

SEP 15 1976



Discussion Bulletin/LOS ANGELES LOCAL

Number 1
September 1976

CONTENTS

Page

THE LOS ANGELES LOCAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN 2
by Rich Finkel, Long Beach branch

LOS ANGELES LOCAL TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES 3
Approved by the Los Angeles Local Executive
Committee

THE LOS ANGELES LOCAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN

by Rich Finkel, Long Beach branch

The purpose of the Los Angeles Local Discussion Bulletin is to provide a means by which all members can circulate their views on local perspectives to the entire membership prior to the local convention on Saturday and Sunday afternoon, September 25-26, 1976.

Articles may be submitted for publication in the bulletin during a two-week period, beginning on September 7, 1976. The final date for submission of articles is September 21, 1976. Contributions can either be turned in at branch meetings during this period or at the local office, 4040 W. Washington Blvd., #11, Los Angeles, Ca 90018. Any articles mailed to the local office must be received during the period the bulletin is open.

To facilitate production of the bulletin, all contributions should be typed in triple-space format on white paper. Each article should list on the first page: title, author, author's branch, and date submitted.

Provisional members may submit articles to the discussion bulletin, which is analogous to voice in a branch discussion. Only full party members, however, are eligible to run as candidates for the branch delegation to the local convention.

September 7, 1976

LOS ANGELES LOCAL TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES

Approved by the Los Angeles Local Executive Committee

Introduction

The so-called recovery from the economic depression of 1974-75 has brought little relief to working people in this country. Nearly eight million people officially remain out of work. Food prices, utility rates, rent and taxes continue to rise, while wage gains are curtailed and working conditions get worse. Cutbacks and retrenchment are the order of the day, from the slashing of social services in New York City to the defeat of the child-care referendum in San Francisco.

Here in Los Angeles, where the "urban crisis" has not reached the intensity of Detroit or New York, the first skirmishes are being fought. The Board of Supervisors has already cut off funding to the regional air pollution control program and threatens new layoffs and cutbacks. The RTD directors are turning the two-week-old bus strike into a political confrontation, virtually refusing to negotiate with the unions.

Together with this economic offensive, the American rulers have sought to turn back the gains won during the 1960s and early 1970s and to prevent their expansion. Affirmative action, busing for equal education, and abortion rights are placed on the chopping block by Ford and Carter, as their differences narrow in the course of the campaign. A massive propaganda barrage seeks to convince us that our problems are caused by Blacks, Chicanos, women, and other "trouble-makers" who simply won't accept things the way they've always been. And then to make things worse, we are told that the "illegal alien invasion" threatens "American" jobs and social benefits.

But Blacks, Chicanos and women are responding to this offensive-- from the desegregation battle in Boston to the May 16 national march in Springfield for the Equal Rights Amendment to the August 19 San Antonio rally of 1500 in defense of Mario Cantú and Ignacio Pérez.

Sustained high unemployment, cutbacks in social services and new attacks against the labor movement are part of an ongoing drive initiated by the ruling class in 1971 to boost corporate profits and U.S. competitiveness with Western Europe and Japan. Even though the labor bureaucracy has failed to respond to this offensive, more and more workers are feeling the effects and increasing numbers are seeking ways to fight back.

The struggles being fought by the labor movement today -- from the New York hospital strikes to the just concluded confrontation in rubber -- are largely defensive and preludes to larger battles

to come. Combined with the impact of the Black, Chicano and women's liberation movements and the continuing revelations of government corruption and CIA/FBI crimes, these skirmishes are helping fuel the first stages of the radicalization of the American working class as a whole.

Reorganization of the Los Angeles local

The August 1975 convention of the Socialist Workers Party initiated a turn toward the new struggles that were emerging, particularly those among the most oppressed layers of the working class. As a result, the Los Angeles local has gone through a process of discussion, political evaluation and reorganization during the past year to carry out this turn.

During most of 1975, the Los Angeles local was organized in two large branches -- a Westside branch of 45 members located in Santa Monica and the Central-East branch of 70 located near MacArthur Park in central L.A. Immediately after the August convention, a move by the Westside branch to the Crenshaw district was carried out to facilitate work in the Black community. Nonetheless, the large size of the branches and the proximity of their locations made it difficult for the party to fully utilize and develop every member and to intervene aggressively in the various struggles occurring in the greater Los Angeles area. Further steps were necessary, and in January 1976 the local was reorganized into four branches.

In the initial selection of branch locations, the local attempted to choose the key political centers in Los Angeles county. The Black community in Pasadena was engaged in a long-standing battle for desegregation of the schools; the Crenshaw area was a center for the major Black organizations in the city of Los Angeles; East Los Angeles was a national center for the Chicano movement; and Long Beach, the fifth largest city in California, had sizable Black and Chicano communities, several important industries, and a large university where there was a viable Young Socialist Alliance.

During the spring, the local began the process of sinking roots in these new communities. We also established a small San Fernando Valley branch in May following the outbreak of a struggle against a killing by the cops in Pacoima, and an assessment of other openings in the Valley's Chicano community, women's liberation movement, and at Cal State Northridge.

We participated in the Pasadena Black community's defense of the busing plan and spoke out against the L.A. School Board's motion opposing busing. In East Los Angeles, we helped build the National Chicano Forum and attracted a number of Chicano activists from

throughout the city to our forums. We helped initiate and organize the May 15 L.A. solidarity march and rally for the ERA. Our members active in the Service Employees International Union intervened in the annual county negotiations, opposing the Board of Supervisors' threatened layoffs and cutbacks in health services.

Through our election campaign, we were able to involve activists and leaders of various struggles at successful county-wide rallies. About 175 people came to the April 10 dinner and rally for Willie Mae Reid and 200 turned out to hear Peter Camejo at the June 26 rally launching the California ballot drive.

The local was able to shoulder the central responsibilities for the Arizona ballot drive, and through this work helped lay the basis for a new party branch in Phoenix. On the other hand, the local fell short of its spring Militant subscription drive as a result of organizational weaknesses in both the new branches and the local as a whole.

Although the branches began the process of regularizing their functioning and establishing leadership teams, we need to strengthen the basic branch institutions in the course of the fall. A biweekly forum series, regular bookstore hours, weekly educationals and increased financial sustainers are goals that each branch should strive to achieve.

As a result of the local's reorganization, every member has had the opportunity to take on new challenges and responsibilities -- from becoming a branch organizer to organizing a campaign social. The greater ability of the local to tap its potential was demonstrated beyond expectation by the tremendous outpouring of time, energy and funds throughout the California ballot drive.

Camejo, Reid and Musa in '76!

Winning a place on the California ballot will be a historic victory for the Socialist Workers Party, qualitatively increasing the attractiveness of our campaign to the millions of voters we will reach in this state and throughout the nation. We now need to organize ourselves to take full advantage of this giant step forward.

As we enter the fall, there are only eight weeks left in the presidential and senatorial campaigns. Camejo and Reid will each be in Los Angeles for just one day and Musa will spend less than three days in each branch area. Because of this, every member will have to become a campaign spokesperson.

We can expect the greatest receptivity to our campaign this fall, and we should plan an ambitious effort to distribute tens of thousands of the Bill of Rights for Working People and the new Musa

campaign brochure. The Militant subscription drive will bring weekly news of the socialist campaign to thousands of new readers. Each of the branches will be able to systematically reach out in their areas, canvassing door-to-door, putting up campaign posters, setting up street-corner literature tables, and holding meetings at community centers and the homes of campaign supporters.

We should make special efforts to obtain media coverage for our national candidates and local spokespeople. Endorsement work should be systematically organized to win signatures for the national campaign ads, helping us reach out into the Black and Chicano communities and to activists in the trade union, women's liberation and student movements.

Capitalizing on the massive publicity around our suit against government harassment will be an important aspect of the fall election campaign. As new developments occur, each branch should be ready to respond in their area, seeking interviews, calling in statements to the media, etc. The Political Rights Defense Fund is now planning another large-scale Hollywood fundraising cocktail party that can help us further expand support for our suit.

Campaign literature tables should have collection cans on them and prominent mailing lists. One of our major goals should be to involve new people in working with us on the final leg of our campaign. By involving campaign supporters in regular activities, we can help maximize our growth in the course of this massive socialist propaganda effort.

Black struggle

The racist attacks against school desegregation continue to spearhead the drive to roll back Black rights. If the right to an equal education through busing is curtailed, other gains won by the civil rights movement will soon come under fire. Already the Supreme Court decision reinstating the death penalty and the violent racist assaults in Chicago signify new attacks against the Black community.

Boston remains the center of this national fight in defense of school desegregation, and we must offer whatever assistance we can to that struggle. Here in Los Angeles, the school board is under a court order to draw up a desegregation plan. Racist forces have already begun to mobilize under the banner of "Bustop", a San Fernando Valley-based group that aims to "prevent forced busing." In Pasadena, the desegregation plan faces new threats following a Supreme Court decision permitting the resegregation of the Pasadena schools.

Together with the Student Coalition Against Racism, we will

want to carry out an educational campaign in defense of busing and the desegregation of the Boston, L.A. and Pasadena schools. The projected October tour by national SCAR leader Hattie McCutcheon will serve as a focus for launching Student Coalitions on the campuses.

This fall we should work with SCAR in requesting funding on the campuses to send representatives to the national anti-racist conference in Boston November 20-21. We will also continue to collaborate with SCAR on local issues, ranging from campus cutbacks to exposing the frame-up of two American Indian activists in Ventura County.

The school board elections next spring in both L.A. and Pasadena will provide opportunities for the party to field candidates to speak out in defense of the Black community's right to an equal education.

We should respond to other issues facing the Black community and participate in broadly-sponsored actions whenever possible. These will range from picket lines in defense of the surging rebellion by the Black majorities of South Africa and Zimbabwe to protests against police brutality in Pacoima to fundraisers for Gary Tyler and Phillip Allen. We want to participate in the meetings and activities of the major Black groups in each area, such as the NAACP or SCLC.

Chicano struggle

The Chicano community will face big challenges this fall: from the battle for the passage of Proposition 14 to mounting a response to the deportations of mexicano workers to fighting for bilingual-bicultural education. The Los Angeles local will look for opportunities to become involved in these struggles and help win Chicano activists to the SWP.

The passage of the United Farmworkers' Proposition 14 would signal a major advance in the struggle to allow tens of thousands of farmworkers to choose the union of their choice in the face of a combined assault by the growers, Teamster bureaucracy, and the state legislature. The SWP fully supports Proposition 14 and each of our headquarters should have banners supporting the initiative and large supplies of bumper stickers, posters and other UFW literature.

On the college campuses, the YSA plans to participate in or help initiate Farmworker support committees that can mobilize students to campaign for Proposition 14. In the unions, our members should propose financial contributions, help distribute UFW literature, and wherever possible initiate and participate in UFW support

committees. Each branch should also contact the UFW's downtown office to see how they can aid community outreach work in their area.

The July demonstration of 300 in Santa Ana and the massive August rally in San Antonio are indications of growing Chicano opposition to the deportation of mexicano workers. The constant raids by la migra (the immigration service) are bitterly resented and have the potential to spark large protests. We should carry out an educational campaign opposing the deportations and seek to involve Chicano organizations such as campus MECHAs, Raza Unida chapters and, if possible, CASA in forums, picket lines or other protests.

We support activities by Chicanas to fight against the special oppression facing them -- from forced sterilization to the lowest wages of all workers. In publicizing Anna Nieto-Gomez' fight for tenure in the Chicano Studies Department at Cal State Northridge, we can educate on the contribution that Chicana feminism can make to the struggle for Chicano liberation.

The Los Angeles local should assume major responsibility in the national drive to win Chicano endorsements for Peter Camejo, the first person of Latin-American descent ever to run for President. These endorsements are being sought for a national ad that will be placed in the major Chicano movement and commercial press. In addition, the Virginia Garza campaign for Congress will aid us in taking our ideas to the Chicano community.

This fall, the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) is planning an intensified campaign against the repression in Argentina and Brazil. Our efforts in defense of Latin American political prisoners can help save the lives of our co-thinkers and other victims of dictatorial regimes. In this vital work, we should seek to maximize Chicano and Latino participation.

Women's liberation

The drive for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment is the most pressing task facing the women's liberation movement. The possibilities for organizing mass actions in support of the ERA this fall, however, are limited because of the pressure of the elections. Many feminists, for example, mistakenly look toward the election of liberal politicians as the main way to support the ERA, rather than the building of independent actions.

In Los Angeles, the Coalition for the ERA was successful in organizing the May solidarity action in cooperation with several NOW chapters, but there is little basis for a similar action this fall.

Instead we believe our support for the ERA can most successfully be carried out through our participation in the activities of various NOW chapters, the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), Comisi6n Femenil Mexicana Nacional and other union and women's organizations. There will also be openings on the campuses to organize educational activities in support of the ERA.

We will look for openings to become involved in actions around other issues affecting women, such as child care, abortion and forced sterilization. We should also plan educational activities around the question of feminism and socialism to aid our efforts to win new women to the SWP.

Labor movement

At this time, a class-struggle left wing has not yet developed within the Labor movement. By taking the key social and political issues into the unions, we can help lay the groundwork for building such an alternative leadership.

An important development for us to participate in is Steelworkers Fightback, led by Ed Sadlowski. We fully support this insurgent movement to democratize the United Steelworkers union. At the recent constitutional convention of the USWA, the Sadlowski forces focused on: 1) the membership's right to vote on contracts; 2) the undemocratic dues and nominations procedures; and 3) opposing Abel's national no-strike pact.

The base of Sadlowski's challenge to Abel is a growing layer of radicalizing steelworkers whom we want to reach. To effectively participate in this movement, we have to be in the union. In addition, through sales, campaigning and the work of our members in other unions and on the campuses, we can help win support for the Sadlowski campaign.

Our county workers fraction should continue to meet as required, and we will continue our participation in CLUW. We should seek to establish a fraction in UTLA, the major teachers union, which unfortunately has taken a stand against the desegregation of the teaching staffs. We want to build fractions in several industrial unions where there are opportunities for political work--especially in steel and auto.

Each of the branches should select one of two workplaces as sites for regular sales and campaign activities -- even if we begin at only one site in each area. In particular, we should try to establish regular sales at several steel factories because of the Militant's coverage of the Sadlowski campaign.

Young Socialist Alliance

Since the party's turn toward the developing working class radicalization, there has been a greater differentiation between party and YSA activities. Many young workers have been released from the YSA to concentrate on party activities, and the YSA has reorganized itself into campus and high school chapters. This changed relationship, however, has increased the need for close political collaboration between the party and the YSA.

This fall the party will work with the YSA on building several important tours. Sylvia Zapata, a Chicana YSA leader and national campaign youth coordinator, will tour L.A. in early October. We then hope to bring Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, the internationally known Irish revolutionary, to L.A. in November if we are successful in raising the required honoraria.

The L.A. local will continue its support and collaboration with the YSA in regional work. The establishment of a Phoenix branch is the latest example of the interrelation between YSA regional work and party expansion. Party members can play an invaluable educational role by getting to know YSA members and preparing classes for the YSA. In addition, the local should work with the YSA to win its free speech fight at Pasadena Community College, which would then facilitate our movement's expansion onto other community colleges.

Echo Park branch

The Local Executive Committee proposes that the City Convention authorize the setting up of a small Echo Park branch immediately following the convention. This proposal is intended to enable the party to begin regular political work in the north-central area of the city and to better utilize our forces through trimming the size of the Crenshaw and E.L.A. branches.

Echo Park is a largely Chicano and white working-class area with a rapidly growing mexicano population and a small Puerto Rican community. It borders on Silverlake, where there is also a large Latino population (including right-wing Gusanos), Chinatown, and a Black community directly to its south. A branch centered in Echo Park would also have direct access to downtown, Little Tokyo, and the union hall district near McArthur Park.

Echo Park has been an important center for the Chicano movement, and the branch's major orientation would be toward the Chicano community there. Currently there is a large and viable farmworkers support movement, a Chicana services center where the Anna Nieto-Gomez defense committee meets, and a Chicano community center on Sunset that was the center for mobilizing community opposition to the LAPD murder of Timothy Grandpre last summer.

A second branch located within the central L.A. area would be of

value in carrying out general political work in women's liberation and other citywide organizations. In addition, the Echo Park branch could help build joint activities at L.A. City College with the Crenshaw branch.

Although the branch would not orient toward opponent and counter-culturalist organizations in the area, regular sales and forums would enable us to attract and educate young people from this milieu. We can also expect that a branch in this part of L.A. would attract activists from other areas, such as Hollywood and mid-Wilshire.

One potential problem in establishing an Echo Park branch is that it could rapidly become extremely large through transfers from other branches. Currently 45 members of the local live closer to Echo Park than any other area where there is a branch. But an Echo Park branch even approaching that size could only be an albatross for the local.

Branch assignments should continue to be determined by the overall political needs of the local and not by where individual members happen to live. The LEC is recommending that the Echo Park branch be limited to 15 members, which would be sufficient to explore the political life of the area. We want to encourage branch members to make plans if possible to move into their areas to enable our cadre to participate fully in the life of the new branches.

1,000 Militant subscriptions

As part of a national effort to win 20,000 new readers for the Militant, the LEC proposes that the L.A. local accept a fall subscription drive quota of 1,000. Winning these new readers for our press will help each of the branches better get to know the communities where they are located and to reach the activists we are working with on the job and in various struggles.

One thousand new readers of the Militant in L.A. county will help build support for our election campaigns and the struggles we are involved in. To meet this goal a well-organized campaign by each of the branches and full membership participation will be required.

To launch the drive, the local has organized a four-day campaign and subscription blitz September 9-11. Another major push should be planned for October 14-17 to help build the October 23 local-wide rally for Peter Camejo and to win Militant subscribers for the final stretch of the campaign.

To achieve our quota, the branches will need to accept goals that total to at least 1,000. The initial proposed division is: Crenshaw - 225; Pasadena - 185; San Fernando Valley - 175; E. L.A. - 165; Long Beach - 150; and Echo Park (if approved) - 100 for a total of 1,000. Each branch should of course aim to meet its goal. But through close cooperation among the branches, we can readjust the goals if necessary to ensure that the local as a whole reaches its national quota.

Sam Manuel for Mayor

The primary election for Mayor of Los Angeles is scheduled for April 5, 1977 and State Senator Alan Robbins of "Bustop" fame, has already launched his bid to unseat Mayor Bradley. The local convention can help us initiate a discussion of the municipal elections which will become a major focus for the local following the November national elections.

The LEC is proposing that the party run Sam Manuel for mayor and that we announce his candidacy in October. A central issue in the mayoral campaign will be busing and education, and by launching our campaign early, we can forcefully intervene in this debate. By running a leading Black spokesperson, we will be able to most effectively challenge Bradley's four-year record of responsibility for a segregated school system, the unchecked reign of terror by the LAPD, and staggering levels of unemployment among Blacks and Chicanos.

Through the Manuel campaign, we will be able to deepen our roots in the L.A. Black community and aid our growth. The Manuel campaign can also be a vehicle for probing Watts as a possible area for party expansion.

Winning new members

At the national convention, the party launched its first membership drive since the late 1940s. This campaign to win new members will be completely interwoven with all areas of party activity and will flow from them. Even though there are no local quotas, the party nationally is seeking to win 300 new members by the end of December.

The party's growth and expansion are its central priority and recruitment activities must be consciously thought-out and directed by the branch leaderships. In addition to recruitment activities, the branches must also take specific steps to integrate and educate the new members who are joining the party.

Most new party members will not have been educated in the YSA. Increasingly, their first contact with socialist ideas will be through the party, and our educational program should be geared to help assimilate these people as rapidly as possible. Every branch should have an ongoing class for contacts and new members, aimed at people with little or no prior knowledge of socialist ideas.

Educationals on current political topics should become part of every branch's activity. The local should consider organizing an educational weekend this fall like the previously successful weekends on feminism and socialism and Chicano nationalism. The LEC can help coordinate the overall educational program of the

local, including possible classes on topics such as the history of the SWP and various aspects of our Marxist program.

This fall offers the SWP unprecedented opportunities -- from our largest presidential and senatorial election campaigns and the media coverage of our lawsuit, to the Militant sub drive and openings in the mass movements. We will be coming into contact with tens of thousands of potential party members across the country. Our job is to fully take advantage of this situation.

September 7, 1976