

DU BOIS CLUBS CONFERENCE

Youth rallied for labor progress

By JAY SCHAFFNER

CHICAGO, Feb. 6—The W.E.B. DuBois Clubs of America, at its first national working youth conference last weekend, set a new direction and launched a new national effort to establish young worker chapters of its affiliates.

The conference also mapped a concentrated drive to organize the unorganized. Of more importance though is the fact that as a result of this stimulating conference, DuBois Clubs realized the contribution that the organization, as a Marxist-Leninist body, can make to the trade union movement.

"The overall goal of all these efforts will create a meaningful left force of young workers within the labor, peace, and freedom movements: with the long range goal of workers' power and socialism", declared Jarvis Tyner, DBC national chairman.

Tyner cited the radicalization within the trade union movement, and noted that the majority of young workers, especially young black workers, developed after the Joseph McCarthy period.

A serious fight against imperialism, racism, exploitation and war requires concentrated efforts among the basic sections of the working class, it was emphasized.

Basic industries

Over 75 people attended this one-day Chicago conference which agreed to this Marxist thrust in the trade union movement. The assembled black, brown and white trade union activists represented almost all basic industries. Heavy representation came from the following industries: steel, auto, construction, trucking, warehouse and shipping, garment, meatpacking and machinists. These young workers felt that it is now time for the working class to realize the need for socialism and the historic role of the working class in bringing this change about.

Conference planners previously concerned about the number of women who would be in attendance, noted that one fifth of all the trade unionists present were women, and greeted this as a step in the right direction.

The basic industries were decided on for concentration because of their essential position in our economy and because there the exploitation and poor working conditions are clearly visible.

Will fight speedup

Systematic speedup will be one target of the DuBois Clubs drive. Most young workers fall into the 90-day probation period and thus have no union protection, but during this period they must work to capacity to keep their jobs, and so these young workers are forced to speed up the entire production.

Another target will be the state, local, and national taxes plus the surtax that chop up the workers pay.

A Detroit Ford worker noted that last year he was taking home \$105 a week, but this year after a hard-fought pay increase, he now takes home only \$103.

Tyner, himself a former shop steward, remarked, "Ain't so about the elite, affluent auto workers".

The fight against racism is still essential. The recent Wallace campaign showed that racism still has a strong hold over white workers, even though Wallace didn't get as large a working class vote as he expected. All delegates agreed that black and white unity is essential to the basic needs of the working class.

The young workers present felt that Walter Reuther was forced to break away from George Meany and form the Alliance for Labor Action because he realizes that labor is capable of correcting America's social and economic crisis. The young workers regarded this as a positive step forward, but they also realize that Reuther is a good man at making speeches. These young trade unionists also felt that the rank and file trade unionists must implement and put into operation the ALA, otherwise it will just be used as another political tool by the labor leadership.

One reason that trade unionists are dissatisfied with their leadership, the conference decided, was that the leaders haven't come through with 'the goods and conditions promised' for the rank and file. The delegates saw black and young militant leadership as a positive step forward in solving this problem.

Unity role seen

The role of DuBois Clubs in the future in terms of trade union work will be to solidify the rank and file, by building black and white unity amongst work-



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ers and attempting to end racism.

The organization also seeks to agitate for social change within unions and to attempt to provide new leadership for today's crises. This mood was reflected in what Tyner said before the conference divided into workshops, that youth are not a vanguard as such but a 'revitalizer.'

Twelve-point program

The delegates went on to outline the following 12 points through which they hope to win young workers to socialism.

1. Socialism — workers' power and workers' control of industry and government.

2. Organize the Unorganized — especially in the South, with emphasis on a living wage for all workers, elimination of the present poverty wage scale, and repeal of 14B of the Taft-Hartley Law.

3. International Working Class Solidarity — support world socialism, fight against monopolies, strive for union affiliation with the World Federation of Trade Unions.

4. Labor Party — independent force for social change, based on labor and allied with the peace and black liberation movements.

5. Black and white alliance for victory — labor has the power to lead the fight against racism, which in the end will benefit the trade union movement; this means more black leadership, community control of schools, police, government and welfare.

6. 30-hour work week and no cut in pay — to end unemployment.

7. Smash the Military-Industrial Complex — end the Vietnam War, end the Draft and discontinue the practice of a peacetime army, nationalize the war industry, and stop U.S. imperialism to insure no future Vietnams.

8. Give the unions back to the workers — restore democracy to unions, restore the right to strike clause, involve youth and black workers in union leadership.

9. Workers' control over management prerogatives such as quotas, speedup, new equipment, and safety conditions, because

workers have direct knowledge of the conditions in which they work.

10. End the present tax situation of young workers — tax the corporations with no rebates to business, exempt all incomes under \$10,000, double the exemption allowance, and use tax money for education, health, and welfare, not for imperialism.

11. Defend the rights of women — equal pay for equal work, job protection for women, especially expectant workers, openings for women's leadership.

12. Defend the rights of young workers — youth leadership, end of the 90-day probation period, revitalization of the job apprentice program.

15 new chapters

Tyner, speaking on behalf of the national staff of the DuBois Clubs, said he saw the possibility of 15 young workers' chapters by the end of the year. At present there are three workers' chapters in N. Y. City and one each in Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Chicago.

A major proposal to come out of the conference dealt with the fight on racism. In this fight the organization is going to try and form center-left coalitions with unions based on the fight against racism.

Another proposal on education

of young trade unionists dealt especially with socialism and on the training of a Marxist cadre amongst workers. Also discussed was the possibility of a young workers' newsletter and of serialization of pamphlets.

Another major proposal to come out of the conference concerns the ALA. DuBois Clubs will urge rank and file unionists to participate in that organization to help organize the unorganized.

The major resolution ties together the issues of fighting racism and organizing the unorganized.

In the struggle to have Martin Luther King's and Malcolm X's birthdays celebrated as national paid holidays, the DuBois Clubs will attempt to involve labor, peace, and black liberation leaders. The fight will use petitions, speeches, demonstrations and, if necessary, strikes. The drive for the holidays will involve organizing the unorganized which Dr. King was doing in Memphis at the time he was murdered.

A talk by a Midwest union leader during the conference centered on the need for young Marxists to be 'experts' in problems in their shops to give leadership on the day-to-day issues.

He also urged young Marxists not to isolate themselves from their base of young workers.