

SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE REPORT

This Bulletin is only for members of the SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE
Exception should not be made.

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YOUTH RESOLUTION

Since the last Active Workers Conference of the Workers Party the activity of the Socialist Youth League has noted the formation and consolidation of four new units. In this period the SYL has more than doubled its size and has successfully organized a number of discussion groups and clubs on campuses. Though these gains have been real, their significance should not be exaggerated. Half of their value lies in the proof that student work can be a very fruitful field for general socialist activity and, more specifically, for recruitment to the SYL. Organizational inefficiency and inexperience prevented the SYL in this period from fully benefitting from its activities on campus.

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There has been no significant change in the overall economic status of American youth in the past period. Consistent with its economic stabilization the apathy and indifference of youth and students towards political organizations, particularly towards radical and pseudo-radical movements remains substantially the same. The only indication of a political renaissance among youth, especially those on campus, was the Wallace movement. The nature of this movement, however - its poor leadership and its superficiality - combined with the small Wallace vote and the decline of the Wallace Party has led to the virtual disintegration of the Youth for Wallace movement. Aside from this brief political flurry on campus, the political relationship of forces has not changed.

This lack of politicalization has its roots in the relative economic stability of the United States. Though unemployment has increased somewhat, students do not as yet feel the insecurity of a depression era when prospects were bleak; nor do young workers who are still in a far better economic position than the young workers of ten years ago feel the economic compulsion to look for a way out that will make them receptive to the ideas of socialism. Nor has the threat of war and the reality of conscription evoked any tangible rebelliousness among the youth. The inevitability of the war appears to be accepted with passive resignation and conscription has affected only a few thousands.

This should not be interpreted as meaning that objective conditions prohibit a much greater extension of our activities, size and influence. However, it is apparent that operating in this atmosphere the Socialist Youth League can not think in terms of building a mass youth movement either on campus or among young workers in the coming period.

There are many thousands of young people, found mainly on campus, who will listen to us with interest and eventually with sympathy, all of whom are potential members of our movement. The fact that almost all these potential youth members are found on campus dictates the continuation of our student orientation.

Our movement, because of its small size, will find it more difficult to integrate young workers than students. To integrate a worker in any radical political organization it is necessary to offer something meaningful in terms of union activity and direction. On the

other hand, students, because they are more concerned with ideas, can be more easily attracted and absorbed into the life of our movement today on the basis of the validity of our socialist ideas. Thus, for the next period, our work more than ever must be directed towards the students. It must never be forgotten that this campus approach is only a means towards an end; that it is intended to build a youth movement of sufficient numbers and competence to act as a cadre for a working class socialist youth movement.

Agitation and Propaganda

The Socialist Youth League remains primarily a propaganda group. But it has several important advantages over the party in its ability to conduct popular agitational activity. The reason for this lies basically in the greater receptivity of those in our chosen arena of student work as compared with the tremendous obstacles confronting a small revolutionary party which attempts to take the lead in the working class movement. For example, three or four comrades on campus can organize a student club which is in turn capable of carrying out at least a minimum of agitational activities: Petitioning, organizing a committee for student rights, sponsoring agitational meetings, etc. It is obvious that three or four comrades working in a plant cannot carry out comparable objectives. Therefore, the proposal of the party Political Committee to recognize the party as a propaganda organization does not have the same meaning for the SYL.

Tasks for the SYL

1. The main objective for the SYL in this period is the building up and consolidation of its membership and to continue training cadres for the party. This means that a higher priority is to be given to such routine activities as contacting than has heretofore been the case in most of our units and fractions. In general, this also means that if a youth unit or fraction finds it physically impossible to carry on activity designed to recruit directly into the SYL and more general socialist work on campus, the former objective is to be given first consideration. Recruitment to the SYL in the past period has been all too small proportionate to the amount of time and energy spent in building clubs and discussion groups on campus. Emphasis must be given to inviting students to SYL meetings, to distributing party literature on campus and to posing to students more boldly the question of joining the SYL.

2. Wherever there is a comrade on campus he should think in terms of building a discussion group or club. Experience has proven that an individual, isolated comrade can accomplish this with a measure of success. Where comrades have managed to organize off-campus discussion groups they should have as their perspective the transformation of such groups into recognized chartered clubs, thus gaining all the facilities at the disposal of a school organization.

3. We propose to the party that it urge all its members on campus to cooperate actively with the SYL center and wherever possible to function as a representative of the SYL. In line with this the perspective of SYL on campus is to recruit students to the SYL in preference to the party. Wherever two or three party comrades are on a campus, the SYL should maintain contact with them and the party branch to which they belong, with the idea of initiating a local unit

of the SYL. Even where such a unit would begin with a nucleus of party members only, experience has shown that such a core of party comrades organized as an SYL unit can recruit students with a greater ease than a party branch.

4. Wherever possible, sections of the SYL should engage in off-campus work. We should not become so completely buried under school activities as to lose sight of the value of joining other political organizations, neighborhood clubs, etc. Also comrades should engage in whatever direct action is possible such as picketing, poster parades, etc.

5. An effort should be made to establish fraternal relations with the members of the Young People's Socialist League (youth section of the Socialist Party). The YPSL has within it a strong left-wing which finds itself at odds with the leadership of the Socialist Party. There is no valid political reason why the left-wing YPSL's should not join the SYL. We believe that they have more in common with the Workers Party than with the Socialist Party, particularly on the basic question of the Third Camp of Socialism. We should constantly impress left-wing comrades of the YPSL that our movement is a democratic one in which they can freely express whatever independent views they have. Proposals should be made to the YPSL for joint discussions and united front activities.

6. A publication is indispensable to the cohesion, education and growth of the SYL. Until we are able to publish a national SYL magazine, local units should publish their own bulletins and newsletters as has been done in several units already. Also, comrades working in campus clubs should make an effort to impress upon these organizations the value of their publishing campus magazines. This has been successfully accomplished in one section and is under way in a second.

As a substitute for a popular SYL magazine in the immediate period the National Bureau should see to it that a regular Educational Bulletin is published. This bulletin should contain articles on more basic theoretical questions with comrades encouraged to contribute articles of agreement or disagreement to it. Contributions need not be limited to members. Sympathizers and even political opponents should be invited to discuss and debate their views with us in the bulletin.

7. Although the establishment of a national socialist student federation has been delayed it is nonetheless necessary for various socialist clubs on campus to integrate their activity towards that end.

8. We must not lose sight of the importance high school work as a bridge between the predominantly student SYL of today and a projected workingclass Socialist Youth League. Some measure of contact with high school youth should be maintained through distributions of literature and announcements of meetings.

Political Tasks on Campus

1. The fundamental political role of the SYL on campus is to spread the ideas of revolutionary socialism. We must endeavor to make the student body aware of the imperialist nature of the struggle between the American and Russian blocs and to make the slogan for the Third Camp of Socialism popular understood and accepted.

2. The comrades should make every effort in the next period to organize meetings protesting the attack on academic freedom being waged by a number of college administrations, and in some cases even by civil authorities. The expulsion of teachers from the faculty on the grounds of membership in the Communist Party must be opposed as a frontal assault upon the democratic rights of all. Comrades should attempt to organize petitioning, rallies and committees to defend academic rights. As a general rule, our policy should be to fight on this issue as on all issues independently of the Stalinists. Where tactical considerations dictate the necessity of functioning on committees together with Stalinists, we must always make clear the differences between our fight for democratic rights and the hypocrisy of the Communist Party and its front organizations.

3. Our comrades should through their propaganda attempt to make the students labor-conscious and to explain to them the stake of all young people in the formation of an independent labor party.

Towards a First National Convention

Our goal is to call the first national convention of the Socialist Youth League by the time of the next national convention of the Workers Party. Within this period, existing units of the SYL must increase their membership and new units must be organized to warrant this step.

National Bureau
Socialist Youth League

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A. Background.

The Berkeley Unit of the SYL is concentrated exclusively, at the present time, on the University of California Campus at Berkeley. The University of California is a State University with a present enrollment of 22,000 students about 8,000 of whom are veterans of World War II. Despite the "small town" tone of Berkeley, it is not isolated from the work class since it is only two or three miles from the industrial heart of Oakland.

The U. of Cal. has a militant tradition of student action which is a hangover from the huge peace strikes of the late thirties. Like most land grant colleges it has a compulsory, two-year, ROTC course which everyone but veterans must take in order to continue in school. During the thirties this compulsory ROTC bore the brunt of the concentrated hatred of the entire liberal and radical student population--YPSU, YCL, ASU, etc.,--and was passively disliked by a majority of the students. At one time the sabotage and active discontent was so overwhelming that the student body govt. appointed a commission to look into the situation.

This is just one example of a militant tradition which at the present time is completely dead. The general atmosphere on the Campus may be summed up in this way: the fraternities run the student government, the veterans are a huge, conservative, "sophisticated" lump, 90 percent of the students do not vote in student elections, and almost all political activity is carried on by a small, vociferous minority. This is the background against which all political groupings must be examined.

B. Political Groupings and their Influence.

1) The Stalinists. The Communist Party in California generally is very strong and this is especially true in the Oakland Area where they control the CIO. Around 1935 the local YCL had many hundreds of members and was in the leadership of all militant struggles. Although they are still the most powerful "radical" group their degeneration may be seen in the fact that with a much larger student body they only have an active membership of around fifty students. Their activity in the Wallace movement has been their high point of influence for many years (see below), although during the war they had a fairly strong AYD. They put out a rather senile monthly newsletter, and have public meetings once in a while, but mostly carry on their activity through front groups behind the scenes. Their strength is concentrated among the older students (many diehards), and they have control of the Graduate Students Association and the Student Workers Federation.

Although the Stalinists can still attract people they can no longer imbue them with the fervor and selflessness of the thirties. Their hard core is smaller and politically more bankrupt than before and this is reflected in the political immaturity and naivete of the Stalinist periphery. What is especially significant is the abysmal and complete ignorance of Russian society which is now, more than ever before, almost a condition of membership in Stalinist organizations. We have had especial success in the exploitation of the "genetics purge", since most of the Stalinists are in the sciences, and have thrown a scare into the local C.P. by pulling out, or at least influencing some of their members.

2) Students for Wallace (Young Progressives). In this area, this was an exceedingly militant, well-organized, and dynamic youth organization,

completely controlled and dominated by the Stalinists. It reached a high of around 700 book members but was never a popular movement in the real sense of the term--having to use publicity stunts in order to make itself known. Since the election fiasco it has declined to around 150 book members and is largely a paper organization held together by Stalin as the glue.

7) Students for Democratic Action. A small but fairly influential group has competent faculty advisers, members in influential positions on the student paper, but of course conducts no mass political work. A substantial group of its left-wing members are beginning to gravitate away from sympathy for the Stalinists towards the SYL.

4) AVC. Fairly Anti-Stalinist in its political complexion, the student chapter is otherwise small and uninfluential and has not even scraped the surface of the veterans.

5) YPSL, SLID, AYD, World Federalists, etc. The YPSL and the SLID do not exist and the AYD has long ago absorbed into the Wallace movement. A short lived "Students for Thomas" movement folded the day after the election. The World Federalists are "nice people" but are politically inept and have no membership. There are only three distinct living tendencies: The Stalinists (Young Progressives, Stud. Workers Federation, and other front groups), the S.D.A. (A.V.C. and influence on the paper), and the S.Y.L.

C. History of the Berkeley Unit SYL

The Berkeley SYL, during its two semesters of existence, has gained in prestige and influence but not in membership. It has completed the following activities:

1. Two street meetings against the draft. Received publicity and acknowledgement from a passive but not too hostile public.
2. Successfully exposed two Stalinist front groups by our presence. Recruited an AYD Exec.-Board member by merely stating 3rd Camp position.
3. Organized and led a heterogeneous anti-stalinist caucus in the Student Workers Federation which vied with the stalinists for control. Are now active in this organization despite Stalinist control.
4. Did the usual propaganda work thru leaflets, public meetings, and debates. Started to sell Labor Action regularly but have discontinued for lack of results. The paper does not attract students.
5. Started a local "Politics Club", which degenerated into a talk-fest and which finally folded after the election since its main program was for an Independent Labor Party. Wasted a lot of time on this venture and are undecided about attempting another start.
6. Have held regular (but not well-planned) Sunday night discussions and lectures. Regular attendance of about 15 people, some of whom were Stalinist sympathizers and SDAers. In general we are recognized by the "political public", as a definite tendency and our size is usually much overestimated by our opponents.
7. Our relations with the S.F. Branch have been excellent and fruitful. The Branch has cooperated closely and has helped the unit in distributions, in classes and public meetings, and street meetings.

D. Perspectives for Berkeley S.Y.L.

1. In general, we have suffered from inefficiency and slight delusions of political grandeur. Uncoordinated, unintegrated, and generally bad!

planned and followed-up activity has resulted in notoriety but not re-
sult. We have wasted time in agitation and in attempting to lead
the Student Workers Federation and to intervene in all political issues
and organizations with equal emphasis. We are now going to concentrate
on propaganda--classes, public meetings, socials--on building the S.Y.L.
directly through individual contacting and will spend less of our effort
on time-consuming activity which does not result in an increase in mem-
bership.

2. We now intend to put out a one page monthly newsletter called "The
Campus Trotskyite". This sheet will be largely propagandistic but will
contain some local action proposals and local news. In dealing with
the students it will go on the theory that it is better to approach them
in a direct theoretical way and not to attempt to move them by agitation.

3. We will continue to have people in the "Student Workers Federation",
which up to now is largely composed of politicians, to help build the or-
ganization and to prevent the Stalinists from using it as a recruiting
agency.

4. Too many of our new members have joined the W.P. instead of remain-
ing in the S.Y.L. This contradicts the purpose of the Youth section
which to be really successful must be more than a recruiting agency for
the party. We will attempt to have close political relations with the
party with complete organizational and "social" independence. Only in
this way will a youth group really result.

5. A close sympathizer of the S.Y.L. is now going to an Art school
in Berkeley, and there may be a chance to start another Unit in this
area. In any case, we shall watch closely any opportunities to get started
in the local high schools and technical schools where the working class
youth are concentrated. It is difficult to get started in these areas
and the S.Y.L. National Bureau should spend some time on the techniques
of starting new units.

BUFFALO UNIT

Organized last September, the bulk of the work and membership of the Buffalo unit stemmed from ~~the~~ University A, the largest of three universities in the city, with a student body of approximately 6,000. Despite the extremely liberal administration with no restrictions whatever on student activity, this campus is overwhelmingly non-political. With the exception of the Young Progressives, the only discussing group on campus has been as a non-partisan discussion club. Due to a good local publicity, timing of subjects for discussion, and the use of professors as discussion leaders, the PIC established itself as the student forum of the university.

The SYL was organized off the campus to include members from other universities and young workers. Students from the PIC at University A were invited to come down to meetings and the response was gratifying. The unit began to recruit and grow. All this occurred in the pre-election period as well as several weeks immediately thereafter. Following this period, however, a definite lull set in. In an attempt to arouse the interest of the students, the Unit issued a newsletter -- directed specifically towards a group of students that had recently left the ranks of the Stalinists. The newsletter was generally well received on the campus, but the attendance at meetings continued to fall off. In addition, the attendance at PIC meetings has considerably fallen off, and the general indifference towards politics that previously characterized the vast majority of the student body, seems now to have infected those whom we previously regarded as the "politicals" as well. It should be added that the Young Progressives have not met for months and have not been heard from for the same period of time. The original perspective of the SYL was to initiate the formation of a broad socialist club on campus, but this perspective will have to be postponed for a while at least. The group will continue to work in the PIC as a forum. The only new development has been the erection of a civil liberties committee, consisting of liberals, Wallaceites, Stalinists and SYLers for the purpose of guarding against violations of academic freedom.

One of the major problems confronting the unit has been the fact that most of the members are newly arrived in political movement. Consequently, individual education has been one of the major tasks of the unit. Attempts were made to involve all of the members in the organizational work, while their theoretical development was progressing. Chairmen were rotated at every meeting; a ten minute period was instituted before each regular educational, entitled "Culture Corner" -- in which the newer members read literary selections or gave film or book reports. Each member was required to "specialize" in a specific topic in order to write an article and give an educational. Educationals were given on organizational structure and democratic centralism. In addition to this, the unit is to be split up into smaller groups for the purpose of research in various theoretical problems.

The SYL unit works very closely with the party branch. Large meetings, as are most socials, are joint meetings with out of town speakers. SYL members are encouraged to attend branch meetings regularly and there is no lack of interest in branch activity despite the industrialized character of the branch.

An attempt will be made to enter University B, where we are represented, but where no activity of any kind exists. A leaflet distribution will be made by a number of students from University A inviting these from B to a joint meeting. If this is at all successful, an attempt will be made to do the same thing at several high schools.

The major task of the unit is now to fully integrate those who were recruited while continuing to participate in the few arenas open to the unit for further recruitment. The initial wave of recruitments that followed shortly after the formal organization of the unit is over -- it did not end without taking some members with it -- and the period of consolidation is under way.

CHICAGO

Through the efforts of Workers Party members on the campus of the University of Chicago a unit of the SYL was organized late in December. Although less than half of the SYL members are U of C students the main interests and activities of the unit are centered around the university and its neighborhood.

Since its inception the unit's activity as a group has been limited to weekly discussion meetings on various political topics. At present we are concluding a series of discussions based upon Shachtman's "The Fight For Socialism". We have had to devote a certain amount of time to organizing ourselves, consolidating new members, dividing responsibilities, and making plans for future activities. Our discussion meetings by and large have been on a high level and have been quite successful. Several contacts joined the SYL through these discussions and a number of other outsiders have been brought closer to us.

The age of the group is young, average about 19 years. Eight people are students or work at the university, two are students at Roosevelt College and the remainder work or study at various places.

The Chicago unit is today confronted with the problem of getting on its own feet. It has an excellent core of experienced people who are capable of giving it the necessary education and leadership. It must now break out of its isolation as a group and establish itself as an active and vital socialist youth group. Tied up with this is the necessity for developing an integrated social life for its members. We have considered these problems and have made plans for overcoming them.

In the next few weeks we plan to hold our first public forum-social at a meeting hall in the university neighborhood. Extensive preparation will be made to bring in outsiders. We also plan to set up an SYL chapter on campus under whose auspices we can hold forums and public meetings and yet have the benefits of university facilities.

Our possibilities for recruitment are very good. We have contact with members of the Hashomer Hazer and the YPSL as well as individual students. Unfortunately, we lost an excellent opportunity to recruit from a group of young factory workers in December. But we were not in a position at that time to cash in on this.

The principal arena of activity for the unit is the university of Chicago. The nature and extent of our activity is a result to a large degree, of the efforts of Workers Party members during the past year and a half. In fact, most of the SYL members on campus and some who have joined during recent months were recruited by the WP fraction.

The most important achievement on campus has been the building of the Politics Club. The club was formed over two years ago by members of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party on campus. It sponsored a few ineffectual activities, remained isolated and unknown, and floundered around amidst sharp disagreements between us and the SWP.

At the beginning of last year we reorganized the group which then consisted of six members and sympathizers of the WP (the SWP in the meantime pulled out and formed their own Marxist club). We promptly proceeded to launch ourselves into a series of activities which gradually brought new members to the club and brought it forward as the most prominent left-wing group on the campus. We defined ourselves as a socialist

group, independent of Moscow and Washington and for the third camp. We held several club discussions to which friends were invited and which were moderately successful. A series of well-advertised public meetings which were among the most successful both in reception and size of audience of any held on campus soon brought us out into the open. We sponsored people who we felt had general agreement with the Politics Club stand or who had something of special value to offer us. Therefore, our meetings varied, with speakers ranging from Dwight Macdonald and Abba Lerner to Manny Garrett and Max Shachtman. These meetings were always well liked and drew large crowds averaging through the year 200 per meeting.

The club also held a number of very successful house parties and movies, the profits of which have permitted us to buy an electric mimeograph machine.

During the course of the year the character of the club changed and consequently the nature of club activities became broader. The club changed from a paper organization to a live and genuine socialist club. The membership grew to twenty-five people many of whom were alive and active people. This year our membership expanded from a September low of 15 to 40. It consists of people of every socialist complexion. The Politics Club is known throughout the campus and has gained a high respect among the student body and the faculty.

One of the finest accomplishments of the club has been the publication of the "Student Partisan". The development of the club to a large extent can be traced through the improvement in the magazine itself. About seven hundred copies are sold on and off the campus and many of these are passed hand to hand through the residence halls, cooperatives, etc. Many friends and sympathizers first became acquainted with the Politics Club through the magazine. It is known not only to students but to residents of the neighborhood and members of the faculty (many of whom have offered to help us in one capacity or another).

Early this year a broad, progressive anti-stalinist slate was organized for the Student Assembly election. The Politics Club was invited to place ten names on it all of whom were put into office by virtue of the slate's clean sweep. The club assembly members constitute a sizeable fraction of the body (second only to the Republicans!) and are instrumental in fighting against the Republicans' efforts to keep the assembly "non-political". Our efforts were responsible for the passage of resolutions which supported the Olivet protest and a student-United Public Workers' effort to bloc university union busting. Several club members form the majority of the all important civil liberties committee in the assembly.

The club has been active to a greater or lesser extent in numerous "action" campaigns. We participated actively in the campaign to bring job equality to the State Street department stores. We drummed up sympathy for the fight, contributed financially, and regularly brought pickets to Goldblatt's for a long period of time. We were active in the student strike against discrimination in the university medical school and hospital, in the Olivet case, etc. For the past year we have been associated with almost every worthwhile effort on campus (from the student strike to book collection for Frankfurt University students).

We have continually harassed the Stalinists and have had the pleasure of seeing them lose power and sympathy. We helped dislodge them

from their control of Studnet Assembly and no doubt we have influenced many people away from their point of view. During the summer we walked into a committee which they organized and ran for the purpose of protesting against the arrest of the twelve. Our proposal to invite Albert Goldman to their big protest rally was supported and passed by the non-Stalinists present and the Stalinists at the last moment withdrew from the meeting to the embarrassment and anger of the faithful Wallacettes.

They have lost control of the campus paper, the campus humor magazine folded under them, and the Wallace movement (the UofC chapter was the largest student Wallace group in the country) has turned into an open battleground between them and the Tugwell-Ebby liberals. The Stalinists have a large fraction on campus but their proportionate effectiveness is small.

Last year a small YPSL run socialist club lived an almost unknown existence apart from the students. This year the club has done nothing and at their first organizational and only meeting of the year most of their time was devoted to discussing a proposal to dissolve and join the Politics Club. Through the concerted efforts of the YPSL national organizer at the time and his henchmen the motion was narrowly defeated, however, those YPSLs who were interested in participating in activity have since joined the Politics Club and the Socialist Club has continued to live - on paper.

The SWP Marxist club led an existence similar to that of the Socialist Club. Eventually, seeing that they were in a blind alley the Marxist Club dissolved. Half of their people joined the Politics Club.

Club members are now playing an active part in the formation of a campus Kutcher Defense Committee.

Our comrades have participated in other activities outside of the Politics Club. The UofC chapter of the AVC has been the scene of considerable effort where many contacts and friends have been made.

We were instrumental in founding the Committee to Defend Academic Freedom which not only organized the campus protest in the Olivet case but also coordinated and ran the midwest motorcade.

The most recent activity of the Politics Club was a campaign centered around a protest against Allied occupation policy in Germany. The winter issue of the "Student Partisan" was devoted entirely to a discussion of the German problem. The club held a series of discussions culminated by a highly successful public meeting on Germany. Along with a representative of the Politics Club we had several prominent faculty people speak before an audience of slightly less than three hundred people. Although our collection speaker failed to show up a simple request from the chairman drew fifty dollars for German relief. Simultaneously, we sent out a letter to the entire faculty, signed by over twenty faculty people, requesting financial assistance in our drive for German relief. A very successful social was held whose proceeds also went to relief. The campaign had a considerable amount of political significance inasmuch as it focused light on one of the most crucial political questions of the day. We found considerable interest for our program among faculty and students.

If the situation at UofC seems bright it is almost the opposite at Roosevelt College. We had a large party-youth fraction there last

year which has practically disintegrated. Several people left school and others dropped out of the party. A good bit of work was done last year; several successful meetings were held and two issues of a paper were put out. In the meantime, participation in the socialist club which we shared with several other groups fell off sharply. The Socialist club of Roosevelt College is today practically defunct.

The YPSLs had a little spurt which grew out of the Thomas campaign and they set up their own organization. However, they found that all good things come to an end and they are now prostrate; several of their people have recently left in disgust.

Roosevelt College does present enormous possibilities. At present we lack the necessary organizational forces to rejuvenate the socialist club and capitalize on the situation. It is hoped, however, that certainly by next fall with the return of experienced comrades Roosevelt can again be the fruitful field it has been for us in the past.

In addition to regular campus activity the UofC fraction undertook responsibility for making contact with socialists and WP sympathizers on other campuses in the midwest. Our most successful efforts were in Madison where last year we organized a small discussion group of friends and sympathizers in the University of Wisconsin. The group fell apart during the summer and unfortunately the key people did not return to school in the fall and the group was not reformed. During the past year contact was established with YPSLs at several mid-western universities (Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin) in connection with the Politics Club proposal for a national student socialist federation - many of them were interested, particularly people in Wisconsin but with its failure to eventuate contact with the YPSLs was suspended.

Our people both in Chicago and at Olivet played an important role in the Olivet College strike and the subsequent student protest meetings. An SYL member was on the central strike committee in Olivet and did an excellent job; in a short time he managed to make a number of fine contacts and gain considerable prestige as a political and strike leader. Unfortunately, he had to leave school before we could bring pressure to bear from Chicago. Several weeks after the strike began a very demoralized and almost ineffectual strike Committee in Olivet began to pour responsibility for national student support into our laps. Contact with twenty midwestern schools where groups had sprung up to assist Olivet students was maintained and coordinated by the Committee to Defend Academic Freedom at the UofC. The group was controlled by the SP and ourselves. Plans, money, contacts, press coverage, speakers, etc. for the midwest student motorcade to Olivet and the protest demonstration were arranged here.

With the complete defeat of the striking student in Olivet almost the entire student body left or is preparing to leave school. Our comrades in Olivet along with the best contacts were among those who migrated en masse to Mexico City College. Altho we have had no contact with them recently we're confident that they have been able to maintain their small discussion group which they transferred several thousand miles to a new school.

NEW YORK - CITY WIDE

The main city-wide activities of the N.Y. SYL in the past period have been meetings under the auspices of the three units. The city-wide meetings are held on an average of once every six weeks, and the preparations for them are relatively extensive. At our last city-wide meeting, for example, we distributed 5,000 copies of LABOR ACTION with leaflets announcing the meeting pasted on to each paper at colleges and high schools; this in addition to a city-wide mailing. The response to these meetings have varied considerably, our most successful one being a meeting on the war question at which comrade Shactman spoke to 100 youth.

The New York SYL has recently concluded a series of classes. The subjects were: (1) Principles of Leninism, (2) Economic Analysis of Capitalism, (3) Readings in Marxism. Attendance at each of the first two classes varied from 15 to 30, and at the third class from 5 to 15. The classes have not as yet borne fruit in terms of new members, but it is yet too early to say whether this will remain the case.

The main orientation in the New York SYL has been towards the campus. We have managed to build six recognized clubs on five campuses, and are participating actively in an anti-war club organized by left-wing YPSLs on another campus. Though this is undoubtedly a real accomplishment, the comrades should be aware of the fact that we have extended ourselves considerably, and consequently find it difficult to keep each of these clubs in a healthy functioning condition. One of our main difficulties is that of getting speakers for club meetings. For reasons not of our own making we have to appeal almost exclusively to party comrades to speak on campus. As campus meetings are held in the afternoon, all working comrades are eliminated as possible speakers. This narrows down potential speakers to party functionaries and unemployed comrades, particularly the former. However, the party functionaries have been particularly reluctant to speak at campus meetings. A number of times planned meetings on campus had to be called off for the lack of a party speaker to address meetings on campus, audiences of which usually vary between 25 to 50 students. Frequently, comrades from the party are recruited as speakers on almost a personal basis. If the clubs are to continue functioning it will be necessary for all party functionaries and other capable comrades with free time to cooperate in a more tangible way with SYLers on campus.

The New York SYL has also over-extended itself financially. Not only do SYLers bear the financial brunt of the campus clubs, but they must provide expenses for leaflets and mailings for SYL meetings. The situation is becoming increasingly intolerable, and unless some means are found by the SYL or by the party to provide a larger and regular income above dues, it will become necessary to sharply delimit our activity on and off campus.

On the N.Y. campuses, our comrades with the Socialist Clubs are pressing for the federation of these various student organizations. It is felt that a N.Y. Socialist Student Federation would facilitate the growth of each of the affiliated clubs. A federation of these clubs could publish a student magazine which would serve as a socialist propaganda organ, and which will help to integrate the clubs in the federation. A N.Y. Student Federation may well become the focal point of a National Socialist Student Federation.

BRONX UNIT

The Bronx Unit's activities include the following: (1) the fraction at the College of the City of New York (CCNY), (2) The fraction at New York University (NYU) and (3) Off-campus activities.

1. The CCNY Socialist Club made considerable progress since it was formed. This progress has not been so much in recruitment to the club, or to the SYL as it has been in building up the following: a reputation, and influence for its members.

For example, the club has been given one of the best rooms for its meetings, and a bulletin board for its exclusive use. The invitation from the SLID for us to join it - despite the fact that Trotskyists were banned from SLID membership at its last national convention - is indicative of the progress we have made. There is every reason to believe that the influence of the club will continue to grow in far greater proportion than its membership.

City College is not the same radical hot-bed that it was ten years ago. The conservatives on campus are stronger than they've ever been in this period. The left wing anti-Stalinists are likewise weaker. The old YPSL (Fourth International) had in its hey-day 40 members on the City College campus; today we only have a fraction of this number. The de-politicalization on campus naturally has its adverse affect on the number of students who attend meetings of political clubs. The average attendance of the club in which our comrades are active is 20, and has never been more than 45. The same holds more or less for the SLID, which is the only other Socialist club on the campus. There is little prospect for significantly increasing the attendance at club meetings: the political interest simply does not exist. However, there is a possibility of joint activities between the two Socialist organizations which might have a salutary affect on the student body's interest in the clubs, and facilitate recruiting members to the club and to the SYL.

2. The club at NYU was formed last semester. From its very inception, it was torn by factional strife which handicapped the functioning of the club. Initially the factionalism was between the Social Democrats and ourselves; the Social Democrats insisting that the club exclude all Trotskyists from membership. When these proposals were defeated, the Social Democrats lost heart and left the club. Following this, a factional struggle developed between members of the SWP and SYLers. The SWP has a large fraction on the campus, and they were for a time being at least much better organized than ourselves. It was clear that they intended to "take the club over" at the elections held on March 17. They were so confident that the club would be theirs that in an SWP internal bulletin it was announced amid much fanfare that the SWP fraction at NYU had organized a club! This of course was not true, but they meant that the club which our comrades were instrumental in organizing would be taken over by the SWP. It became obvious that if the SWP were to win the elections for the executive committee, they would make it difficult for other Socialist tendencies to exist within the club. However, at the election meeting which was attended by over 20 club members, the SWPers did not win any of the three posts!

Because of this intense factionalism, the club did not recruit new members. Students who were interested in the organization were repelled by the bickering. Another unfortunate result was the inability of the club last term to hold more than two forums. This semester the club has already sponsored one forum and now with the elections over, it can reasonably be expected that the club will be able to meet more regularly and gain members. The Socialist Club is the only socialist organization on the NYU campus, and this clear field should make it easier to accomplish these objectives.

3. The Bronx Unit is only a semi-independent, functioning closely with the Manhattan unit. The unit meets every other Sunday in its designated borough. It's meetings so far have attracted very few nonmembers. This must not be understood, however, as denoting failure. The unit has been meeting for only a few months, and on an evening which is perhaps the worst one for getting youth and students to attend.

The main activity of the unit aside from fractions is leaflet and Labor Action distributions at high schools and colleges. Many thousands of leaflets and papers have been handed out with the objective of building up a meaningful contact list. Several interest blanks have been returned from these distributions, though we have not received as many returns as had been expected. Aside from distributions, the only other off-campus activity is contacting, which has not been adequately carried on. Though attendance at forums by contacts has been small, membership attendance has

usually been 100 percent, and discussion are good.

The unit has the perspective of working with a group of left-wing YPSLs who were at the head of a recently dissolved Bronx Circle of the YPSL. The unit will propose meetings and discussions and activities under auspices of the YPSLs and the SYL. If this can be accomplished we will not only help revive a left-wing YPSL circle but will make for more harmonious relations between both youth groups, opening up the possibility of even greater integration of the two groups.

MANHATTAN UNIT

As with the other New York units the activities of the Manhattan Unit revolve around the campus. The unit is in charge of the functioning of two fractions: Columbia and Queens College.

1. A socialist club was organized on the Columbia Campus at the beginning of last semester. Most of the initial work was carried on by our fraction of SYL and party students. When the club was first organized, it showed prospects of numerical growth. However, things did not develop as expected due in large part to the fact that some of the party comrades in the fraction did not follow through in their initial drive and enthusiasm to build a club. The club has a membership of 15 today. But the club has held a number of successful forums - 9 public meetings since its inception - with the attendance varying from 15 to 50.

The club at Columbia has real possibilities. The comrades working in the club are particularly competent and experienced. The student body is extremely large and on the whole more sophisticated than most New York college students. Another factor brightening our prospects is the liberality of the school administration. The problem for our comrades in the fraction - and for the club - is to attempt to put the club on a more formal basis: to make it clear who is a member, collect dues, etc. The lack of this formality including the lack of a division of labor results in unnecessarily sloppy organization and places an undue burden on just one or two members of the club. Another defect in the functioning of our comrades is their failure to date to acquaint club members and sympathizers with the SYL. Only a few contacts have been made for the SYL.

Much of what is on the debit side of our activity at Columbia can be corrected this semester. On the positive side is the fact that the club has had successful meetings, publicized in the school press, and we have acquainted a number of students with the ideas of socialism, and have opened up the possibility for recruiting to our movement.

2. In Queens College, there is a socialist club which is a coalition of various socialists and anti-stalinist tendencies. The club has sponsored meetings, frequently with P speakers, but they have been few and not well attended. The political atmosphere at Queens College is even less conducive to well attended socialist meetings than on most other New York campuses. With the formation of a New York Socialist Student Federation, a socialist club at Queens College should be favorably affected, almost immediately.

3. The main off-campus activities of the Manhattan Unit consists of weekly forums and contacting. Attempts were made to get comrades into neighborhood organizations but they were unsuccessful. For most of our forums, distributions at Columbia or Queens College and some high schools are made.

One of the main problems of the unit is the lack of a social life. The failure to develop group activity and what appears to be almost an innate inability to organize successful socials has proven to be a real political problem for the unit. This is one of the main factors accounting for what has been a large turnover in contacts and even the loss of several good members. Unit meetings, likewise, have been unproductive at times. The main reason for this is the lack of a social life, 63

BROOKLYN UNIT

The main area of activity for the Brooklyn unit, SYL, is the Brooklyn College campus. With the exception of a few high school students isolated in their respective schools, the remaining members of the unit are matriculated students and function regularly on the BC campus.

All comrades have been members of the Eugene V Debs Society, a recognized campus club. Within the Debs Society we constitute a numerical majority; the rest of the club being composed of independent socialists in general sympathy with the SYL and W.P. The Debs society was originally created by W.P. members on campus who have long since left either the campus or political activity. The club is now generally considered "socialist" or more particularly, "Trotskyist" on the part of the more politically sophisticated students.

During the course of last term's activity the membership of the Debs Society increased. About half of this additional number have since joined the SYL. These additional Debs and SYL members were recruited primarily from two sources:

1) General campus propaganda and activity which attracted students on an individual basis, who, up to now, have been isolated from the organized socialist movement. And

2) The students for Thomas movement. The Brooklyn College SFT, like similar groups on other campuses, was organized during the recent presidential election campaign. Due to its broad appeal, amorphous political composition and the watered down nature of the program, Students for Thomas, at least at BC, was able to attract just about every student who thought he was a socialist plus a slew of anti-Stalinist liberals (even if the most important activity of most of them consisted in their entering their names on the SFT mailing list). Nevertheless, the SFT at BC did gain some prominence. However, with the end of the election campaign, the SFT officially dissolved. Many of its members dropped from politics; those remaining tended either toward the WP or SP. As a result of this situation, a series of informal discussions took place over the course of several weeks with leading spokesmen of both parties. These discussions brought the political controversy within SFT to a head. What had been SFT split down the middle with its reading and more revolutionary inclined members simultaneously joining the SYL and the Debs Society.

Also, as a result of the split in SFT and a new orientation in the SYL on campus, two new campus organizations have been formed: the Socialist Politics Club and the Socialist Club (SP orientation). What was and still is needed at BC is a broad, all encompassing Socialist movement which can democratically reflect the different socialist currents on campus -- a club so constructed so as to promote the freest sort of interchange of socialist ideas. Our appeal in this direction was rebuffed by the extremely sectarian, anti-Trotskyist, pro-SP group which proceeded to organize its own Socialist Club and officially proclaimed it to be in accord with the underlying principles of the SP. Informally refusing us membership in the SC, we were obliged to establish, in conjunction with other socialist elements, The Socialist Politics Club. The creation of the SPC is a reflection of our new orientation toward the type of all-inclusive socialist movement outlined above.

The most important result of our recent growth in outright SYL and in Debs members and in the increase of our political periphery is that we have become, for the first time, a factor on campus -- not a powerful factor -- but a factor nevertheless. The Stalinists, due primarily to the generally reactionary nature of their student opponents and the college administration, have managed thus far to pose as a progressive force on campus. Given an increase in our own membership and influence it seems inconceivable that the Stalinists could continue their hoax to the extent that they have managed to do thus far. The liberal and conservative bourgeois elements on campus have no dynamism and little chance for any meaningful development. Our own perspectives for growth are good.

Several SYL'ers have joined the Bedford-Stuyvesant NAACP Youth Council **the only significant NAACP Youth Council in Brooklyn. They are well liked and active workers (one of our comrades was nominated for president in the recent elections). Our orientation has been a long term one in an effort to build up the Council. As yet we have not recruited, though prospects for recruitment in the near future are good. Several party people are working in the senior branch. Recently, the Stalinists moved in on the senior branch and indications are that they'll be sending in some youth soon. Other than ourselves, two Johnsonites joined recently and are doing active work. We are handicapped by the fact that we don't live in the immediate neighborhood and are therefore not in intimate contact with the Negro youth.

A very happy development in the Brooklyn unit has been its acquisition of a new H.Q. It will stabilize the unit and offer a place to invite contacts (it has a real youth atmosphere). It also is the center of community youth activity and as a result it is now possible to make easy contact with various youth organizations (ADA, YPA, Young Dems., etc) and with the youth of the neighborhood.

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activities following a political discussion. There is nothing youthful about our political activity. An encouraging sign, however, is the fact that the comrades in the unit are aware of the problem and its importance, and are taking concrete steps in an attempt to overcome these handicaps. Another problem for the unit is that of finances. In addition to paying for headquarters, our distributions and mailings, and support to college clubs, add upto a terrific drain on our limited finances.

The unit has excellent potential possibilities, but to fully exploit these possibilities, financial assistance from the party may be required and it may even be necessary for the party to assign comrades to work actively in the unit.

WEST VIRGINIA

At the beginning of the current school year the student fraction at West Virginia University was riddled thru several former student members going into local industries. The industrialized ex-students kept up their campus contacts however, were active, and the student fraction has been built up again thru recruitment during the time since September.

The major sphere of activity for the fraction in the past year has been the American Veterans Committee Chapter. As an AVC chapter it is not extraordinarily healthy and there is a tendency for it to become a W.P. sympathizers club (it is definitely a "Labor Vets" chapter). It is not a failure in either of these functions and has served fairly well in the latter capacity (as a left wing discussion club and center). This has been partially responsible, no doubt, for its relative failure as an AVC. This cause for its failure will be eliminated with the beginning of function of the discussion club now being organized. Also, we are now in the process of attempts to build AVC again. Too pessimistic a view of it must not be taken for it is certainly not completely a failure even as an AVC chapter. A particularly fine feature of it is its close relations (almost affiliation) with the local union movement. It has representation (as does the NAACP) on the county nonpartisan political committee (called the Democratic Labor Committee). This organization is being described in detail in the report of the W. Va. Branch. It will suffice to say here that the Democratic Labor Committee greets the representatives of the AVC heartily and that this taking part in a grass roots labor body is valuable training for the politically interested but inexperienced students.

Other organizations on campus in which the fraction works are academic ones. Among these are the "International Relations" club (political science), the sociology and social work club, and the philosophy club.

More important than any of this perhaps has been the more or less unorganized discussion which heretofore has taken place in students rooms and in cabarets. It is here that a large part of recruiting and education take place. The effectiveness of this discussion has been held down by the lack of a center, by the lack of room enough for everyone to congregate at the same time and by the consequent lack of organization. AVC did not have these faults but had others. From a Marxian socialist point of view it did not go deep enough into many of the things it dealt with and with many important subjects it could not be legitimately concerned. It did serve as a makeshift political center and has in the past been very important to us in that capacity altho the new club should serve much better.

What has made the new club possible is the becoming available of a room in a downtown building and the getting together of enough politically interested students to finance it. The organization meeting has taken place and the name Social Problems Discussion Club has been chosen. The political composition of the clubs membership is indicated by the fact that they read the WP press or some part of it and (or at least) the Student Partisan, of which we get a bundle of 20. Programs are now being mapped out and classes planned and the response of the members is good. All indications are that the club will be a success.

As it exists now the club is solely a discussion club and will not take action (as a club at least). Neither will it attempt to use normal

publicity channels. Though composed chiefly of students it is not officially recognized by the school authorities and will not use school facilities. It is thought by those concerned that this will give extra freedom and scope which would be impossible for an official club on the campus and will keep the members from being isolated and tagged (as we think we would be if an official club intending to discuss socialism were formed). This club in its particular form is the product of a great deal of thought and planning over a long period of time.

This brings up the main overall obstacle to student work here. That is a reactionary school administration and an atmosphere of intimidation which is felt by faculty and students. The agencies explicitly formulating the threat to left wing activity and academic freedom are a community newspaper and a reactionary faculty of journalism which tightly controls the school paper.

A situation seems to be forming now which may allow us to strike a real blow for academic freedom here and relieve somewhat the tension which is felt. This can only be dealt with in a future or supplementary report however.

NEWARK, N.J.

There is no SYL unit in Newark. Up to very recently the Workers Party branch had assigned only one person in the youth age bracket available for youth work. Since he has been working in a shop, where the problems are not youth problems, even he is really not available for the type of youth work which the SYL has found most fruitful -- student youth work.

Despite the considerable total effort expended, the WP has recruited only one young person in the past period and that was due to distribution of Labor Action at a high school two years ago.

The efforts of the branch in the fall of 1947 centered around contacts of the branch youth member in the AYD? from which he had been recruited. We were not able to make any real dent in the AYD, which, through the Wallace campaign and their greater facilities, offered activity which could not be matched by us.

At the time of the banning of the Nation and Soviet Russia Today from the school libraries of Newark, leaflets on the issues in dispute were distributed at three high schools. An attempt to mobilize student opinion on this issue, which had created a great deal of stir in the press, proved fruitless. A public meeting we held on the banning was not successful.

A class with three or four contacts was held, using Shachtman's "The Fight for Socialism" as a text, but though at the completion of the course the persons attending more or less considered themselves as SYL members, they had not really been brought close to us. Meetings held with National Bureau speakers were sparsely attended.

A great deal of work was expended at Rutgers University (Newark Colleges) by one of the older Workers Party comrades. A large number of people were made acquainted with Labor Action, the New International and the Student Partisan. Our program in general was known to a considerable number of students. A series of classes, with up to 15 people attending, was held during the summer of 1948. While thru all this activity a large number of people were made friendly to us, nothing tangible in terms of recruitment resulted. An attempt was made to establish a non-stalinist socialist club on the campus. This effort collapsed through an excess of dependence by our comrade upon the good intentions of some non-party socialist elements in getting the club chartered.

Beyond the nature of the times and the errors indicated, the chief reason for our failure to develop a youth group would seem to be the absence of an experienced youth cadre in the universities in the area.

Our plans for the future include continuation of our work in the Newark colleges, especially where we have already established some sort of a tradition, and the expansion of our work in other fields where we have youth contacts.

Student activity in St. Louis is directed toward Washington University, a large school located within the city. The enrollment is over 8000 and the vast majority of these are residents of St. Louis. The city, the school, and the students are very conservative and there is virtually no political activity there. The Stalinists have functioned there in the past but at present there are no Stalinists organizations in existence. There is not even an SDA. There is a student senate but it is entirely controlled by the fraternities and sororities. What political activity there is is carried on by the Young Republicans and the World Federalists but even these are far from mass organizations. The only thing that faintly resembles radical politics is the activity of the campus Y. This is divided up into several "areas". The Public Affairs Area has recently formed a committee to work for the admission of Negroes to the University. At present Negroes are admitted only to the graduate schools of Social Work and Liberal Arts. I have participated in this from the beginning, acting as chairman of the organization meeting, and I am hopeful that it will provide opportunities for some fruitful work but I am far from optimistic.

Party activity is centered around a small discussion group which meets at the home of a sympathizer off campus. This group was formed last summer as a result of the Gould tour. It has met regularly ever since about once every three weeks. Most of the discussions have been led by Coleman or myself but occasionally we have had guest speakers. Falk and Maxwell spoke to the group on their tour. Felix Morrow also spoke on one occasion. Martin Lechner, an ex-party member has spoken to two of the meetings. Once in a while one of the contacts who attend the meetings will volunteer to speak on a subject which interests him. The attendance has been fairly good, ranging from about 5 to 20. The last meeting was on the Communist Manifesto and was attended by 13 people. The previous meeting was on Indonesia and was attended by 22 people. However, most of the people who attended by 13 people. However, most of the people who attend these are not very good from the point of view of party material. Many attend purely for social reasons or because they like to talk or because they are mildly curious in an academic sort of way. Some are diehard liberals but most of them are not seriously interested in politics of any kind.

At the present time we are at sort of an impasse. We have formed a fairly successful discussion group and this is a definite accomplishment considering the kind of environment we are working in and the short time we have been here. However, it does not look like we are going to get anything out of it in the way of recruitment in the foreseeable future. We have been investigating and talking to people about forming some kind of organization on campus but have come to the conclusion that that is impossible at least at the present time. It cannot be done as those on campus who have some interest in politics are skeptical about the possibilities of accomplishing anything or are tied up with other things, jobs, school-work, etc. These facts make our perspectives difficult to work out.

In summary I would say that in spite of the fact that we have established a successful discussion group we have so far not attracted any promising contacts and since other organizational possibilities are virtually nil, we are in quite a quandary about what to do next. Though things are going much slower than hoped for the discussion group will keep going and sooner or later we will get something out of it.

DETROIT

Youth work in Detroit consists exclusively of activity on the Wayne University campus. We have been severely hampered by the lack of people on campus who were in a position to devote the necessary time to student work. This handicap has been slightly overcome in the past month. One of the few functioning chapters of the Student League for Industrial Democracy exists on this campus. Its membership is heterogeneous consisting of liberals, YPSL's, and members of the SWP and WP, despite the fact that at its last national convention the SLID excluded Trotskyists from membership. A number of SLID and YPSL members are friendly with us.

We have started Saturday night discussions recently. We have held two so far, spaced three weeks apart. The purpose is to try to create a center of intellectual socialist activity. The turn out has been largely from Wayne, comprising about 30% of the audience. In concrete terms about 15 people. These people, largely YPSLs and other types of politicians, have been impressed by what we are trying to do and are really interested. The contact is tenuous however, since there is an element of demoralization among them.

BALTIMORE

Essentially, the Baltimore branch has its origin in a unit of the SYL which was transformed into a branch of the party. Several youth who did not join the party with the unit dropped out of the movement altogether. However, the branch has continued to spend a good deal of its time on student work, though the main orientation is towards contacting workers. The source for new youth contacts was Morgan College. The contacts made here have become estranged from us in the recent period.

On a campus about 40 miles from Baltimore one of our student comrades has managed to organize a discussion group which is still finding it hard going. The comrade here will attempt to organize the discussion group into a more formalized club on the campus.

CLEVELAND

Student work is carried on in a college just outside of Cleveland. On this campus a study group is in the process of organization. There are two political radical forces on campus: the Young Progressives of America and a strong club organized by the Young People's Socialist League. The latter group is the stronger of the two and has held meetings attended by as many as a hundred students. However, the YPSL group is of extremely poor composition and doesn't offer real possibilities. The young Wallaceites, on the contrary, are a more militant group and it has not been corrupted by Stalinist influences. In view of this it is the perspective on this campus to attempt to work more closely with the members of the Wallace organization.

In Cleveland itself it is the perspective of the branch to work more closely with the younger comrades and to attempt to penetrate the local campuses.