists in nearly every field in which we work.

c. The Labor Movement in New York

The two above-mentioned factors, the nature of New York industry and the Stalinist movement, combine to give the New York labor movement its distinctive character. The CIO in New York, unlike other centers, is not primarily based on heavy industry. Its real strength lies in industries composed of a myriad of small enterprises. These have been organized as a result of the large Stalinist movement and are firmly controlled by it. The CIO Industrial Union Council is practically run like a party institution. Through control of the latter, the CP took over the American Labor Party and uses it as a mass reformist front. The existence and activities of the ALP, makes our fight for a real labor party doubly difficult.

7. Role of These Objective Difficulties

The enumeration of these objective difficulties does not lead to the conclusion that there is no base for our work in New York. It is necessary precisely in order to understand how such a base can be developed. Without an awareness of these factors, a realistic estimate of our possibilities and an intelligent comprehension of our role is impossible. A knowledge of these objective difficulties will clarify for us where we must work, what to expect and what our role is. Without this we will meet only continued demoralization and disappointments.

a. Our Main Field of Work

It would be false to base our main work upon activity in the trade unions in the coming period. Our fractions are too weak and unimportant to permit organizing our main activities around them. The work in the trade unions must be the main activity for those in the fractions and a few additional comrades, mainly for distribution purposes. However, everything possible must be done to bolster our industrial work by a constant alertness for opportunities to place additional people in industry, and to recruit to the party workers, regardless of where we first contact them. In the long run there is

no substitute for industrialization and recruitment of workers from the shops. The Czech events have again demonstrated that the movement that controls the working class wields an overwhelming power. Stalinism can only be defeated by driving it out of the labor movement.

In the absence of an industrial base, however, our main perspective in the coming period must be activities in the working class neighborhoods. Neighborhood activity does not consist of a group of comrades from the four points of the compass converging on a given neighborhood on the night of the branch meeting. "Neighborhood work" of this kind could well be skipped and comrades involved could as well gather in the City Office.

Neighborhood work only has meaning if the bulk of the branch either lives in the neighborhood, or is so accessible to it as to be able to spend the bulk of their activities in the local headquarters, in other neighborhood organizations, etc. Only in this case is it possible to get acquainted with the life of a neighborhood, its problems, its political complexion, etc. A branch that is alive to a neighborhood's problems and reacts to them, will soon have its members known to a large circle of people, will compile a large list of contacts and will be in a position to take part in elections as a movement that is heard from by the neighborhood the year around.

The steps toward such a neighborhood branch have been taken by the Manhattan Branch in its activities on the East Side.- Though Brownsville and Harlem have discussed this work, little has been done.

9. Every Member in a Mass Organization

No matter from what point of view we approach our difficulties, the answer will always lead to the conclusion that the basic organizational weakness from which we suffer is our isolation. The sources of our isolated condition have often been discussed and need only be referred to: our small size, our social composition, the character of New York industry and the concentration of Stalinists in the city. At present, we are a party in name only, a workers organization in program only and in the class struggle in propaganda only.

There is no magic formula with which to overcome this situation. What we need, is to know the direction in which a solution lies, and the first steps toward it. These latter consist of systematically, branch by branch, going over the list of members and finding fields of work for every member in the mass organizations. We need no further theories or discussion on this score. What is needed is deliberate and conscientious application of the ideas we have already developed. The quiet and unostentatious but extremely effective work of M.H. in the Brooklyn NAACP is an example every member should try to emulate.

The plan of entering the mass organizations must not be viewed as a project that is suspended in the air by itself. Like most everything else we do, it must be combined with our general approach. In

this case, it means relating it to our perspective of neighborhood work and the election campaign.

Work in general mass organizations cannot, however, serve as a substitute for work in the trade unions. These latter still must receive top priority. Other types of organizations should be centers of activity in somewhat the following order of importance:

Organizations of struggle (other than trade unions) like Negro, tenants, vets.

Community and fraternal

Political (opponents work) AYD (adult sections)

Discussion centers, forums, adult education, schools, etc.

10. Leadership and the Party Cadre

The first steps toward raising the level of activity and morale must be practical ones. We have no want of schemes and ideas. We are in need of nothing so much as "a little success" which, in our case especially, would go a long way. Not "brilliant" proposals, but effective and vigorous leadership, is our prime need. But leadership is not to be understood in the narrow sense of office administration by the city organizer. What is meant is administration of our many excellent plans and proposals in all their spheres and levels by the City Committee, its sub-committees (industrial, educational, campaign, etc.) branch organizers, branch executive committees. In short, a leadership on all levels, that acts decisively and imparts to the membership a much needed sense of confidence in our ability to get things done, even if they are only small things.

The absence of such a leadership on all levels of party activity has been our greatest shortcoming in the past period. The City Committee, especially, has been affected by pessimism growing out of repeated failures. Its members represent a segment of the old cadre that has been in the leadership of the New York organization for many years and has become routinist and psychologically tired. Their declining enthusiasm and vigor is part of a process that has always affected the leadership layers of the movement, but which operates with increased weight during unfavorable periods such as the present. Realizing this situation, the City Committee has discussed new material for leadership with the intentions of presenting a slate with the barest minimum of hold-overs. The slate will proceed from the view that if the older and more experienced comrades lack the necessary drive to get things done, it is better that they be replaced with less developed comrades who do have the drive.

The exceptional difficulties which our comrades have faced in New York, combined with the extremely heavy drain of developed comrades for work elsewhere, has exhausted the old cadre in New York. This must be borne in mind and steps must be taken to replenish it. One of the most promising developments in this direction is the growth of the SYL in New York. The latter is one of the few real successes we have to record in the last year. Its ranks of political-

ly educated and self-sacrificing revolutionists will, in time, provide a vital infusion, a new blood into the cadre of the New York party.

11. Our Political Role in the 1948 Elections

Every political tendency, both within the country and abroad, recognizes the profound importance of the issues that will dominate the 1948 campaign. These issues will consist of the most crucial international political questions of our day - Marshall Plan, atom bomb, Stalinist expansion, Russia, war, UMP, air power, Palestine, European union - and such vital domestic issues as Taft-Hartley, civil rights, inflation, the Wallace movement, etc. Never has an American election been fought on such a combination of issues which, in their totality, will be decisive for the future of the United States and the world.

It is our great misfortune that we do not possess the strength with which to run a national ticket. However, our voice need not be silent in the elections. Unlike the municipal elections, the Congressional contests are fought on the great national and international issues of the day. The City Committee is recommending that we enter a candidate or candidates in the Congressional elections, preferably on the East and/or West Sides of lower Manhattan.

The Jewish question will play an important role in the elections in New York City, especially on the East Side. This affords us an opportunity to put forth our views in opposition to the outright Zionists and the demagogy of the Stalinists. Special election material on the question should permit us to reach people whom we ordinarily do not reach. Our candidate can appear before organizations and present our views on this question where they have never been heard. Material in Yiddish should permit us to reach thousands of the old Socialist electorate in this area.

The Wallace movement must not be regarded as a mere Stalinist movement. Millions of workers will vote for Wallace because he represents the nearest thing to their desire for a labor party. These Wallace voters represent an important section of the labor movement for us. We must address ourselves to them and point out the difference between an independent labor party based on the trade unions and the type of movement the Stalinists have organized for Wallace.

12. Branch Reorganization

Both in line with our perspective of neighborhood work and in preparation for the election campaign, a number of shifts in branch personnel are required. All reorganization must be related to our plans for the elections.

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LABOR REPORT SUBMITTED FOR NEW YORK
CITY CONVENTION HELD APRIL, 1948

One of the chief reasons for the healthy state of the party outside New York and the poor organizational position of the New York Local lies in the fact that we are not rooted in the industry and labor movement of the city. The effective participation of the out of town branches in the union movement has produced limited but sustained growth and a renewed vitality that comes from the successful contest for political influence among organized workers. The stability resulting from continuous work among an expanding group of contacts and sympathizers, and the thriving political life generated by the direct interplay of the party's ideas and the political currents in the labor movement is absent in New York.

The picture presented by the party's industrial activity since the war is bleak. During the war a majority of the party's membership was active in industry, 50% in concentrations. After the war, layoffs, low pay jobs for available jobs, a feeling of inertia and weariness on the part of many comrades and a renewed pursuit of other interests, combined with the general situation within and without the party, produced a steady exodus of party members from industry. The reduction in the number of party effectives in industry was also accompanied by a general deterioration in the quality of the party's industrial work - loss of contacts and sympathizers, decline in LABOR ACTION subs, absence of recruitment, etc. The "progress" noted several times during the past two years usually turned out to be merely a temporary arresting of the general decline. Advances made in one place were offset by losses elsewhere.

Industrialization

We must reiterate the importance of industrialization not only for the reasons cited above, but also because it would give us our best avenue of reinvigorating the political life in the New York party. An additional and very important reason for the further industrialization of our membership is the political ferment which has just started to hit the union movement in New York over the issues of the Taft-Hartley affidavits, the Wallace endorsement by the CIO council, and the possible raiding of the UE by the UAW. In place of the relative quietude of the past few years, the New York union movement will face political ferment which presents us with an excellent opportunity to put forward our program and make a significant dent upon the CIO in New York in addition to putting us in touch with the most advanced and politically aware workers.

Due, however, to the difficulty of getting jobs in concentrations in New York, and the present morale of the New York party, it is not likely that we can accomplish a tremendous improvement in the industrialization of the membership in a short time. Realistically, there is a slight and can be a greater improvement in the prospects for industrialization. This must be energetically seized hold of and developed if the trend toward disintegration of the party's industrial work is to be halted and reversed. A number of people have expressed willingness to enter industry and have sought work

conscientiously. This has resulted, partly because of individual persuasion, general publicity and organizational attention given to the problem. The total is still quite small, about six or seven in number, but the successful placement of even these few comrades will make a real difference in the industrial work of the party. The persistence that comrades have shown in looking for jobs must be maintained in the next few months since, in the face of the present scarcity of jobs, only intensive job seeking, over a comparatively extended period of time, and readiness to seize any opportunity, will result in effective placement and concentration of comrades in industry. This factor of maintaining interest in job seeking is now the most important one for the future of industrialization in New York. This is particularly true with regard to comrades who have gone through the discouraging experience of being hired and later laid off.

The generally increased discussion, interest and attention devoted to the task of industrialization, informally among members as well as in the branches and at the City Center, has helped to provide a party atmosphere conducive to obtaining an improved response to the call to enter industry. Keeping the work of industrialization constantly at the center of attention in New York activity is a necessary condition for further recruiting for industry.

Work in Unions

Although the number of comrades in effective places in industry is very small, and for the most part established for a comparatively short time, and in spite of dispersion even within our "concentrations," the activities already carried through demonstrate the enormous possibilities for the party in this work, even with its relatively limited forces.

In each of the important centers of union work, the UAW, the UE and the NMU, it has been amply demonstrated that there is an abundance of opportunity for party activity, and that this activity bears fruit in a relatively short period of time. There are, however, several improvements that must be made in the functioning of the party, to develop its group work in the unions.

In most cases, comrades in concentrations are scattered among several shops, various locals, and even, in one case, divided between two unions. The position of the comrades at each point must be reinforced if their work is to be made effective.

There is still a notable lack of stability, perseverance, and adaptability among many of the comrades entering industry. Many of the comrades who have been in industry in the last six months could have avoided their dismissals with a little effort. Comrades must be prepared to make the minor adjustments in personal habits necessary for holding a job.

One of the needs of union work is for comrades who have the political experience, capacity and drive to give assistance and leadership to others in the field. The entrance of experienced comrades into industry will not only enhance the work of the party's industri-

al groups, but will also attract others into industry.

MARITIME GROUPS The experience of the maritime group is the most recent demonstration of the possibilities of union work even when carried on for only a limited period of time.

After the shift in concentration from the SIU to the NMU in the last half of last year, some of the comrades served in various positions on ship's committees, and one comrade was elected a convention delegate. The group as a whole took active part in the Curran-Stalinist fight, in the general political life of the union.

The supercharged atmosphere of the NMU lends itself readily to a high level of political activity by the group, and the fight between the two caucuses permits a wide latitude in inner union operation. The group should be able to make swift progress in recruitment and in attaining influence within the Curran caucus as well as the NMU as a whole.

UAW The efforts of the party to establish a concentration in a small amalgamated UAW local has not yet met with success. This local, although composed of only 1500 members, scattered among a large number of small shops, is of exceptional importance to the party. Because of the nature of the leadership of the local, its background, its history and its make-up, the local can be converted into an important vehicle for the party program and its participation in City and State CIO affairs, and in UAW regional and national activity, in addition to serving as an important recruiting ground for party members. Party members could not only quickly take the leadership in shop work, but also in innumerable social, cultural and educational activities in the local.

One comrade is accepted as the ideological leader of the local. The local has already adopted a large part of the party's transitional program (labor party, sliding scale of wages, etc.). In addition, a part of the local leadership is favorably disposed toward this comrade and his political approach, and to some extent to the party as such. With the addition of other comrades to the situation the party is certain to attain complete political and organizational leadership.

One comrade working in the Ford plant at Edgewater for more than a year is now an active union member, serving on one of the local's committees. Because of the fact that he is working alone and because of the difficulty of coordinating his work with that of a party branch, he has found progress slow. The City Labor Committee must consider once again the possibility of sending additional people into the plant.

UE The comrades in the UE are divided among four different shops in three locals. The comrades working in a Long Island local are the only party members remaining of the large group that worked there during the war. They are the recognized leaders and also officers of the local and are also active in the UE district council. One of the comrades was also a delegate to the UE national convention. There has been, however, a distinct decline in many phases of the

local work of these comrades' activity along the lines of sub-
ing (in the past they were among the best sub-getters in the
and contacting must be renewed and coordinated with branch
activity.

One comrade in a large shop in an amalgamated local is a shop
steward and well known in the shop. He is active in the anti-
ist caucus in his local and in the district. The other com-
rades who have been in the UE for a comparatively short period are
establishing their positions.

The UE radio and machine shop locals contain the largest plants
in the New York area. If only for that reason it would be necessary
to give first priority to strenghtening the party's position in the
There is an important additional reason. An entirely new situ-
tion can be expected to develop in the UE in the near future, as
a result of the tremendous pressure being brought to bear upon the
stalinists in the labor movement generally. They will no longer be
able to act with such complete disregard of the rights of the opposi-
even in their own stronghold. Although the Stalinists are
far from defeated, and have in fact great reservoirs of strength to
draw upon, there will be an ever growing opposition to their poli-
tics. This situation gives the party the opportunity to greatly ex-
pand its work, and to take leadership of at least a large part of the
opposition if the party can build up an effective concentration in
the next few months.

ILGWU Work in the ILGWU confronts the party with special
problems. The type of activity pursued by a party group in this
union differs considerably from that in other unions.

Comrades in the union must function chiefly through the many
al and educational groups that exist in the union. Participa-
tion and leadership in direct "class struggle" activity in the shops
must necessarily take a secondary place. Their work is mainly of
an educational nature.

Thus, although the possibilities of recruitment on the basis of
individual discussion is as great or greater than in other unions,
the party's general objectives of influencing the course of events
in the unions and winning support through contending for leadership
in the shop and union meetings, must be considered as a much more
long term perspective than is ordinarily the case in a union concen-
tration.

Comrades who plan to enter the ILGWU must be prepared to go
through a period of apprenticeship to learn the trade. This presents
an entirely different perspective from that faced in other industries.
To date only a few comrades have accepted the responsibility of es-
tablishing themselves in the industry with a view to permanent work.

The Coming Year

The next city committee must give full and constant attention
to assisting the industrial groups and each individual comrade in
industry. Even where the work is in its minutest beginnings, it must

receive the close and continuous direction and assistance from the city office. The work of industrial groups must be more systematically coordinated, with greater emphasis on recruitment and specifically political work. However, this is not the principal task before the New York party. These comrades have, without exception, conducted themselves with spirit and determination, and their progress is imposing.

The party must place additional comrades in industry. The city committee should make regular progress reports to the membership. This will focus attention on industrial activity, and hasten the decision of those comrades who are preparing to go into industry.

Consultations should be held with comrades who have made themselves available for industrialization, to insure that they make a sustained and consistent effort to explore all job opportunities in proposed party concentrations.

Good opportunities are opening up for the party in trade union work in New York. The party must make every effort to increase our effectiveness by adding to our functioning industrial groups as much and as rapidly as possible.

* * *

REPORT ON TENANTS WORK IN DETROIT

By Miriam Evans

* * *

Two comrades and one sympathizer have been active in tenants council work for nine months, since May 1947. The sympathizer left the city after four months of activity. Two more comrades were added to the tenants fraction in November. From the very beginning of the tenants work the party showed very little interest in the work both nationally and locally. If we had entered the work once it showed promise, as a party, as an organization, instead of a couple of young women, we might have got a better end result in our work. The amount of work that could be done was hampered by the fact that only two people were actively engaged in it. The effectiveness of our work was hampered by the fact that we did not have a male to take over leadership of Tenants Council A. And until the Detroit Area Board Rent Hearing of December 29, not one piece of party literature was sold or given away to the tenants.

We have in the course of our work in Tenants Council A activated six to eight people. None of them are party material and only two of them would be willing to read party literature. In our work in the Greater Detroit Tenants Council, we have met two people who can be considered contacts. One is a contact. And one is an SWP'er who has not been "contacted," that is, we have not seen him personally yet.

One of the major shortcomings in our area work is and was our failure to put first the organization of building councils. The success of our tenants work was limited by the small amount of tenants we had to work with. The number of party contacts to be gained was limited by the few tenants we had to choose from.

Ever since the organization of Tenants Council A we have had a running fight with the Stalinists. The Stalinists have a stronghold in this area. They never mobilized against us but nevertheless were a real obstacle. About two months ago the Stalinists backed and organized a rump meeting to get rid of us. They used one of our active tenants as a front and got her elected as chairman. And that was all they could accomplish. Just one new officer was added and the other officer remained because the Stalinists pulled their horns in after we began to attack and expose them. Since that we have been in a much more favorable position organizationally. The new officer who was only passively on our side is now actively on our side. We had intended to get a male comrade elected as chairman but, as he left the area, we couldn't do it.

Since our fight with the Stalinists in which we were red-baited and slandered, they have gone on fighting in the council they organized. This council has mainly a Negro membership. It seems a couple of SWP'ers were in this council and they were red-baited and attacked viciously as members of our party. The SWP split this tenants council from the Stalinists taking about twenty with them. In all this struggle the SWP has been assisting the Stalinists

against us. We are going to use this in our contacting of one of the SWP'ers involved in this council that was split.

Other than the two contacts already mentioned, we have the names of two people through the sale of the rent pamphlet. Neither of these two people have been seen yet. There is one other woman whom we have worked on from time to time but since we haven't been engaged in any tenants or other work with her, she has been difficult to contact. We have given the rent pamphlet to a couple of tenants. The party officially has sent most tenant council chairmen sample copies of the rent pamphlet. As yet we have had no response on that.

Fifty copies of the rent pamphlet were sold the night of the Detroit Area Board Rent Hearing. Fifty copies of LABOR ACTION were given away that night.

We have one member on the Detroit Rent Board. We accepted on the basis that there was equal membership of landlord and tenant "representatives." This Board is to meet before the 29th and the CIO has prepared a resolution which I think we can go along with: no rent increases at all, revocation of 15% leases, and OPA levels, the old OPA law. This would mean the abolition of the rent boards. (A change has been made stating tenants for continuation of rent boards. I have been arguing against it with CIO in caucus. They are for it, not strongly, on basis it represents a forum for tenants in the eventuality of a bad law.) Whether or not the CIO will carry on any opposing activity in case we lose on this rent law, remains to be seen. We certainly should have something to propose to the tenants councils on this.

One separate point for discussion is how we have and how we should function in relation to the Stalinists. We successfully maintained leadership against the Stalinists organizationally. But since we failed to build up any large sized base of tenants, they began to gain influence in our council. Witness the rump meeting they organized. We have always maintained that we would and did work with any group including the Communist Party so long as they were doing tenants work. But as soon as they or any other group tries to use the tenants council for a political football, we would fight them. We fought them on their rule or ruin policy. Most of the Stalinists in tenants work have discredited themselves in one way or another. They are almost as discredited here as in the UAW. Whether or not they can rise again in the near future depends on whether or not there is a real rent law and whether or not the Reuther caucus puts up a militant fight for a rent law after the 29th. Wayne County Council CIO is controlled by the Stalinists and they are in charge of tenants work for Detroit. We still have to cope with one of their people in our tenants council. We have not been able to distinguish ourselves programmatically from them since there has been no programmatic differences. In the recent months we have opposed them as red-baiters. They have been a bone in our work with such things as PAC. They got people to do PAC work and kept them from doing tenants work. Not that this was a major factor but it did hinder our work.

Our future work depends on the outcome of pending rent law proposals. Everyone seems to be holding tight until February 29. The tenants all believe there is going to be a rent law of one sort or another and so are not willing or interested in tenants work now. The Tenants Council A will probably expire if there is a rent law. Whether or not they will be willing to fight a 15% rent increase now, we don't know. We will, of course, continue to work on the five contacts. And we propose that the Tenants Council organize a meeting if the new law is against rent control.

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P.S. The Detroit Area Board met and couldn't get a quorum and so no meeting took place. The Wayne County section is scheduled to meet this week at which time there will be a fight on both motions for and against rent control. In the event that we lose, I believe we should get the CIO to make a public statement against the board.

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(All of the above is from a letter dated February 11, 1943, addressed to Comrade McKinney by Comrade Evans.)

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"CULTURE" ON THE INSTALLMENT PLAN

By John Barnes (Buffalo)

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Buffalo has come up with something in the culture/education line that may prove interesting and useful to other branches. If the idea that follows has been or is in use elsewhere we hereby withdraw our patent claim; anyway, we like the idea and think it has excellent possibilities.

It started Sunday, February 29, when the Organizer called the writer and asked if about ten minutes of entertainment could be daubed into the meeting scheduled for that evening. Personally, I think our branch meetings are, on the average, as entertaining as our material and local situation permit, but the thought of something "special," some "surprise," is always dear to the Buffalo heart. So we discussed various possibilities. Singing: the fact that we do not have song books quickly ruled this out. Drama: although one comedy skit was available, the time for rehearsal made presentation quite impractical; besides, why waste a good skit on the branch when it could be used at a Social? It was then that "culture" reared its neglected head. Why not read something? A good short story, an excerpt from a fine novel, a famous political address?

After much hashing and re-hashing (with an occasional tremor of indecision) it was agreed that we would "hit them cold" with humor. "The Greatest Man in the World," by James Thurber (from "The Middle Aged Man on the Flying Trapeeze") was accorded the ground-breaking honor. Only the Organizer's wife (notoriously close-mouthed) was let in on our secret.

That night as the agenda was read it was announced, in a very casual manner, that the final point in the business portion of the meeting was "The Greatest Man in the World;" nothing more. And true to local tradition the chairman commented (rather cheerily) "...surprises...always surprises."

Came the last point of the business meeting and the writer strode manfully to the rostrum. Withdrawing the volume from a bag wherein it had been hidden until the crucial moment he wistfully announced that contrary to what might be expected he was not being pawned off as the greatest man in the world. This brought a grim laugh from the assembled and set the stage for a brief explanation of the innovation. We labeled it a "culture corner" experiment, spoke of Thurber's status in the world of humor, and - began.

The reading took the full ten minutes allotted and was dotted with frequent chuckles, laughs, and mispronunciations... The comrades enjoyed it - absolutely. They applauded the idea as a whole. And to show that they really liked it - started making detailed suggestions. Who could ask for further proof?

One new comrade, in conversation with the writer, asked that future readings be "assorted" so that he could come in contact with more books and authors that he had never before had an opportunity to know.... It's things like that that keep men of science going.

Future plans are boundless in scope. We have a hit on our hands and with it a bit of a problem. After all, how to please the cosmopolitan tastes of Buffalo? Already there are rumors of pro and anti-Koestler wings in the branch!

Actually, of course, there is a wealth of material available. There is no need to list items (or space for that matter) but we plan anything and everything from a short story by Farrell to passages from "Fontamara," speeches by Trotsky, and - god willing - "Ulysses." And all for ten minutes of a business meeting!

Branches who give this a whirl and meet with success are urged to let us know. Those officials who sponsor the idea and are consequently swept from office are asked to remove us from their mailing lists.

Remember: the Buffalo heart, like an inner tube, is something apart.

March 1, 1948.

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THE FIGHT AGAINST JIM CROW IN A UAW SHOP

By Sid Roberts (Detroit)

The struggle against racial discrimination in the auto industry is aided immeasurably by the action of the 1946 UAW convention in authorizing the establishment of a Fair Practices Department on the International union level and Fair Practices Committees in all UAW locals. This significant step dealing with a problem which is one of the most difficult and important facing the labor movement, i.e., the abolition of Jim Crow, provided an extremely useful weapon for those militant elements in the UAW who are ready to fight against this cancer in the auto industry.

It is almost stating a truism to say that local union bureaucrats and reactionaries would have been quite content to keep the convention action confined to paper - and have done so, or even have fought against militants who attempted to set up a FPC in several locals. It is also true that many union officers and chief stewards have been one of the greatest obstacles, thus far, that the FPC in our particular shop had had to face in trying to carry out its duties.

When I was assigned by the fraction to function on our local FPC about a year ago, it was controlled by the Stalinists (who had started it and were a powerful influence among the Negroes in the shop). At the time, they were using it solely as an adjunct to the CP's participation in the campaign for a Michigan FEPC law. The FPC's activity was restricted to sending delegates to Stalinist-controlled "People's Lobbies for a State FEPC." Otherwise nothing was done! Not even the elementary job of publicizing the committee so that the rank-and-file members in the shop (particularly the Negro brothers) knew of its existence and could utilize it for any grievances they had.

Shortly after I became active on the FPC, I proposed that the committee initiate a campaign against restaurants in the vicinity of the plant which refused to serve Negroes. There was general agreement on the idea among the members of the committee (10 in all - 6 Negroes, 4 whites; 2 Stalinists, including the Negro chairman, and myself and a Johnsonite). However, getting active cooperation proved to be another story.

Our fraction realized that the success or failure of the campaign would depend to a great extent on the degree to which the active Negro unionists participated and rallied their supporters among the rank and file to participate. At the same time, we undertook the job of activating the Negroes whom we knew in the shop in the campaign. We also hoped for support from the more progressive white unionists.

As it turned out, the Stalinists and the semi-Stalinist Negroes wouldn't or couldn't (emphasis on the former) get their supporters

to join in the campaign, while the Reutherite Negroes didn't even participate themselves. Nor was the fraction able to get any rank-and-file Negroes activated. Thus, the campaign fizzled out!

We did take the first step and organize a small mixed group to go into a "white" restaurant. We were served, but there never was any follow-up. In a campaign of that type, it was necessary to follow up that first break with a steady stream of Negro patrons in order to establish equal service as an accepted practice. It was in this phase of the campaign that the mass support didn't materialize.

I believe it would be profitable to analyze several key factors involved in the experiment:

1. The Stalinists didn't support the campaign because:

A. The Trotskyists proposed it and would therefore be credited with a large share of whatever success might have been achieved.

B. They, the Stalinists, were allied with Jim Crow elements in the "left-wing" caucus and didn't want to antagonize them by playing a leading role in such a campaign.

2. The "right-wing" Negroes were undoubtedly pressured out of the campaign by the more conservative elements in the caucus (unfortunately they are of the type who would not require much pressure to be convinced). The fact that it would be called a Trotskyite campaign no doubt had its effect on them.

3. Lacking our own base among Negroes in the shop, the first two factors proved decisive. If we had had our own support, the Stalinists and "right-wing" Negroes would have been forced to participate or be discredited.

Since the collapse of the campaign, the FPC has handled two grievances based upon discrimination by stewards. It was in connection with this phase of the FPC's functioning that the opposition of the local union officers and stewards became clear. Since I am secretary of the committee, I acted as spokesman for the FPC in hearings before the local Executive Board and Stewards' Body, in view of the fact that the Stalinist chairman ducked out. As a result of being the spearhead, I put myself in the position of being a target for a red-baiting attack before the Stewards' Body, by one of the shrewder opportunists in the union who stated that the FPC was being used by political groups for recruiting purposes.

His line went over very well because many stewards were and are afraid that the FPC would expose their "dirty linen" to public inspection. Also, there's not much doubt that they really think we were just using the FPC for political gain. As a result of this incident, the fraction agreed that it was necessary for me to cease playing the prominent role that I had been playing and offering such a fine target for opponents of the FPC. It was agreed that I would continue to function on the committee, but that one of

the Negro unionists would have to assume the leadership of the committee. That's where we stand today.

As a result of the FPC work, we have gained recognition among some of the more advanced activists and rank-and-filers as the foremost fighters against Jim Crow. I have also met several contacts who may be good party material.

March, 1948

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ON PARTY PUBLICITY IN THE DAILY PRESS

By Gerald McDermott (West Va.)

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Almost all comrades have had the experience of telling a contact about the Workers Party, only to have him or her reply, "What's that?" We are not surprised by this, since we expect and anticipate it. Likewise, we recognize it as a disadvantage. The problem is how to overcome it.

Naturally, the Workers Party will not become a household word until our size and activity is far and away beyond what it is today. Within the confines of our present size and activity, however, there are certain things that can be done.

In this article, several techniques for publicity are described which have been successful in specific localities. Other comrades throughout the country might well contribute their experiences.

1. Complimentary subscriptions to journalists. In the West Virginia branch, we have an extremely favorable situation in this respect. One of the local daily papers has a column devoted to labor every day. Naturally, the columnist who writes it is hard put to fill it up day in and day out. He was sent a complimentary sub some time ago, and since then has liberally quoted from LABOR ACTION, giving credit to his source.

Few of us stop to realize that the labor coverage in LABOR ACTION, incomplete though it may be, is not duplicated by any other paper or news services. The press services do not, as we do, have reporters inside of the UAW, UE, NMU, UMWA, URW, and so on. LABOR ACTION can be of value to local journalists.

Few cities have a column similar to the one here. Most newspapers do, however, have a reporter who handles labor news. A sub sent to him could be very fruitful.

2. Calling on local newspapers in person. This has been suggested by the National Office in the past in connection with national tours. In Cleveland, the suggestion was put in practice with gratifying results. A comrade personally visits the news editor with a release and, if possible, a picture of the speaker. This has resulted not only in advance notice of public meetings, but in reporters actually attending the meetings and writing up the speech the next day. This publicity inevitably results in new faces at public meetings, above and beyond those people the branch is immediately in touch with.

3. Letters to the Editor. This technique is pretty obvious, course. Some branches have been employing it successfully for years. Straight "party" letters don't fare too well, but letters written by housewives, union members, and so on frequently see print.

4. Specialized Newspapers. By specialized, we mean the Negro press, foreign language press, labor press, local union newspapers, and so on. They are usually hard up for news and they are ordinarily more progressive than the dailies. The party has had scattered success with them from time to time. If each branch systematically exploited such opportunities, our "coverage" would increase.

March, 1948.

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BUFFALO BRANCH SOCIAL/POLITICAL PROGRAM

By the Buffalo Branch

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The purpose of this report is to inform the party of the origin, execution and results of Buffalo's social/political program, during the first six months of 1948.

What must be mentioned first, and kept clearly in mind hereafter, is that this program was not the result of any basic peculiarities which might set Buffalo apart, as a city for party work, and, above all, was not due to the overall composition of the branch. Rather than boasting, therefore, we are saying that every branch, allowing for certain local variations, can create, manage, and benefit from a program such as ours. Any who doubt this should take to heart Buffalo's actual experience, wherein prior to January 1, 1948, there had not been a truly successful social or thoroughly rounded political meeting in the eight years of the branch's existence!

In April, 1945, Buffalo acquired its present headquarters and a responsibility which it did not completely meet for almost three years. Although located in the heart of the downtown area and distinctly habitable if not luxurious, the headquarters was not able, for the period mentioned above, to pay, financially, politically or socially, for itself. Raising the rent, which went from \$25 to \$40 in three years, was a constantly nervewracking experience. Although a sympathizer contributed the necessary full amount for long periods of time, there were months when funds originally collected for the center had to be diverted, when the organizer went without expenses, when loans had to be made. In the main room, which can easily hold 75 people, were held political meetings which, until early 1947, attracted anywhere from 10 to 30. Socials were few and far between (even the comrades found them wholly boring) and a number of these were not held in the headquarters at all but in private homes. The headquarters, then, represented in the minds of most comrades an expensive, dreary meeting place, and nothing more. While it is true that the branch was sorely undermanned in 1945 and 1946, it cannot, in our opinion, be said that this was the underlying reason for the then existing condition. Rather, we believe, the branch then did not know how to use the headquarters; and the branch, today, is still in the process of learning.

Late in 1946, a somewhat makeshift bar was constructed and adequate lighting installed; also, at about this time, a movable partition was built which made possible the dividing of the main hall into two smaller rooms, and a comrade (whose talents had heretofore been completely neglected) painted a number of attractive signs and displays which gave the headquarters much needed color. This effort, in line with branch effort in other directions, culminated in what is now referred to in the branch as the "Goldman meeting" (March, 1947). It was at this political meeting, addressed by Comrade Goldman, that the comrades saw most forcefully the possibili-

ties of the future. Approximately 80 people were in the hall; the hall itself shone (at least when compared to its previous appearance); the numerous contacts and sympathizers were correspondingly impressed. The reaction of the comrades soon simmered down to this: we know now that we are capable of conducting successful political meetings; but meetings of this type can, at best, be held every few months; the problem of formulating and conducting a program that will, through continuity, meet our various needs is, therefore, still to be solved.

The solution came in a very simple, yet unexpected manner. Some time during the last months of 1947 there appeared in the PARTY BUILDER an article by a Cleveland comrade which described how, by auctioning parts of brief playlets, that branch had provided for a successful social evening. Buffalo decided (in desperation perhaps) to give the suggestion a trial. Our socials had been, unanimously, drab failures, the mention of which was enough to start the comrades secretly plotting ways and means of avoiding future attendance. Two brief skits were accordingly prepared. As the evening wore on it was obvious that this was to be no different a social than the others. The comrades spoke to contacts quite halfheartedly, spoke to each other with the same enthusiasm, and moved about painfully aware of the group sacrifice being made. At the low ebb (if it is possible to select such a time during such an evening) the announcement was made that the entertainment was to begin. After the people had been grouped in a semi-circle the scheme was explained and the bidding begun. With the drop of the first penny it was apparent that the idea had clicked. The entire atmosphere had been changed. The bidding was so spirited and the resultant laughter so long and loud that it might be truthfully said that the skits themselves were a sorry anti-climax. And it might be mentioned in passing that said bidding yielded seventeen exceedingly welcome dollars. Moreover, the social was a blooming success. At the branch meeting that followed later in the week one comrade after the other unashamedly admitted that he/she had had a good time! A number of comrades went so far as to say that, given other socials of this type, they would be no longer hesitant to invite friends! On the basis of this, can anyone doubt that a primary solution to our social problem had been found?

The opportunity to expand on this newly discovered technique soon presented itself. New Years Eve was but some six weeks away and it was decided that for the first time in the branch's existence a full scale New Years Eve social should be held at the headquarters. Deciding to further test our luck - and our experience - a three act show was prepared. Since it was agreed that the bidding arrangement was but a novelty and would suffer with repetition, a cast was assembled and briefly rehearsed. It may have been the effect of the refreshments, the exuberant tenor of the New Years Eve hours, the sight of two adult males tumbling about in full length union suits, or the concluding spectacle of a leading Executive Committee member as a demurely diapered 1948 -- or a combination of all of these -- but the show, and consequently the party, was literally a howling success. January 1, 1948, saw not only a new year but a new (to Buffalo) technique definitely arrive.

In the next six months two additional "shows" were featured at socials, one Monte Carlo night was successfully staged, on "plain" social fitted in, and three political meetings, featuring Comrades Garrett, McKinney and Jason, were conducted. All of these, without exception, were successful. Net financial profit ran well over the \$200 mark. Social and political capital also accrued. Although the turnover was larger than we would have liked it was distinctly noticeable that a healthy percentage (35-50) of contacts and sympathizers were "coming around" ever more regularly. To the comrades, despite the amount of work connected with each and every meeting or social, this was a tonic indeed.

Here it is, we believe, necessary to recount briefly the actual methods of preparation for these activities.

The Entertainment (Shows)

As is well known (and we hope appreciated) by any of the comrades throughout the country who are personally aware of at least some of Buffalo's personnel, we are not, by any stretch of the imagination, possessed of any undue amount of theatrical talent. We do have, and we believe this might well be true of every branch, some people who have had a slight measure of experience in work of this nature. We do not have a stage (more on this later), a piano, unlimited rehearsal time, or money for costumes or even the simplest props. And yet we have staged three "smashes" and confidently expect more of the same in the future. How then, in the name of David Garrick, do we do it?

First, someone writes a tentative show. He does not consult with the Executive Committee; he does not limit himself to the chapter headings in "Das Kapital;" he does not take into consideration that we in the Workers Party are dreadfully adult and hence above healthy American tomfoolery. Therefore, he is able to write a show. Then volunteers are called for. At the beginning this was a rather morbid experience but success has bred confidence and we anticipate fierce casting competition for the approaching season. At the first rehearsal the script is read, suggestions are made, parts assigned, and provisions made for such costumes and scenery as may be necessary. We say suggestions are made; this is not to be construed as a late hour session of warm, detailed debate. Suggestions are incorporated into the already prepared script ... or a dissenter is cordially invited to submit ... clearly type-written ... a completely new script. The show must - and does - go on. The non-professional directing consists basically of one cry; relax!

Because we are convinced (although the conviction did not come easy) that our audience does not expect a professional, polished, high-g geared performance, we aim to perform in as relaxed and natural a manner as possible. Yes, this does result in a bountiful supply of corn, but it is a homey sort of corn and our audiences, thus far at least, endorse it enthusiastically. Insofar as costumes and props are concerned, we say, unashamedly, that we burlesque for all we are worth. Because we have no money to spend (our total expenditures for three shows ran slightly over one dollar) we dig up all

sorts of outlandish rigs - and with them a good many laughs. When a script is first read (and it is, naturally, prepared with our many inadequacies in mind) it is generally agreed that it will be quite difficult to secure this or manufacture that; before the rehearsal is concluded the cast has outdone itself in ideas and suggestions that ultimately solve the initial problem. And speaking of rehearsals: as the shows "grew" (from three to six acts) we managed to arrange for two rehearsals.

Now, this final point we wish to drive home with atomic force. The Buffalo Branch is no more inherently equipped for this sort of thing than any other branch! The Buffalo Branch caters to no different an audience than the majority of other branches! We "play" to workers, students, housewives, intellectuals. There is absolutely no reason to believe that these people differ in taste and reaction than their class counterparts in almost any other locale! They do enjoy our "shows"! They do come back for more! They do feel closer to our people - and our ideas - because of this familiar medium! They do feel closer to our people - and our ideas - because they see we too are not above a loud, healthy laugh, a risqué song, and a corny gag! Are we sinking to popular culture? No! We are actually creating, for our own unique purposes, a distinct variation of a wholly acceptable medium. So: if your branch, wherever it be, concludes that "this sort of thing" is just not "suitable" for you -- it is a decidedly good bet that you are quite thoroughly divorced from the very people who, in the future, will constitute the very mass of the party!

As "proof positive" we offer this experience.

We were asked to put on one of our scripts for the last UAW Regional Educational Conference. Approximately one hundred and fifty UAW rank and filers plus Victor Reuther and one Kowalski, the UAW Educational Director, composed the audience. Result: excellent audience response; personal commendation from V. Reuther and Kowalski (the latter asked permission to use the script for the UAW summer camp!); and requests from many out of town UAW locals for script-copies! Agreed: some of our material might not be so well received. Nevertheless - could any comrade... anywhere... ask for a more suitable audience and a more enthusiastic reception! Moral: we in Buffalo are not blessed with any "special" type audience.

Political Meetings

There is but one point that need be raised on the conducting of political meetings that may prove of some value to the branches. Its adoption was an innovation to Buffalo although so obvious it may well have been the rule elsewhere for years. It revolves about the need for keeping an audience within the headquarters once the speechmaking is finished. This was no small problem for Buffalo in the past. Even at the Goldman meeting, referred to before, we found ourselves with no names, addresses, or specific, personal contact results on the morning after. The usual procedure resulted in the summary speaker concluding not too long before midnight, a quick rush for the door, fresh air, and refreshment, and a headquarters quickly left to a few conversational dichards. Such results,

naturally, made only for half a meeting - if that. We therefore decided to incorporate a social note into each political meeting. The rule developed (and was faithfully applied) that all speeches, literature plugs and the like were to be finished by no later than 10:30. Immediately after the last speaker - but immediately - chairs were to be gathered up, card tables set in place, the bar opened, and, what is most important, the record player set in motion. We went further; we specifically assigned certain comrades (those who were known to the greater part of the audience) to stand before the door (literally) and prevent contacts from leaving; here every known method short of force was employed. We need not dwell on the underlying reasons for these seemingly desperate gestures; enough to say that it is quite impossible to sell beer, literature, or a political line to the little men and women who aren't there.

Our experience has proven that these techniques pay off, and they pay off financially as well as politically. Our May Day meeting perhaps best illustrates this. For at least one hour after the conclusion of the formal meeting not one person, to our knowledge, left the headquarters. There was a good deal of dancing, imbibing and, above all - political discussion. The headquarters was not cleared until after 2 A.M. and enough money was taken in to pay all regular expenses, thirty dollars to the speaker, and still leave a surplus of over five dollars. We emphasize this because it has heretofore been a tradition in Buffalo that political meetings make for a local case of deficit financing...

We believe this streamlining of political meetings (and it is but a streamlining without sacrifice of any politics) with the addition of the social aspect has not diluted our political program but embellished it and provided us with the opportunity to capitalize on the general effectiveness of our speakers.

Publicity

The job of effectively publicizing our socials and political meetings and, in connection with this, keeping in close "correspondence-tough" with our periphery had never, in the past, been accomplished with any measure of success, or even given thorough, detailed consideration. And in a semi-isolated group this lack, as many a branch will attest, seriously reflects itself in branch operation.

Prior to the institution of the NEWSLETTER technique we in Buffalo drifted along, as regards publicity and impersonal periphery contact, with a sadly outdated mailing list based on local LABOR ACTION subscriptions, a "name" picked up in this meeting, that social, etc. To this list, and at intervals that ranged from three to six months, we forwarded our announcements of political meetings and socials. The effort, small and inexpensive as it was, was not rewarded by even a comparable success.

With the realization that the then newly projected social/political program demanded a completely new approach to the publicity problem evolved the NEWSLETTER form which, by a monthly appearance,

solved not only the direct advertisement of our affairs but also served as an instrument whereby we could keep in touch with our periphery. In this last respect it was decided that the NEWSLETTER should serve as an appendage to LABOR ACTION; that is, it should cover only local news and items which, for reasons of time and space, the paper could not handle. And this decision was so announced in our first NEWSLETTER, a two, 8x10 page job. We said that our purpose was to inform our friends and sympathizers of our activities, to report Buffalo events which for technical reasons had to be excluded from LABOR ACTION, and to mold and direct a spirit of socialist solidarity among the many friends of our party in the city.

The response to our first issue, despite the condition of the mailing list, the brevity of the NEWSLETTER, and the fact that this was the ground-breaking number, was such as to assure us that the technique itself was basically good and that with sensible development could prove of great value to us. Because we had previously agreed that we would not proceed along rigid lines with the NEWSLETTER we next shifted to the longer, legal size page, sometimes running three pages, sometimes but two. With each issue (there have been five to date) we received gratifying comments from a number of readers and, actually, drew a few people to our meetings and socials on the strength of the NEWSLETTER alone. Also, with each issue, we became more acutely aware of the state of our mailing list. We tackled this problem in these ways. First, we sat down with the list in hand and chalked off those names which no longer meant anything to any of the comrades. Second, we made it a point to solicit names expressly for the mailing list at socials, meetings, in the shops, at the university, etc... Third, we utilized the twenty-five cent offer made by LABOR ACTION to add more than one hundred names to the list within a two month period. In short, our plan was to have every LABOR ACTION subscriber receive the NEWSLETTER and, in reverse, to accumulate names for the NEWSLETTER mailings which would make for a bigger LABOR ACTION circulation, through a plugging of the paper.

We believe our NEWSLETTER has excellent possibilities and prospects. While its form may change from time to time, we believe its purpose and need are already proven. Indeed, despite the effort required and the money expended we are of the conviction that we cannot afford to do without it. And, again, we wish to make clear that we do not boast a staff "trained" for such activity or a local situation wherein publicity and periphery contact work differs basically from that of many other branches.

A New Type of "Result"

In reports of this type it is usually the case that certain, specific benefits are listed. The description of the "benefit" that follows is, we believe, more informative, in and of itself, than any facts regarding recruitment, etc., that could be mentioned.

The reader will recall the history of the branch headquarters mentioned before; its expense, etc... Today, expressly because of the experience of the social/political program of the first six months of 1948, we in Buffalo are in the midst of a headquarters renovation

campaign that, for scope and promise, exceeds, by far, anything else every attempted locally. Briefly: we are conducting a raffle with the expectation of realizing approximately \$125 with which to redecorate the headquarters. The mere fact that the comrades - and willingly - subscribed to a ...raffle... for this purpose tells its own story as regards the enthusiasm of the branch for the project. But we are not merely sitting about until the necessary funds come in. Already the homemade blueprints have been made and accepted; already estimates have been secured for various materials; already some purchases have been made. We have decided that August, traditionally a "slow" month for our branch, is going to be put to "use" in that we aim to complete the work in this month. By September, if all goes according to plan, we will have a freshly painted headquarters, a stage, piano, facilities for cooking, a new bar, a new literature display case, a record rack and phonograph stand, slipcovers, a ping pong table, etc., etc. And all this, to repeat, only because we believe we need such a headquarters, because we believe we have learned (or, at least, begun to learn) how to use such a headquarters.

Summary

In this report we have tried to describe, in as brief a manner as possible, the high points of a six month experience in a specific phase of branch activity. In the reading of this many comrades must find many questions coming to mind. For example: suppose we can't find a headquarters or support one? How do we get people to attend these things? How can we devise a comparable program with our limited members?

We readily agree that for some branches these questions cannot be answered in a word, a simple deed, or even answered, for the present, at all. To those branches to whom such a program might apply we say only that this report is not designed to "teach" or "explain" how a periphery is secured, or a headquarters found. We have spoken here only of how a periphery may be reached, solidified, brought closer, made more interested in the life of the branch. We have recounted only techniques which we are convinced enhance the possibility of a branch's growth. We have tried to show that as far as our own experience is concerned a correct political line alone will not fill a hall or swell the membership; but rather, that certain common methods of operation, attuned to the level of American political development and background, are necessary organizational reinforcement.

We hope this report will sufficiently interest comrades throughout the country to write us directly with questions and comments that pertain, perhaps, only to their branch. We promise to furnish more detailed information and explanation if so written. We hope further that the other branches will report on their experience with programs of this nature so that we may further profit (we do not forget that our shows came into being because of an experience of the Cleveland branch). Above all, we hope the comrades will fully understand the motivation for this report and the esprit which its enactment created here.

August, 1948.