

C O P Y C O P Y C O P Y

REPORT OF THE DUBOIS CLUBS ORGANIZATIONAL SECRETARY, Terence Hallinan

In the process of growing up any organization goes through a number of stages. Unless it is able to master each of them and move on to the next level, it will cease growing and eventually begin to wither away.

The DuBois Clubs has reached such a plateau. We have mastered the stage of initiating chapters. Now unless we are able to consolidate those chapters and develop a long-range perspective for our organization, than we shall suffer the fate of so many other shortlived groups of the past.

The first step in this direction is to formalize our organization. At the Chicago Conference it was recommended that membership cards be printed by the National Office. This has been done and such cards are now available. According to the proposal, local clubs are to undertake a widespread sale of these cards, the only criterion for membership being a willingness to pay the required fee. In this manner, we can find out exactly how many members we have and who they are and can begin building a mass membership organization. Once five membership cards from any chapter have been received by the National Office a charter will be sent to that club. Where no chapter is operating, people can still join as independent individuals.

By using four cards, one of which is to be retained by the applicant with the others going to the local, regional and National offices, we hope to be giving structure to the organization at several levels. Area committees should be established in the major population centers to direct the growth and activity of clubs in that area. It was recommended at the last NCC that club chairman serve on these committees. The regional offices must be becoming more than just a roving coordinator. Regional coordinators should begin to concentrate on one or two major centers in their area and establish a regional office in one city. The area and regional conferences scheduled for the Christmas and Easter holidays must be taken seriously and carried out with a maximum of advanced preparation.

One thing which became clear during the discussion of structure at the NCC is that we have seriously overextended ourselves. The tremendous growth we have experienced this first year has been almost purely a horizontal one. We have not really reached new people and have not begun to tap the masses of American youth. The potentials for organizing chapters have been so great that there has been a tendency to set up chapters throughout an area without building any strong center. Similarly, within the big cities chapters have been splintered into a number of small localized groups which are incapable of developing or carrying out program. Although much of this has been motivated by the worthy desire of reaching more, and particularly working class, young people it has had the

DBC Clubs Organizational Report2

opposite effect. The truth is that such people are reached by what you are doing, rather than by setting up little chapters in their neighborhoods. When at least one chapter is operating really effectively in each area then you will get the kind of spontaneous growth needed to build the DuBois Clubs into a mass organization.

We must begin to consolidate chapters and to concentrate our efforts, even at the cost of some local clubs and individuals. Experience has shown us that in order for a DuBois Club chapter to operate effectively it should have at least 50 members. It is then possible to set up committees in several special interest fields. Each of these committees should develop and organize activity in their respective areas, checking back with the executive only for approval and to gain the participation of other members. The president's job will then consist of supervising the work of these committees, paying special attention to those that are having problems.

While our organization places its principal stress on the action aspects of our program, work must also be carried on in the educational and social fields. Unless there is an educational program that can develop the people contacted on the basis of your activity (and remember it is exactly when the club is operating most successfully that it is going to attract people who are not socialists) and a social program to make it enjoyable to remain in the club the chapter will become one-sided and cease to function effectively.

The key to mastering this new stage we are entering is program. But program cannot be developed without organization. The National Office is beginning to turn out materials which can help local chapters gain direction and sustain activity. But, this is a two-way street. To develop really meaningful program on a national level we must learn about the experiences of different areas and the results of attempts to put the program developed into practice. This means communications must be strengthened and that someone in each chapter must accept the responsibility for steady communication with the National Office.

We are today in a position to become the most important organization in the Movement, because we are developing the program that everyone else is looking for. But, this will not happen by itself. It will only happen if people in this organization are willing to get out and fight to see that it does. And they can only do that if they have an effective structured and operating organization behind them.