

B U L L E T I N

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November, 1943

## REPORT ON THE N.Y. ORGANIZATION

Any evaluation of the work of our organization since the last city convention must take into account the special and difficult circumstances under which we have had to function. The outstanding feature of this period has been the fact that we have had to work in a restricted manner, undermanned and understaffed in a situation which offered a number of very good opportunities. The problem of our personnel has become more acute in the last several months and will continue to grow more serious as time goes on. In spite of this, however, the organization can record a certain amount of progress and growth - both numerically and politically - and when this is placed against the background of our lack of personnel, our accomplishments are all the more pronounced.

This does not, of course, mean that every phase of our work has been carried through with perfection and efficiency, or that every favorable circumstance was fully taken advantage of. Far from it. No one realizes the shortcomings more clearly than does the city committee, which has tried to cope with the problems of this situation in a number of ways, and not always successfully. It too has suffered losses in its membership and number of effectives, so that it hardly resembles the original body elected at the last convention. Its attempt to set up departments with the aim of sub-dividing the work of the organization and thereby introducing some semblance of order and system ended in the consolidation of these departments under the jurisdiction of the office committee, with its attendant inefficiency, oversights, etc. Working hours, pressure of other work, loss of people made it impossible for us to function as of old. While it is true that this situation has existed for some time, it has certainly become very much more aggravated in recent times. As we discuss the different phases of our work in detail, the effects of such a situation will be demonstrated more clearly.

An examination of the state of the organization, the changes that have taken place since the beginning of the year will provide the necessary basis for a discussion of our work during this period.

### I - CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP:

The membership figure given at the last city convention was approximately 135; at the present time it is about 111. As then, this figure is subject to daily change. Yet during this period we have gained about 25 new members and about 10 others have been transferred to our city from other sections. Two who had dropped from membership rejoined during this period. Only two left the organization completely. (Some of our friends who could not maintain membership for one reason or other have been helping in our work, such as distributions, clerical work, etc.) This means then that we have actually lost some 50 or more people from effective participation in our activity in the first 9 months of this year. This came on top of an already weakened membership.

An analysis of the kind of members we have lost reveals that they included four city committee members, at least 10 important industrials, important club executive members, full-time activists, distributors, writers, N.C. members (which meant less help from the N.C. to the city organization), etc. Of the 30 new members we have gained, on the other hand, most are young, inexperienced and new to the movement. While they certainly add tremendously to our work and effectiveness, it must be recognized that they do not replace fully those of whom we have been deprived. In reality, we have a new type of membership and our organization is beginning to reflect the results of our recent recruitment. The age level has become somewhat lower. This change means a change of the problems in organization which the new committee will have to face. Our standards of activity, etc., will naturally have to be revised in accordance with these changes. But this will also mean a correspondingly heavier load on the older and more trained members, not only those on the leading committees, but throughout the organization.

Our recruitment has been the best in the country and we have retained in the organization practically every new member, but our failure to recruit more from our field of basic concentration shows that, though we have made a beginning, we still have not completed our transition from general agitation and propoganda to recruitment and integration into the party.

8 new members have come to us from the H.H. - every one a devoted, earnest, intelligent, hard-working young person.

- 1 member recruited from the I.C.
- 16 members recruited through personal contact.
- 5 members recruited as a result of our main concentration.

What does the membership look like now?

- It is divided into six clubs, with two members-at-large.
- 31 are in industrial concentrations;
- 30 others in industry generally;
- 20 white collar workers;
- 10 functionaries; 11 housewives; 3 students; 5 unemployed and
- 5 on long leaves of absence because of health.
- (These figures are subject to slight changes.)

Outside of further recruitment, only minor changes in the composition of our membership are likely.

In spite of this drop in effectives, there has been no serious curtailment in our work. While it is undoubtedly true that some things which might have been done were not taken care of adequately, we have nevertheless continued our work pretty much at the same pace as in the previous period when we had far more members. This means that, discounting the inexcusable recalcitrance of certain individuals, the membership as a whole has been carrying a heavier burden and can well be

proud of its ability to keep the organization going against these odds.

## II - THE CITY COMMITTEE:

We have already touched on how the city committee has tried to cope with the problems of organization as related to the shortage of manpower. The committee has in this sense reflected the rest of the organization. In another sense this is true too. Committee meetings revealed a certain lack of political consciousness inside the committee, which is both a cause and effect of the general state of the organization. While it was in most cases excusable that members of the committee did not carry through certain organizational tasks, the difference of the committee to any number of political problems which concerned the city organization must be given careful consideration. Three causes are responsible for this situation: 1) Indifference, or simply letting it ride; 2) dependence upon the national office to make political decisions for us, as the easier way out; and 3) the fact that the committee was made up to a very large extent of new people who had never served in that capacity before and who themselves were just learning the tasks of leadership. In the selection of the new city committee we must bear in mind the need for people able to give political guidance as well as activists.

## III - CHANGES IN ACTIVITY:

The most important change which has taken place in the manner of our operation is that we have gone over from the general to the concrete. That is - whereas a year ago the work of contacting, house-to-house work, distributions, etc., was conducted in a very loose fashion, without actual spots of concentration, today this has changed to a very large extent. Each of our special concentrations now has a very definite group of contacts, people who are seen regularly and who read our literature. There are several groups who attend classes for contacts regularly and the process of recruiting them into the organization has already started.

To a lesser degree, the same is true of our house-to-house canvassing. The general distribution of the paper has now been boiled down to distribution at given spots, contacts have been made, and at least two classes for contacts are now under way with good prospects for recruitment. These classes consist in the main of Negro workers who have been reading our press and who are interested in learning our program.

The distribution of the paper has now been boiled down to a point where we have steady readers, people who take the paper every week and from whom we have been getting subs.

In the course of the last 9 months, the clubs have become more and more self-reliant, something which has been forced upon us by necessity, but which has resulted in bringing even new people into active and responsible club leadership. Educational are now wholly conducted by the clubs

themselves, and even if there are complaints that the quality has somewhat deteriorated, the fact remains that comrades who in the past even hesitated to take the floor in discussion are now learning to prepare and lead such discussions themselves. The local club leadership are learning to cope with club problems, developing new methods of work, picking out points of concentration, finding teachers and directors from among their ranks, etc. The discussion at the convention, where each club should report concretely on its work and accomplishments, will reveal that a great deal of latent talent and ability of our membership has been forced into the open and is being utilized.

This is also borne out when we compare our accomplishments with the goals set at the last city convention: An examination of these in the light of what has happened will reveal that in the main we have carried them through, except in the field of Negro work (to be discussed later), and that where we failed it was due primarily to the fact that the goals were unrealistic.

1 - We recruited 30 new members, but we did not recruit any Negro members.

2 - Our distributions have remained at 8,000. The lack of distributors (we lost them at a faster rate than we had expected) made it impossible for us to reach the goal of 12,000.

3 - We aimed at 200 new subs. In the sub drive we got over 300. Before and since the national drive we got at least another hundred. Today our sub list in N.Y. is 513. Our N.I. subs have been picking up slowly, and we have now 87 subs.

4 - Our contacting work has been systematized and we now have a very definite group of contacts. Recruitment is under way.

5 - New club leaderships have been and are being developed.

6 - Public meetings held on the average of one a month.

7 - We did not hold as many city-wide socials as proposed.

8 - Our monthly income was well on the way of achieving the goal set, but the unforeseen rapid loss of heavy contributors and the reductions made as a result of the government tax has caused a serious slump in finances. Those remaining will now have to carry a heavier burden.

#### IV - INDUSTRIAL WORK:

In this field our work has definitely taken a turn for the better. In spite of the very serious losses suffered in some of the groups, we have been able to maintain them at more or less the same numerical strength, although we had to re-trench somewhat in the sense that we had to wait for the new

people to become integrated in the work. In any case, we did not have to start all over again, but merely to mark time for a little while and then to forge ahead again.

All kinds of difficulties have been encountered in this work, some avoidable (due to inexperience, ineptitude, timidity, modesty) and others outside our control (due to loss of members key people, overwhelming situations where our forces are too small to be as effective as we would like.) The three groups have generally improved their positions, have ironed out what their work shall consist of and have for a time now worked systematically at it. The results thus far include a contact class under the auspices of each of the three groups, with actual increases in party membership as a result. The creation of a definite group of contacts and prospects, organized into classes, studying our program, etc., is by far the greatest achievement in this field of work. In this respect the Q1 club is the model and pioneer. Taking advantage of a particularly favorable situation, the comrades there, very alert and on their toes, began a process of singling out individuals for contacts, talking to them, selling them subs to L.A. and N.I., bringing them down to public meetings, introducing them to leading people, and finally getting a contact class under way. The result thus far has been the recruitment of two very good members. The other two clubs engaged in this work are now following suit, while Q1 is already started in its second contact class.

#### V - EDUCATIONAL WORK:

Here the city committee started out by setting up a special department which functioned for a short while. The educational director met with club educational directors, issued several bulletins, arranged for some of the public meetings, etc. Soon afterward, however, the department had to be dissolved because it was impossible to replace the city educational director whose hours of work had made it impossible for him to function. After that, the work was carried out mainly through the city office committee.

There has been a general improvement in the educational work of the clubs, although most clubs have found it impossible to conduct regular and systematic classes. In stead discussions and educationals have been confined mainly to club meetings. Some of the clubs have introduced new methods of educational work (such as personal supervision, check-up on reading), and have involved an ever greater number of members in this activity. While in some clubs this is going along very well, in others, especially where the members are very active, insufficient emphasis has been put on the education of the membership.

Our public meetings, held about once a month, have more often than not been quite successful. Especially in the latter period, our members have gotten into the habit of bringing down their friends and contacts, which after all is the real purpose of these meetings.

The series of lectures on the war, given during the spring of this year, was successful and resulted in the recruitment of several members.

We failed in our attempt to organize a city-wide class in the ABC's needed for our new and younger members. Another attempt must be made to have such a class functioning at all times. Also, a problem that has been with us for a long time is the organization of a night workers' class. In this case, however, the comrades involved are older and more experienced ones and it is with them that the problem mainly lies.

We still have to establish a city educational department, and the new city committee will have to find a responsible person who can lead such work. Outlines must be issued, the clubs must be helped, and speakers and teachers trained.

#### VI - NEGRO WORK:

This field of work has proven to be the most difficult for our organization, and not without just cause. The solution to these difficulties will not be found in hocus-pocus schemes, but rather in a better understanding of the problems involved, and in getting the proper personnel to carry through such work. This is not the place for a lengthy thesis on Negro work, but what we can do is to relate our own forces, members, organization to what is possible for us in this field. We have had several experiences in Negro work, and while there is no absolute agreement with regard to these, several things stand out which everyone viewing the situation realistically must subscribe to.

Regardless of the evaluation we wish to place on our experiment with the friendly organization in Harlem, the fact remains that we had to give it up because of lack of personnel. Some found "principled" reasons against such experiments; others favored such organizations as experiments, but everyone saw at the time of the dissolution that we simply did not have the manpower to continue.

Secondly, it must be recognized that we are not in a position to do Negro work on a "mass scale," even if "mass" is reduced to our own size. This is true in almost all fields of our work where we have already had some initial successes - and it is especially true of our Negro work. An examination of the kind of work we have done will show where we failed and where we succeeded. Club by club, this is the picture:

#### BRONX:

Members engaged for a long time in house-to-house distribution of the paper (in a very concentrated Negro neighborhood) with the result that about 150 subs were obtained, contacts made, visited and revisited, some finally drawn into a class. The beginnings of a workingmen's committee achieved with the possibility of duplicating what was done in another

part of the country. The help of an N.C. member, who is also involved in numerous other activities, etc., was absolutely indispensable to make even this beginning.

The difficulties encountered by this club consisted of the fact that almost all the members are very young and found it hard to organize among older Negro workers. In spite of this, however, the best results thus far have been gotten from this club. Practically every comrade substituted hard, diligent, persistent work (not just an occasional evening) for experience, age and talk. The creation of the workingmen's group, the class, etc., though it involved actually one or two of the club members, is really the product of the work of the whole club.

B 3: This club was assigned to do what the Bronx was doing in its own area. Difficulties of club organization, long discussions of detail, and in many cases the reluctance and resistance of some of the members to do the initial, hard work, have delayed that club from getting its work under way. Today it has been organized and is concentrated in a given area, with the possibility of the early organization of a class for contacts.

Q2: This club, as a sort of side-line (it is a concentration club) started house-to-house work in a given spot in its area. At the present time it is running a class for contacts, again the result of the cooperative work of the entire club membership assigned to this activity.

HARLEM: For a long time this club was occupied with the friendly organization which drained its best members. When it became impossible to continue in this field, the club decided on a program of contacting, distribution of the paper, etc. At the present time the club is in the initial stages of the work, handicapped by lack of personnel. The special problems involved in the work in this section of the city makes it imperative that the whole question of the Harlem club be reviewed from the point of view of finding the proper people, even if few in number, to carry on. Unless the club can be re-organized on the basis of an active membership, each prepared to devote himself to this special field, it is doomed to stagnation and its value will be completely lost.

INDUSTRIAL: Our members in concentrations report an increasing number of Negroes in their particular places. Several contacts have already been made and are being drawn into classes, that is, the regular classes run for industrial contacts.

After the last city convention, a Negro department was set up. As in the case of others, this department too had to be dissolved and the work more or less handled through the city office. Whether such a department can be re-established will depend upon what the available forces are. In any case, Negro work is now being done as part of regular activity of several of the clubs and will have to be handled through



regular organizational channels. Continued contacting, establishment of classes in party program, recruitment of individual Negroes into the organization - these are the prerequisites for any serious work in the future.

#### VII - CONTACTING WORK:

There has been a decided improvement in the fact that this work is not systematized. However, a number of problems have arisen in the course of this work - namely, after a contact is made, what to do with him. From time to time comrades have come forth with proposals for the setting up of special organizations, committees, etc., to take care of contacts who were "not ripe" for recruitment. In almost every case the city committee has opposed this and proposed instead the organization of classes for contacts, involving them in work around the paper (getting subs, giving us the names of friends, bringing their friends to classes, etc.). The committee has felt that we are not in a position to organize housewives' committees, jobs committees, local newspapers built around neighborhood issues, etc., but that we could very realistically organize contacts into classes for the purpose of recruiting them into the organization. The fear that some comrades have that we will not be able to integrate new members into the organization is not at all justified. New members can be assigned to the regular club work, to work among his friends, to educational classes, etc.

#### VIII - LITERATURE:

In view of the loss of distributors, our ability to keep the distributions at the same level is an achievement. At the present time there are only 20 comrades who participate in this work, and of these only 10 go out twice a week. These comrades have been going out regularly now for nearly a year and a half in all kinds of weather and at all hours (including 6:30 A.M.) and the organization should certainly recognize what a wonderful job they have done in distributing 7,000 to 8,000 papers a week. We distribute now at 15 buildings throughout the city, and although there have been small cuts in the bundles distributed at each place because we now have steadier readers, the total number has not fallen off. We discontinued a distribution in one place, but substituted for this one another which is more important for us at the present time.

L.A. is making a real dent now at the points where we have regular distributions (witness the attacks in the Stalinist press, etc.) and is considered a serious factor in union affairs. Our subscription list is growing at a very satisfactory rate.

There is still a considerable lag with regard to the NI. Clubs do not yet utilize the magazine in making contacts, etc. Where it has been tried (Harlem, Q1, B2) it was found that the NI can be sold and that subs can be gotten for the magazine.

The sale of the India pamphlet has been only fair, but

at the rate that Plenty for All has been going, indications are that the N.Y. organization can have mass sales of any popular literature that is issued by the national office.

The N.Y. organization issued special leaflets for the sub drive, but these did not have the expected results. Subs had to be gotten through personal contact, as was shown both in the house-to-house work and in concentrations.

In addition to our regular distributions, we had several special distributions of our special L.A. issues - Harlem, ship, UAW, etc.

#### PERSPECTIVES:

The prospects for our work are very good, providing we learn to relate our strength to the tasks ahead of us. Our main job is to recruit - not by hundreds, but by two, threes and tens. This is altogether possible.

new

- 1 - Recruitment of 50 members before the next convention.

We have the prospect now of recruiting at least 10 industrial contacts in the very near future. Our contact classes will be the means of this recruitment. Since we plan to run these continuously, recruitment too should be a continuous process.

- 2 - Contacting

- a) house-to-house work to get subs. The entire club to be involved in this work.
- b) Aim of having a class for contacts in every area where we engage in this work.
- c) Each club to have a contact director who will keep careful records on contacts, etc.

- 3 - Industrial:

- a) building up of our 4th concentration.
- b) continuous classes for contacts, with aim of recruiting.
- c) special emphasis on Negro industrial contacts to be drawn into classes and into party.

- 4 - Negro work:

- a) continued work of distribution of paper, contacting, etc.
- b) aim to reach groups of Negro proletarians who can

be organized into classes for purposes of recruitment.

- c) Where we have contact with a group of Negro proletarians we consider with the N.O. the establishment of workingmen's committees.
- d) Self-education on Negro problems through club classes.

5 - Educational:

- a) Creation of educational department.
- b) Organization of city-wide classes, especially an ABC class.
- c) publication of bulletins, outlines, etc.

6 - Distributions: to be maintained at the present level.

7 - Literature: Increased sales of N.I., pamphlets, etc.

Plenty for All to have a sale of at least 2,000 in NYC.

SEPTEMBER, 1943

---R. CRAINE

Chicago, June 9th

Dear Max:

Now that the subscription campaign for LA has come to a successful conclusion, it is necessary, I think, to consider where the emphasis must be laid on party activity in the coming period.

I am quite certain that if the campaign be kept up indefinitely, that is to say if we consider that the number one job on which the greatest energy is to be spent, we could continue to garner a record number of subs. The campaign has shown that not only are there many workers interested in reading the paper when it is handed to them free but that a goodly number are willing to pay for it. All of which means that we must try to get subs.

However, it seems to me that the most important job before us is to try to make some organizational gains as a result of the campaign. I would even go so far as to say that if it means neglecting certain distributions or other sub getting activities in order to follow up our subscribers with the object of recruitment, this should be done.

The circulation of 50,000 LA's by our small organization is a magnificent accomplishment - just as is our successful sub drive. But we are not a publishing society or a circulation agency. And unless we make the necessary effort to recruit as a result of our activity we shall not be able to record any real gain. We cannot afford to make LA our Minneapolis - if you know what I mean.

It therefore seems logical to me that a sharp turn ought to be made in our activity. Every club should be instructed that its first job is to follow up every single subscriber; find out the level of his political development and decide whether he is material for the club or he can merely be counted as a friend. Then the maximum energy should be expended to ripen up the club prospects and try to recruit them in the shortest possible time. I would not at all be alarmed if as a consequence of this activity our circulation dropped a little for a while - we certainly are not trying to impress anybody.

I don't wish to labor the point any further especially since it seems to me rather self-evident. But I believe that this course should be taken as quickly as possible. I would appreciate it if you let me know either by a short note or in a letter to someone here what you think about my proposition.

Norman Sanders

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July 20, 1943, Chicago

Dear Al & Max:

For the past few months in Chicago, we engaged in and tried to extend our activities. We could perhaps best describe this period as a period of "activism", or, in any event, some serious efforts at it. This was a "policy" of sorts, yet a necessary one. The object or purpose was to show that despite the traditional pessimism, doubt and inertia that prevailed in Chicago for such a long time, there were nevertheless many useful tasks that every member could carry out.

For example, this was shown in one sphere in the very successful subscription efforts made for Labor Action; and also, in lesser extent, in other directions. For my part, I regarded the work in obtaining subscriptions, hitherto neglected, even as with other work, as elementary activity which any member could carry out successfully (merely by actually trying) and which does not even require many members to get substantial results. Even here, however, too few at first of even our meager forces participated in such simple tasks. However, gradually everyone was involved in varying degrees, but involved.

However, mere "activism" or activities mean nothing, or can mean nothing in the end. We realized this and consequently had always in mind the early establishment of a policy or orientation for the Branch and for each member for a given period, following the "activist" period above indicated. I would call such a proposed orientation (or policy, or program) for the next period as a political-organization period, which is to take precise and concrete, even if simple, form. If you can find a better name for the idea, that would be welcomed.

In the present period, our work has a limited, yet significant and potentially lasting character. I exclude from the characterization, "limited", the mass distribution of our press. Yet despite any limitations and difficulties, every member is in a position to carry out very serious work, perhaps the best he or she has yet contributed. This is provided, however, that a conception or policy is adopted; but moreover the readiness to carry out that conception actively in life.

Locally we have gone carefully over our names -- on Labor Action and New International subscription lists, etc. From these we have made a selection of a quantity of them. The selection of many of this group has been deliberate; that is, based on some knowledge and experience with these persons and a temporary evaluation of them as prospects for our movement in some manner. Some of these selections have also been arbitrary, having no other choice at this stage. In any event, so far as we could, we selected names, Negro and white, with an understanding of their potentialities; their present political level; the significance of their place of work; their union situation and their own possibilities in connection therewith; their special interests and activity, (as, for instance, in the Negro field) and so forth.

We have assigned each member one, two, three or more names. The number of such contacts assigned to a given member is dependent on the hours the member works; his or her own abilities and potentialities in this work, etc. For the next period of months, each member will have as his main political-organizational task the steady, uninterrupted contact and association with his or her contacts. The member has the obligation to carry through a job of political education of such contacts in all phases of our movement: our Party program; trade union work; education; how our Party functions; its role, etc. The object of these endeavors is to recruit such contacts into the organization on the basis of fundamental understanding of what our movement stands for in all respects. Or, unable to succeed within a given period in direct recruitment into the Party, at least to have gained an active sympathizer of our Party, one who will work with our Party in one or more of its many tasks, such as union work, support of our press, aiding our public gatherings, financial aid and so on.

Locally, we have gradually improved matters, though we have a considerable distance to go yet before we achieve what is necessary and entirely possible. I am hopeful it will not take us too long completely to bridge the gap between word and deed. That means that each person in Chicago will be carrying out this work, maybe in another couple of weeks. At first, for a period, only one, or two, of us did nearly all this "contact" work. This is a very poor name for the most important, fundamental work each member can now carry out. It is very desirable, though it can be done otherwise if there is no other way, to carry out this work in pairs. Experience and knowledge help very much in the development of relations with new, hitherto unknown workers. Since probably 75% or maybe considerably more of our members are inexperienced in this work, they will have to learn by observation and experience over an extended time how to conduct themselves; how to establish close and genuine relations with the worker; and come to be accepted as a matter of course by the contact as a serious revolutionist legitimately trying to win a fellow worker to his political ideas and organization. Where an inexperienced member is accompanied by an experienced or relatively experienced member, it helps the member a good deal, and obviously eases the task with the contact.

This work involves constant association and discussion of the member with the contact on all problems of our movement, general and particular; from the simplest questions to our basic ideology and program. This kind of work means that the member will come more quickly and better to know and to understand his fellow worker. Almost certainly, in due time it will result in knowing and living the life of the ordinary workingman. This will come about in several ways, perceptibly and imperceptibly. Coming to be at a given worker's home more and more frequently and vice versa will be a matter of course.

By this constant and frequent association with the worker-contact; by his better knowledge, his method of analysis of economic and political problems, our member more and more will be

able to demonstrate to the contact in a concrete way what the Party is; how the Party aids the working class in its immediate efforts; why, hence, each member, a new member is of great significance, to us; why we try so hard to recruit him with an eye for the immediate and ultimate interests of the worker.

Thus, this apparently simple work is a test for each member to be able to show a worker how the Party attempts to apply its program in life. The member will discover quickly enough if he or she just knows and grasps the Party program in words; or if he knows how to explain it to a factory worker in such a direct and clear manner as will cause the worker seriously to consider the role of the Party and his entry into it on a clear-cut political basis. And at this stage that is the kind of member who is desired. Or such a worker, while clearly now understanding the role and work of the Party may decide to remain a sympathizer for a period, but an active sympathizer.

Where NC people are in the field, it must be understood that this kind of work should occupy the greatest portion of their time by far; for it has the best possibilities at this time to bring new and better elements into our ranks. There is no guarantee for success in any effort. This method has the virtue that it is possible to work at in this period, and will probably bring some successes. For local organizers or NC people to address themselves primarily to the few Party members; giving them a line, policy or program of action without themselves carrying out and demonstrating the efficacy of any given program or policy, would be a false role for the local leader to enact at this time. The time when the local leader or NC field member will be primarily a political worker concerned with main lines of policy, etc. is a way off for us yet, so far as the great bulk of the organization is concerned at any rate.

It may perhaps be said that this is individual, not mass work. In a specious or formal sense, this is true. In a very real, living, dynamic sense, it is mass work. For what it really is, is the attempt of each member to win directly into our ranks, or much more closely to it, the best or most advanced elements, in fact or potentially. That is a most important task today. It is those elements or workers who have the best possibilities, because of their knowledge, their ability, their militancy, their presence in basic industries and unions, to become genuine leaders of the workers in their unions or other mass organizations. That is what each Party member in a mass organization strives for. We all know the importance of qualified individuals in a union, etc. Even the accretion of a few score <sup>such</sup> additional workers to our Party more than geometrically increases our influence and basis in the mass organizations of labor.

Since we cannot, as yet, win members to our Party in droves, we must gain them individually; but really gain and hold them because each one knows why and what he is joining. This work can be done now and accomplishments achieved. This political-educational-contact work gives us the greatest possibility or assuredness for considerable recruitment into our ranks in the

coming months. And recruitment is our NO.1 requirement--for political, organizational, financial, etc. imperative necessities; if we are to continue to struggle effectively against the stream; against the war; assure the maintenance and development of Labor Action; increase the scope of the New International; train our members in relations with workers; in union and other work. The quantities of member will come later, when the social situation will make it possible for our integrated, mass-thinking and mass-acting Party, individually and collectively, to win adherents in large numbers. This has been done by other revolutionary parties. This can be done by us--provided we do what we must today: increase our numbers considerably by the technique or orientation given in this letter.

Each member, in carrying out this political-contact work, must meet his contact a minimum of once weekly, and twice if possible, for two or more hours at a time. Very quickly the member will test his own ability and knowledge to speak the language of the worker without doing violence to, vulgarizing or toning down our political ideas. This would nullify the whole purpose of this work. If such a worker does finally join the organization, then it is also a test for the organization to see if it knows how to integrate, and keep and develop him in the organization.

One thing I have had re-affirmed in carrying out this work is not to proceed on the assumption that the other person is a dope, doesn't know much and can't learn quickly. The book or theoretical knowledge generally isn't there. However, if the member is candid, presents ideas straight and clear, tries to teach without being officious, essential conceptions make headway fast. Unfortunately Labor Action is insufficient; other literature--pamphlets, books, etc. are required. Members, by pooling pamphlets and books for this work, will be in a position to furnish the contact with the required more advanced reading in material, keeping in mind that workers won't have much time to read following their labors. However, the New International can and must be utilized. I have heard talk that the workers don't understand or won't read the New International. I don't think this is the case, using our experience as partial corroboration of this opinion. The group of selected workers certainly are much more likely to read the magazine, after a little time if not at first.

Without exception each current number of the magazine should be left with every contact. Any article should be indicated which might interest the contact. After two or three issues are left or sold (they can be sold), one will learn that the worker has read this or that article. He comes to take it for granted that the NI is part of his education. Through the magazine, the level of political knowledge and understanding is gradually raised.

Only in passing do I want to state the opinion that all our L.A. sub-getting and mass distribution of the paper will have, not ephemeral value by any means, but too general a propa-



gandistic and agitational value, unless from a selection of and close relationship with these readers, we can secure at least a few hundred new members within six months, more or less. In my view, a serious carrying out of the aforesaid policy or orientation is the only way we can achieve such a necessary goal at this time. Let me say, too, that there are other ways in which we can effectively utilize our enlarged subscription list and our mass distributions, but I do not here want to divert attention or emphasis from the main matter of political-organization contact work.

Permit me to point out further, as a matter of considerable importance, the intimate and immediate relation of this work and orientation to our general mass and union work. The persistent, assiduous carrying out of this political-educational work with these 300-600 plus worker contacts means that each member will be engaged in regular discussions of union work and policy with these union and factory workers. Obviously this is of mutual benefit.

Moreover--again skipping the details or procedure--through this political-union work, we also lay the foundations for the formation, soon or ultimate, of Union progressive groups, minority groups, a TUEL, so to speak, locally and nationally. This is a matter on which I hope to say more later on--as a problem and need now, that however can stand by itself for consideration. Likewise, I leave to another occasion the more precise relationship of Labor Action to the trade union militants, in respect to its more definite utilization as the unifying and guiding organ for the union militants. In any event, it does not require detail for you to accept the direct relationship of both Labor Action and prospective union progressive or minority groups to this basic political-organizational task.

All that I have indicated above applies to any elements we may find ourselves working with--unionists, Negroes, et al.

In considering the adoption of this orientation nationally, perhaps it is not out of place to point out that the larger part of our present membership are "politicals"--both the older ones and the relatively newer ones. That is, they are former students, have had their association with the socialist movement, Right to Left, and are largely factory workers by adaptation. I cannot say how exact this impression of mine is, but you will get the general idea. If through the carrying out of this policy, we recruit a considerable number of established workers in factories, this will create a new and much better situation and possibilities for the Party.

Of course, someone may ask, can all our members, developed and undeveloped, engage effectively in this work? Yes. And must. Differences in knowledge and experience will be very, very great. But each can and will learn. After all, they are Party members and that is something, indeed a great deal. This orientation, further, is the best way at this time to engage all members in serious external work, to develop their confidence and leadership in relation to the working class.

All that I have said does not conflict with any work that the membership is now engaged in. In fact, it only promotes these activities, more intensively, widely and intelligently. As for instance, our present trade union work, Negro work, sub-getting, propagandistic work, public meetings and so forth. Since this is self-evident, no more need be said on this score.

Through this method, we have gained our first new recruit in Chicago. He is a Negro worker; welder; CIO. Persistent discussion was carried on with him. It was worth the effort. I believe we have the kind of worker we want to recruit generally. That he is a Negro is incidental--I mean in the kind of talks we had had with him--but it will help otherwise too. He enters with an understanding of what he is joining, since we have discussed all aspects of the organization, general and particular, with him.

H. ALLEN