
Report of Campaign Committee, Workers' League Campaign, Dec. 1, 1921.

by Edward Lindgren

Three copies in the Comintern Archive, f. 515, op. 1, d. 78, ll. 11-29.

In submitting this report for the campaign committee of the Workers' League, it is necessary to offer severe criticism against the party organization as a whole, and particularly some of its units, for the lack of realism and understanding of the necessities contingent to carrying on of an effective campaign.

Especially is this true in regards to the form of organization of the party, which on account of its construction and consequent inadaptability for this form of activity, prevented quick action and loyal support on the part of the membership; the membership considering the Workers' League but an adventure that they were not at all compelled to support, but rather, that their activities in connection with it were of a voluntary nature.

The controversy in the organization itself contributed also largely to the chaotic and ineffective support, and helped to increase the hostile and indifferent attitude displayed by a large number of our units and members in their cooperation with the Workers' League.

This attitude of hostility and indifference showed itself immediately after the convention of the Workers' League, held on August 26 [1921], at which our candidates were nominated and a platform adopted, when the campaign committee started to organize our forces for a drive to secure the signatures necessary for placing our candidates on the ballot and to carry on an energetic campaign.

Because our form of organization prevented quick action, the first problem confronting the campaign committee was that of creating alongside the party organization an efficient organization which could function independent of the regular party organization during the campaign. This at the very start

was objected to by the Sub-District Committee, who seemed to be afraid that the League may be built up as a competing organization to that of the party. The substitute plan provided proved to be inefficient, as predicted, resulting in general chaos, lack of discipline and coordination.

Signatures.

The election laws of the State of New York provide that to place a candidate on the official ballot for a city office it is necessary to have at least 3,000 signatures of bona-fide electors; and for a borough office 1,500 signatures. This necessitated at least 2,000 signatures from each of the boroughs where we had candidates in the field.

The campaign committee very early realized the futility of depending upon the party organization to secure these signatures for a number of reasons: 1. Indifference; 2. Hostility; 3. Cowardice. A great number of our members were not only afraid to circulate the petitions, but they were also afraid to sign them. Fearing that by placing their names on the petitions it may in some way connect them with the party.

The result speaks for itself. During the five weeks campaign for signatures, the party membership secured altogether 886 signatures of the 6,000 necessary to place our candidates on the ballot.

The campaign committee, considering the prestige of the party at stake, accepted the recommendation of its secretary to put professional people on the job to get the required signatures. Ten men were put to work and in less than ten days the entire amount of signatures were collected; which proves conclusively that our party organization failed miserably. Not be-

cause it did not have the material to do the work with, but because of the reasons enumerated before. The work of these professional people, besides showing up the inefficiency of our organization, cost us the tidy sum of \$1,200.

Meetings.

One of the most important features of a political campaign is that of hall and street meetings. In this form of activity the organization also fell down. A number of sections, at the beginning, were opposed to meetings of all kinds. It required more than three weeks, of the nine weeks we had for campaign activities, to get these units to appoint committees to take charge of this work. At the best, there were at no time a competent committee functioning in any of our units.

The lack of discipline displayed by some of the members of these committees is beyond description. Members who had been appointed to take care of meetings attended to their assignments whenever it suited them. They disregarded all thoughts of system and order, caring little for the disappointment of speakers and the demoralizing effects it had on the campaign as a whole. Members of committees as well as other party members failed to restrain themselves, often without the slightest excuse getting into arguments with someone in the audience, thereby disrupting the meeting and not permitting the speakers to answer questions put to them.

But in spite of these drawbacks, and as an answer to those who shirked their duty and belittled the

efforts of those who sincerely participated in the work, and to show what might have been had the organization functioned properly, we held 265 meetings that we have record, out of the more than 400 meetings that were scheduled, with an average attendance of over 200 persons, creating an enthusiasm that will crystallize itself in the near future, if we are ready to take advantage of it, into a large following ready to support a party standing for a Soviet Government in the United States. Besides this, the campaign of the Workers' League helped to reduce the votes of the Socialist Party, which has been admitted by the *New York Call*, its official organ.

Out of the 265 meetings held that we know of, 160 were open air meetings of the Workers' League, 12 Workers' League hall meetings, 21 Workers' League Union meetings, 40 Unemployment Council meetings, and 32 meetings for the Friends of Soviet Russia and the American Labor Alliance [for Trade Relations with Russia]. Because of the chaotic condition in the party and the disinclination, for one reason or another, on the part of the party members to give assistance, all the hall meetings arranged by the Workers' Meeting were failures, both from the size of the audience and from a financial viewpoint.

The following is a table showing the number of meetings assigned to each unit; the number of meetings held; the number not known of because of the failure of speakers and committees to report; the number of meetings not held because of the absence of either speakers or committees; the number of meetings that were reported by committees and the number of meetings not reported by them:

<i>Assigned to</i>	<i>Assigned</i>	<i>Held</i>	<i>Meetings Not Held Because...</i>			<i>Reported</i>	<i>Not Reported</i>
			<i>Not Known</i>	<i>No Committee</i>	<i>No Speaker</i>		
A. Upper Downtown	27	20	---	3	4	20	7
B. Lower Downtown	43	17	14	9	3	7	36
C. Yorkville	18	8	3	4	3	1	17
D. Harlem	44	37	---	3	4	43	1
E. Bronx	44	20	2	12	10	26	18
F. Williamsberg	49	35	---	6	8	44	5
G. Brownsville	32	23	---	7	2	13	19
Unemployment	84	40	18	10	16	---	84
Indoor (all kinds)	65	65	---	---	---	65	---
** TOTAL **	404	265	37	54	48	219	185

Speakers.

With the organization of the Workers' League for active participation in the election, the committee was confronted with the problem of securing speakers for our campaign meetings. Up to that time no special department existed that had under its jurisdiction the control and assignment of speakers. In fact, there were no speakers lists of any kind. Attempts were made from time to time in the past, without success, to organize a speakers bureau. After several weeks of persistent efforts, the committee succeeded in getting together, without any assistance from the regular party organization, a list of speakers containing about 60 names. The majority of these speakers had never before taken part in a political campaign. Considering the work carried on by the committee under the unfavorable circumstances already described, and adding to this the raw material that it had to deal with in its speakers, instead of the criticism heaped on the heads of the committee, it deserves to be praised. If any criticism is due, it should be placed at the door of those members of the party who were qualified to speak, but as a rule, refused to give their services.

In a very short time the speakers bureau of the Workers' League became the recognized central point from which the various departments of the party drew

upon for speakers. During the campaign, in addition to the meetings arranged for the Workers' League, we also arranged meetings for the Unemployment Council, the Friends of Soviet Russia, and the American Labor Alliance [for Trade Relations with Russia]. At present we are supplying speakers for the Unemployment Council, Friends of Soviet Russia, the American Labor Alliance, and the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Conference.

But in this work also was found the reflection of the controversy in the party. Many speakers did not take the work seriously, disappointing meetings whenever it suited them. Many members of the party who were qualified to speak did not give their services because they were opposed to the Workers' League or had other excuses to offer for not speaking. With most of the speakers, as with the committees, the work of the Workers' League was at all times of a secondary nature.

The following is a table of speakers who gave their services during the campaign; the number of meetings assigned to each; the number of meetings attended by them; the number of meetings they failed to attend; the number of meetings, because reports are missing, that we are unable to classify; and the number of meetings they reported or did not report:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Meetings Assigned</i>	<i>Meetings...</i>			<i>Meetings...</i>	
		<i>Attended</i>	<i>Not Attended</i>	<i>Not Known</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Not Reported</i>
Israel Amter	52	39	13	---	50	2
S. Amter	11	10	1	---	11	---
P. Antoniuk	4	2	2	---	4	---
M. Avasieff	2	---	---	2	---	2
Raymond Baker	6	3	3	---	6	---
L. Baum	36	28	8	---	36	---
Alexander Bittelman	4	---	4	---	---	4
H. Bourgin	2	2	---	---	2	---
J. Brahdly	17	8	9	---	17	---
F. Briehl	12	9	3	---	12	---
Charles Brower	34	29	5	---	34	---
A. Carrol	25	2	---	23	2	23
Julius Codkind	13	13	---	---	13	---
J. Deutsch	31	7	7	17	14	17
M. Federman	7	3	4	---	7	---
M. Garwitt	8	5	3	---	8	---
Katharine Gitlow	10	9	1	---	11	---
B. Gorson	11	---	---	11	---	11
Louis Hendin	7	1	6	---	2	5

<i>Name</i>	<i>Meetings Assigned</i>	<i>Meetings...</i>			<i>Meetings...</i>	
		<i>Attended</i>	<i>Not Attended</i>	<i>Not Known</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Not Reported</i>
J. Harlen	11	9	2	---	11	---
Jacob W. Hartman	7	4	3	---	3	4
Louis Hendin	7	1	6	---	2	5
Fanny Jacobs	8	5	3	---	8	---
Nathan Kaplan	22	20	2	---	22	---
J. Kelly	20	13	7	---	20	---
M. Landy	31	---	---	31	---	31
Max Lerner	11	---	---	11	---	11
Edward Lindgren	12	9	3	---	12	---
Noah London	15	7	8	---	15	---
Ludwig Lore	4	---	4	---	---	4
Charles Lucas	2	---	2	---	2	---
William Mackenzie	1	1	---	---	1	---
J. McCarthy	20	9	11	---	20	---
Thomas J. O'Flaherty	14	2	12	---	14	---
Edgar Owens	24	13	11	---	24	---
Jeannette D. Pearl	14	11	3	---	14	---
Julia Stewart Poyntz	14	8	6	---	14	---
M. Plason	2	2	---	---	2	---
A. Plotkin	11	10	1	---	11	---
Ray Ragozin	33	6	4	23	10	23
H. Ratner	24	12	12	---	24	---
G. Rubin	1	---	1	---	---	1
M. Rubin	19	8	11	---	19	---
Max Salzman	20	15	5	---	20	---
J.R. Scheftel	4	4	---	---	4	---
M. Schulman	12	8	4	---	12	---
A. Seigel	23	13	10	---	23	---
A. Shapiro	18	7	11	---	18	---
L. Shelly	4	3	1	---	4	---
A.R. Solomon	18	7	2	9	9	9
Rose Pastor Stokes	11	4	7	---	11	---
M. Touster	23	9	14	---	23	---
Albert Verblin [Goldman]	22	14	8	---	22	---
Phillip Weintraub	12	---	---	12	---	12
N. Wilkes	8	3	5	---	8	---
S. Zarkin	13	11	2	---	13	---
H. Zukowsky	5	1	4	---	4	---

Literature.

Very little can be reported about this form of activity. We issued only one leaflet during the campaign — The Manifesto and Platform of the Workers' League. Five hundred thousand copies were printed and distributed, with the exception of 10,000 which are in this office. Much criticism was offered by our members against the immediate planks of the platform and for this reason considerable trouble was encountered in its distribution, as many of our members re-

fused to take them out.

Other leaflets were in preparation, but owing to our financial condition it was impossible to get them out.

Finances.

The most serious problem that the committee had to deal with was that of finances. The Workers' League started its campaign without funds. Every unit of the party was circularized with campaign lists and

stamps. Several units at first refused to handle these lists and stamps altogether. Others handled them half-heartedly. Even at the end of the campaign there were no great efforts made by any of them to get funds. The result is that at this time the League is indebted to the amount of \$3,000.

The major part of the funds used during the campaign were borrowed from party members and sympathetic organizations. The next largest [source] came from sympathetic organizations and individuals as donations. The total income from the party members does not exceed \$600.00.

In this respect it may be noted and severely criticized the lack of cooperation from our individual units. Many hundred dollars more could have been secured from labor organizations had they functioned properly. Many members of these units looked upon the Workers' League as a nuisance, to be deplored, instead of working for its success.

Attached herewith is a financial statement from the formation of the Workers' League campaign committee up to and including the 12th of November 1921.

Income.

Donations from Labor Organizations and Individuals	\$ 192.50
Campaign Lists, Labor Organizations	203.10
Campaign Lists, Workers League Branches	131.57
Campaign Stamps, Workers League Branches	221.10
Collections at Hall Meetings	809.36
Collections at Street Meetings	115.01
Sale of Flowers at Hall Meetings	169.44
Loans	1,945.00
Miscellaneous	60.25
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 3,847.33

Expenses.

Printing	\$ 524.75
Postage	142.62
Office Supplies	67.28
Office Rent	60.00
Hall Rent	619.00
Advertisements	27.60
Wages	610.00
Loans Returned	375.00
For Flowers	34.00

Election Expenses	1,052.95
Legal Expenses	200.00
Expressage	24.20
Signs	27.00
Carfares	5.72
Miscellaneous	10.73
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 3,780.85
Balance on hand, November 12, 1921	66.40

Liabilities.

Printing	\$ 750.00
Advertising	70.50
Legal Service	617.09
Loans	1,570.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$3,007.59

Cooperation with Other Organizations.

About three weeks before election, at the request of the Workers' Council, the campaign committee called a conference of all the organizations in the city that had endorsed the Manifesto and Platform of the Workers' League and its candidates. The following organizations responded:

- Workers' League
- Jewish Socialist Federation
- Arbeiter Bildungs Centrale
- Left Poale Zion
- Irish-American Labor League
- Finnish Socialist Federation
- Greek Socialist Union
- Workers' Council
- African Blood Brotherhood
- Hungarian Federation
- Independent Young Socialist League

At the start the conference looked promising, but the net results were nil. The affiliated organizations held four mass meetings as far as we now. Up to date \$20.00 has been the total financial support received. Altogether, it was a whole lot of noise about nothing, and to a certain degree it diminished our own activities. Expecting that actual work was to be done by these organizations. If future cooperation by these organizations will be of a similar nature, we will not

gain very much by it.

Election Results.

While at this time it is impossible to give definite figures as to the vote cast for the candidates of the Workers' League, it is safe to say that no more than 5,000 persons voted for our candidates. Several reasons may be given, all of them a more or less contributory factor.

1. It cannot be denied that the removal of the names of [Benjamin] Gitlow and [Harry] Winitsky from the ballot and the publicity given to this removal by the Socialist press, without mentioning that our party had other candidates in the field, prevented a great number of our sympathizers from knowing that we had other candidates.

A mistake was made at the very beginning of the campaign in giving all publicity to these two comrades, entirely ignoring the other candidates. We tried to make up for this mistake after their names had been

removed, but it was too late to get results.

2. The campaign was started too late, and lack of cooperation on the part of our units made it impossible to cover the city with our meetings and literature. Due to this our party was not advertised well enough to bring out those who undoubtedly would have supported our candidates had they been informed.

3. Many of our party members who were actively engaged in the campaign work have admitted that they did not register, or if registered did not vote. If this were true with the active members, how much more can this be said about those of our members who were either afraid or indifferent to the work carried on by the Workers' League? It is safe to say that not more than one-half of our members who were qualified to vote actually did so, which meant the loss of the votes of the people that they could have influenced as well.

The following is a table, showing by boroughs the votes that our candidates received. This is taken from the police returns. When the official count is tabulated it is likely that the number will be increased.

Vote Cast for Workers' League Candidates, November 8, 1921.†

<i>Borough</i>	<i>Gitlow</i>	<i>Lindgren</i>	<i>Winitsky</i>	<i>Stokes</i>	<i>Hartman</i>	<i>Brower</i>
Manhattan	451	876	155	1,759	---	---
Bronx	169	407	88	---	536	---
Brooklyn	126	702	98	---	---	654
Queens	82	322	67	---	---	---
Richmond	---	18	2	---	---	---
TOTAL	828	2,423‡	410	1,759	536	654

†- The following were the offices sought by the candidates of the Workers' League in the November 8, 1921 election in New York City: Mayor — Benjamin Gitlow; Controller — Edward Lindgren; President of the Board of Aldermen — Harry Winitsky; President of Borough of Manhattan — Rose Pastor Stokes; President of Borough of Brooklyn — Charles Brower; President of Borough of Bronx — Jacob Hartman.

‡- Error in source document, sum should be 2,325.

Total Number of Persons Who Voted for the Candidates of the Workers' League.

Manhattan	1,759 (Stokes)
Bronx	536 (Hartman)
Brooklyn	702 (Lindgren)
Queens	322 (Lindgren)
Richmond	18 (Lindgren)
Total Persons Voting	3,337

Recommendations.

1. That an appropriation of \$1,000.00 be made for the Workers' League, and that \$500.00 be turned over immediately.

2. That the party investigates the conduct of the campaign committees of the various sections, with the end in view of ascertaining and disciplining those responsible for the chaotic conduct of activities in connection with the Workers' League campaign.

3. That the party serves notice on the speakers that in the future they must keep meetings assigned to them, and that no excuse will be accepted that is not of a nature making it impossible for them to attend. Then notice must be sent to the person in charge.

4. In order to become an official party in the state of New York, it is necessary that we put a candidate for Governor in the field at the next coming election. This candidate must receive at least 15,000 votes.

To place a candidate for Governor on the ballot, a petition signed by at least 12,000 electors is required. This means, if we are to make sure, about 20,000 signatures. These signatures must be secured in such manner that no less than 50 signatures come from each of the counties of the state.

It will cost at least \$10,000.00 if this work is done by professional people. By starting at once an organization campaign we can save at least \$5,000.00. We should get at once 10 comrades who can be relied upon to have themselves appointed as notary publics.

It must be made clear to them that they may have to cover any part of the state, and none should be depended upon who is not free to go and who is not capable of giving a good line of talk (not necessarily a communist talk). We shall then take stock of our up-state organizations and have them prepare voluntary workers for this purpose. By proper organization, with the connections we now have, it is possible to cover nearly two-thirds of the counties of the state with voluntary workers.

A comrade understanding this work should be placed in the field not later than March 1st [1922], for the purpose of whipping our machinery into shape. This will take him about two or three months. By that time we can begin to circulate our petitions and we will also be in a position to know where the services of our notary publics will be needed.

The expenses from placing this comrade in the field will amount to about \$1,000.00. But this will be a big saving in the end. This comrade, if he is a speaker, can cover a part of his expenses while on the road by having the organizations arrange meetings for him.

Fraternally Submitted,

Edward Lindgren,
Secretary.

December 1, 1921.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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