

WOHLFORTH REPORT ON NATIONAL TOUR - Nov. 2, 1958
TWIN CITIES, MADISON, MILWAUKEE, EARLHAM COLLEGE

The most significant aspect of this leg of the tour outside of working with our going youth formation in the Twin Cities was the formation of youth groups on campuses (Milwaukee and Earlham) where they did not exist previously. This points up that the tour has been able not only to stimulate youth activity in areas where socialist youth are already organized, but actually organize socialist youth groups in other areas -- to actually expand the organizational base of socialist youth work in this country.

TWIN CITIES: The campus situation in the Twin Cities is one of the best we have nationally. Two highly qualified comrades are on the U. of Minnesota campus and are on the executive committee of the Socialist Club on campus. The club has been under "American Socialist" influence for quite a while and is presently headed by Hershel Kaminsky, who some of you undoubtedly know.

I spoke on the campus twice. The first meeting was relatively small as little publicity got out on it -- around 30 showed. The second drew at least 60 though, and some were turned away from the classroom where it was held, for lack of space. In addition we got publicity in the campus paper because someone tore down our announcements of the meeting. In addition to the publicity in the campus paper our comrades arranged an interview with the daily paper in the area (600,000 circulation) which netted us a story and I got on a popular radio interview program which is heard throughout the general area.

A very important meeting was held with the YS supporters (there are 7 here now) during which youth activity was assessed and some decisions made on future functioning. It was decided to suggest to the Independent Political Youth that the name of the organization be changed to include the word "socialist". It was felt that little or no opposition to this would be expressed as those who had insisted on the non-socialist name earlier had since left the club. In addition it was felt that in reorganizing the club the role of the Young Socialist would become increasingly important and the club would in effect be a club of people attracted to socialist youth activity through the YS. After a years work the comrades felt they had a number of contacts and knew virtually every socialist youth in the area and with that background, with the work of the tour, and at the end of the election period they would be able to reorganize their youth work on a higher level. The good campus situation would also be helpful.

In addition the comrades laid plans to step up their support to the YS. They pledged \$10 a month as a beginning and also planned to step up sales of the YS. Along these lines one of the comrades has promised to build a rack for the YS for the University. All money raised in selling the paper would be sent in to the YS and an effort would be made to try to get sales up to the level to pay for the present bundle of 300.

MADISON: The Madison situation is in many ways one of the most important in the national youth picture. At the University of Wisconsin there is a socialist club with some 60 - count 'em, 60 - members which has been carrying on a very aggressive series of activities including, in addition to bringing speakers on campus, protest over Lebanon and over Quemoy-Matsu which reached a significant section of the student population.

The club is run by graduate students who, in general, come from out of the CP milieu. They are presently greatly under the influence of Professor William A. Williams. Probably 2 or 3 of them are hard core CP'ers but the rest of them are Guardianites, Deutcherites, etc. Most of them like the YS which is distributed to the members. All of them, including the CP-oriented ones, support the United Socialist Ticket. The head of the club, Saul Landau, is sort of a Deutcherite and is friendly to the YS, He felt that if we could supply them with a newsrack for the YS then he could get some body to service it for us.

These kids are also (see report on Reed College) thinking of setting up a "theoretical

Journal. They have \$2,000 or so and are waiting only for copy. They even pay \$4.50 a printed page for material. They seem to be willing to work with us on this project. George Rawick was asked to contribute and he responded by writing calling them all a bunch of dirty "stalinoids", which didn't go over too big with them. Herreshoff gave them the brushoff, suggesting that the American Socialist would fill the bill for them. I, in contrast, was very friendly to the idea. They seem to be willing to cooperate with us on it. I suggested to them that they contact the Reed people (they have \$15,000) and maybe with us we could work out something nationally. This could well develop into something important for us as a way to bring a group of graduate student type intellectuals closer to the YS.

The meeting on campus for me went reasonably well with some 40 persons there. Compliments were received on our last issue -- especially on the Mexico spread -- which incidentally was well received everywhere.

MILWAUKEE: Several very fine young people on the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee campus (some 10,000 students) are organizing a YS club on the campus. The first meeting sponsored the SWP statewide candidates and I also spoke. About 20 were at the meeting and an organizational meeting has been planned to follow it up. The comrades on campus have asked for a bundle of 25 YS's on consignment to sell to their fellow students. The group is the only socialist body on the university campus and the people involved seem to have a good organization sense and it should be a very successful venture. They all consider themselves supporters of the YS. They think they have the possibility of having some 30-40 students in their club.

EARLHAM COLLEGE: This is a Quaker school situated in southern Indiana just a short distance from Antioch which is across the border in Ohio. I spoke in the Friends Meeting House on campus to some 10% of the student body, on Marxism. A very lively discussion followed and the next day the campus was literally teeming with discussion of socialism. We held an informal meeting with those interested more concretely in socialism and about 10 people came. These people agreed on the need to form a socialist youth club on campus and began immediately to lay plans for this. They drafted a very fine militant statement on socialism, condemning the two capitalist parties. In addition they will take a regular bundle of 25 YS's on consignment. When I left the campus they had some 16 people lined up to join the club and they considered that only a beginning.

Most of these students have had some sort of contact with radical politics in the past, mostly in the CP periphery. One subscribes to "China Reconstructs", one was formerly around the YSA, and they seem to know the Guardian. They of course are enthusiastic about the Ticket. They all consider themselves supporters of the YS.

Needless to say this was one of the most hopeful aspects of the whole tour. It illustrates that this is a period for expansion -- we can organize youth in new areas. Further, it points to the role of the YS accompanied by extensive tours and an active center as the powerful force in attracting students interested in socialism. Finally, it shows that there is still a large reservoir of convinced socialist youth from around CP circles on the American campus who wish to work with us and who would be repelled by the social-democrats because of their stalinophobia and their sectarian attitude toward regroupment.

Also this points to the growing section of socialist youth presently organized on campuses but not affiliated with any national body. The groups at Reed, Madison, Milwaukee, Earlham, Antioch, Oberlin, alone constitute some 200-300 socialist youth. This is an extremely important body for us to think of orienting toward.

It is safe to say at this point in the tour that our campus orientation has been vindicated and that we must in the coming months pay increasing attention to the campus through our paper, through tours, and through direct contact work.