

MEMORANDUM FROM GEORGE BREITMAN ON
1969 MAYORALTY CAMPAIGNS
January 11, 1969

The main thing I was trying to say in my discussion with the New York branch organizer was that the radicalization of recent years is considerably wider than we have said so far, or than our '68 election campaign took for granted.

About students there is no disagreement. Probably there is more about the teachers, especially after the recent year-end conventions, every one of which featured radical caucuses, much bigger than the radicals expected, and where the conservative leaders made all kinds of concessions because they thought the radicals might be strong enough to take over.

But it extends far beyond the campus. Consider what is happening in the churches (except maybe the Jewish). The most dramatic is in the Catholic, which outside the South is most working class in composition. Priests and nuns are telling their bosses, whom they swore to revere, to go to the wall. They are organizing and defying the bishops and calling them racists to boot and rejecting their "replies." This is radicalization if anything is. I do not think it could occur on such a scale without evoking echoes among the parishioners, especially the young ones, some of whom must be workers. The birth control debate supports this belief. The same thing is happening in several Protestant denominations, although there it's not so unprecedented.

Or let's take civil service workers and unions. When I left for Detroit in 1954 there wasn't a single teacher or welfare worker or other city employee in all of New York who would dare to identify himself as a radical openly, and if he did he wouldn't have been able to find any fellow worker who would even give him his ear. Now they walk around on the job with Black Panther buttons and wouldn't rate a second look by identifying themselves as radicals.

In the 30s it was considered radical for a union to strike against the government. Now the subway workers and sanitation workers unions are ready to do it at the drop of a hat, and the teachers more often than that. Hospital workers strike, and welfare workers vote against the war, and even the cops and firemen carry on "job actions" within certain limits. Well, when you talk about these unions you are talking about hundreds of thousands of people in New York City. If we add together these facts I think we can come up with some new answers.

I hardly mention the black radicalization, which is most pronounced among the youth. But it has infected the Spanish-speaking population, now undergoing its own radicalization, and will probably reach the other minorities. Blacks plus Spanish-speaking equal over 30 million people.

I don't mean all black adults are radicalized yet, but it's spreading. The inside story about why the New York teachers called off their most recent reactionary strike was that blacks and Puerto Ricans inside the labor movement were organizing and threatening a struggle over the issue. You know about DRUM, the Chicago bus drivers, etc.

I also will just list the antiwar GIs and the high school students, for whom '69 is the year they will bust loose, as signs of radicalization going into working class sectors.

If the above is valid, then I think two things follow and should be considered:

(1) In New York there are several hundreds of thousands, maybe even millions, who have been radicalized, and who will respond to a well-planned and executed election campaign and program with which they can identify. (This would mean a much broader campaign than the essentially two-point one we had in '68.)

(2) It may be time for us to dust off and review the whole transitional program and bring it up to date and put it into action. (This will mean an internal educational effort too because most of our members are not too familiar with the concept.)

BREITMAN ON 1969 NEW YORK MAYORALITY CAMPAIGN --
 EDITED DISCUSSION WITH NEW YORK BRANCH ORGANIZER JANUARY 1, 1969

Breitman: Well, I've got some ideas or impressions about some of these things that you've mentioned. I think that this can be the most important election campaign we've ever had if we approach it in the right way, if we put the energy into it that we put into the presidential campaign. I think that we have sufficient membership now to do something on a local level which wasn't the case four years ago, the last time there was a mayoralty election.

We should start the mayoralty campaign as soon as possible -- late January if that's the earliest it can be done. If it can be done earlier, I think we should begin earlier. We get our main licks in in an election campaign before the others really begin campaigning. At some point that's not going to be true but we never can know in advance. And we can do the best part of our campaigning before or by the primaries. Then if we're able to continue after that, if we make an impact, then we'll do more later. But the sooner we start on it the more we'll get out of the campaign in relation to all our political opponents. But you shouldn't begin it until you're ready, not just begin it for the sake of beginning it.

One of the things I would recommend is that you organize a full-scale discussion of the campaign by the branch membership before it's actually launched. Let the leadership, the exec., discuss it and work out whatever plans it can before then, but

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make a real effort to get the membership to participate in the discussion of what is to be done. Not only because that's a way of increasing their participation in the campaign, but because I have the idea that they may be able to come up with approaches and angles that may not have been thought of.

I suggest, if it's possible, that you set aside a whole day conference on it, or a whole afternoon on a weekend just on this one thing. Bring in whatever plans you have from the leadership, but inform the members in advance that the floor is going to be open and time is going to be available for them to present whatever thinking they have on the subject, both on the political and organization aspects. Whatever ideas they have to offer will be eagerly listened to at that point. And if possible make it a joint meeting of the party and the youth so that both organizations are involved.

Thus we can get from the beginning whatever ideas comrades have acquired as a result of the election campaign that's just been completed. These are ideas which nobody has yet thought through or which may have passed the attention of the comrades on the exec. These ideas will be listened to and taken into account in the more concrete planning which will take place after the conference.

The meeting should be well organized. The members should be encouraged in advance of the meeting to think about the question. They shouldn't just come there cold to listen to the ideas of the exec. They should be urged, told what the agenda is and what specifically will be taken up and that the leadership is very eager to hear all the different ideas that have been circulating in the minds of the members, including the newest members. And then actual time will be available, no matter how long it takes, even if it's a three or four hour meeting.

The Youthful Character of the Mayoralty Campaign

One of the things -- not the only thing, or not necessarily the main thing -- I think we should aim at in this campaign that would be different from the mayoralty campaign of 1965 would be to give it a youth character. That is, from the beginning we should plan to try to organize young people as supporters of the campaign, high schoolers in particular are what I'm thinking about. Youth who would not necessarily belong to the YSA but would come together in high school groups and whom we would try to organize on a high school by high school basis as members of the high school something for Boutelle. And really plan the campaign to utilize the energy and activities of young people, in distributing literature, holding meetings and rallies, all kinds of things.

The high school cadres of the election campaign -- or whatever you want to call them -- will be a new feature of our election campaigns if we carry it off, and one of the most important ones

for us to try to organize. And that will require attention from the candidates right from the very beginning. That is, instead of waiting until everything is organized in the campaign and then going out and trying to get high school supporters, I would be inclined to turn the thing around a little and begin at that end.

I have not thoroughly thought this out. But I feel that in Paul we have one of the best possible candidates that we could have for such a campaign. His appeal to young people is going to be tremendous here in the city....Organized efforts with and through Paul to create a high school apparatus or a set of high school apparatuses of people who will be dedicated in 1969 to get him elected will produce real results in the form of a group of non-YSA people who will work on the campaign.

I probably should not have brought this up so early in the discussion, but it's high in the order of my thinking. As I said, it may not be practical. But I would like to see that undertaken. The high school term ends some time in January. So I think that if we were to do this, we should undertake the thing right away at the beginning of the new term -- Feb. 1st, if that's the first day of the new term. Teams should go out to the schools where we don't have contacts. We should try to hold rallies, even in the winter time, where Paul will talk to people to sign them up and so on. And to create high school campus groups with a common name that will indicate what they're doing.

Some Youthful Candidates

I think that the youth theme should be very strong throughout the campaign, even in terms of the selection of the candidates. What is the legal age to run for city council? These are things we should find out as quickly as possible, the legal requirements not only for city council but for all the other offices that are open. You want to find out all the offices that are open. It would be good if we could run a whole bunch of local city council candidates of people who are in their twenties.

These candidates would become the youth party in this election campaign -- certainly the Democrats and Republicans can't do that. It's not at all likely that others will do that. We could distinguish ourselves from other candidates by selecting out an obviously youthful group of people, if possible. Paul is youthful looking and youthful acting. But he would be the patriarch in my conception of the slate. Young people who are qualified. We would pick out some city council offices and one of the things that we would state is that we want to take the decision-making out of the hands of the old political parties. We want to retire the hacks of capitalism. We want them replaced with a young, imaginative, radical leadership -- that kind of thing.

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I'm not saying we shouldn't have anybody over the age of thirty as a candidate. You'll decide how many candidates you want to run on the basis of what is feasible. It would be good if you could run somebody like Dick Garza because of the appeal he would have to Spanish-speaking people. And he doesn't look that old. But I would think of things consciously in this way. I don't think there's anything at all opportunistic or unprincipled about doing this.

The Campaign Endorsers

I'm mentioning these things not in the order of their importance, but as I've thought of them. One of the things I think we should do in this campaign is go out and appeal to the maximum number of people to endorse our candidate. Not be at all backward about it and not be at all tardy about it. But put everybody else on the spot right from the beginning as soon as we have our program and candidate and made our announcement. Ask all the other political tendencies in the radical movement, in the form of direct approaches, for their endorsement. I would say, here's what I stand for. These are things that you, despite the differences we've had on many questions, agree with. And certainly you agree with what I say on this more than you will agree with Lindsay. Be aggressive about it; be self-confident. Act as though it's our right to get endorsed by them. It's not just a maneuver. We're trying to put up a ticket that is going to represent all of the radical forces in the city. Therefore we approach them with self-confidence and almost demand it of them. This will create problems for those who don't even want to respond. It won't create any problems for us because we are trying to unite the maximum forces around a program against the capitalist parties.

I don't mean go only to the CP. I mean just about anybody. I would go to PL. I know what their answer is going to be, but I would put them on the spot by demanding that they endorse us. And let them take the onus of saying no. This then will either propel them to run their own candidates or else it will put them in a very untenable position with their sympathizers. Not only PL. I'm thinking of other groups that we've never thought of seeking endorsement from, like SDS. Why shouldn't we go to SDS and ask them to endorse Boutelle? They're for revolutionary socialism; we're for revolutionary socialism. He's the only candidate on the ballot who is for revolutionary socialism, so we're asking for their endorsement.

This will be a way of bringing the campaign into every single organization in the radical movement. You're either for or against Boutelle. That's the way it becomes. That's a very advantageous position to be in if you have the ability to carry it through.

I think we have neglected this aspect of it in some of our election campaigns and this is the perfect one in which to do it. We will have the best possible kind of a candidate and the best possible political positions.

I'm inclined to think I would even go to Peace and Freedom Party and Freedom and Peace Party, or whatever remains of those organizations. PFP is supposed to be continuing and they're saying how important it is to run local candidates. Well, let them run local candidates, but we want their endorsement. I think it's permissible for us to ask for their endorsement.

And to the labor movement. I would be in favor of Boutelle addressing an appeal to the Central Labor Council asking them to endorse him as the only union man running for Mayor. Despite the fact that they have differences with him, they also have differences with the people they usually endorse. Even ask permission to appear before a meeting of the Council to ask that they endorse him. And if they won't endorse him, then put out a piece of literature on the thing. You know, I appealed to the leadership and they turned a cold shoulder to my appeal. Now I'm appealing to the members of the unions.

Similarly, to the black organizations -- to CORE, even the groups we know are not going to endorse him. We take the offensive on this kind of thing in demanding their support. I shouldn't exaggerate it; it's not that important. But it's something that we haven't done that we can do effectively. And it will improve our morale and certainly improve our ability to get attention. Even when you have to be rejected, attention has to be paid to you. They have to say we're not going to endorse him and they have to discuss it. That's a way of getting discussion about the fact that you're running as well as other things.

The Political Character of the Campaign

Now as to the political nature of the campaign. It is hard for me to visualize it completely. Everything I say here is more tentative than the other things.

I don't think that the war is going to be the central issue that we made it in the presidential campaign. Of course, it's got to be an important part of it. We demand the end of the war so that funds can be released to help solve the problems of NYC. But a lot will depend on what the capitalist class is going to do about these negotiations and how the war goes and so on. I wouldn't be surprised if the war recedes as an issue. And I would urge the comrades to consider that as a possibility and to make it, say, one of the two main issues in the campaign. It can be tied in with almost everything else, but not in the same form

as we did during the election campaign where it almost blotted out other questions.

My feeling is that this is a year in which economic questions are coming to the fore. Inflation is very bad. It's hitting every working man. And the economic consequences of the war and the effects of inflation indicate perhaps that what we should concentrate on in this campaign is a sort of revived transitional program with a heavy emphasis on economic action and platform.

What should be the central theme of an election campaign? That's something that's going to take a lot of thought and maybe we won't have it entirely thought out by the time the election campaign begins. Or maybe by the time the election campaign begins we'll have one and later we'll be able to think of another and better one.

The idea which I used to try to emphasize all the time in local campaigns was that of letting the people run their own city, letting the people control their own local destiny. This can be sloganized in various ways. But it happens to fit in very well with the theme of the radicalizations that are occurring. That is, the idea of the black people controlling the black community fits in with this very well. But the idea also should be let the working people control the city of New York, let the working people control their community. The idea of letting the students have a voice in the schools which is going to grow in the high schools, that also fits into it. Here we are in a city where the city is controlled by the capitalist class, by Wall St., by Rockefellers and all that crowd. Let's run a campaign to take political control away from these representatives of this capitalist class and put it in the hands of the people so they can control their own community, control their own schools, control their own housing program, control the police department.

If you can find the right formula that would encompass all these things, then you have a common theme which is also the theme, incidentally, of the transitional program. The transitional program tries to mobilize people into action to control things -- to control their jobs, to control their economy, to control prices, and so on. So I would incline to a broader kind of a thing than just the war issue or even just the economic effects of the war.

And then concretize this control concept around a number of different slogans and conceptions which are really part of the transitional program. Black control of the black communities is part of the transitional program. An independent black political party is part of the transitional program. A labor party is a part of the transitional program. The right kind of a taxation program can become part of the transitional program. Let the people take

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over the housing program in this city. Tear down the slums and build new houses through the city government. Where do you get the money from? Taxes. Tax the corporations. End all taxes on incomes under \$7500 a year or whatever figure. That was the last figure we used. Maybe it's inadequate but it comes out to \$150 a week which is the so-called decency budget.

What I'm thinking of then is a change in the election campaign to more of an emphasis on the total transitional program. Not to drop the struggle against the war, of course. That would be foremost and it may even be major, but I'm not sure about that. And the black control of the black community would be a harmonious part of the thing. It is something for black people. We've got something for white people also. We've got ideas relating to housing, jobs and prices and things like that. Control of prices, price committees. And try to bring it up to date and apply it in this particular situation. Well, that's a part of it.

I repeat I'm not positive about this -- and it should be made concrete. We have a program say of 10 or 12 or 15 transitional points. That would be our program under some general slogan which will concretize the whole thing, symbolize all the different points.

We can put out a basic piece of literature which merely lists these 12, 15 transitional slogans or demands. We can also put out literature about each of the particular ones. Not necessarily every single one of them, but about some of them. One about the schools; one about a housing program; one about pollution.

One of the things that annoys me about the Militant is the way it ignores these kinds of questions. I'm going to propose to them that they begin to pay attention to them. The pollution problem in New York is a real problem affecting the very breath that every single person in this city takes. There have been all kinds of studies. We need specialists not only in decentralization but in these other things. They should find out what pollution does to you, and what we say should be done about it. I saw something a couple of weeks ago about how it affects the mental processes of the population. They discovered -- they had laboratory tests on rats -- they found if they breathe this atmosphere they become dull, unable to solve other problems that other rats find quite easy. There are all kinds of projects going on in this city. For instance, they're going to build a lower east side expressway which will increase pollution three times what it is now and which would probably kill some thousands of people in the first year. Get an understanding of what the issues are.

The Audience of the 1969 Mayoralty Campaign

This brings us to the question of who the audience is. The)

audience of the 1968 campaign was mainly students and mainly college students. I think that in this campaign we can realistically expect to reach people beyond that if we want to make the effort. We can reach working class people. I'm thinking mainly, of course, of working class people. That is, high school kids, GIs, and young workers.

Maybe it's too much, maybe we're not quite prepared to carry on a propaganda election campaign geared to a broader audience. But I think that we may be and that if we don't seize it this time it's going to be a couple years before we get an opportunity to do it. We should try it. It may even be that we'll be able to recruit some workers out of this thing -- that may be within the realm of possibility. And this is going to pose all kinds of new problems for the branch, the way the branch functions as well as the way the election campaign is conducted.

For example, one of the things that I would see as possible through the course of this election campaign is that we'll be reaching some thousands of people whom we haven't reached before and we'll be telling them something about socialism. And there will be some kind of a response on their part, an interest in learning perhaps more about it. I think that the party will have to be prepared to take advantage of this. Not only to be able to sell literature to such people, but to have classes. I can see the possibility, if the campaign goes off well, of having a nightly class at the headquarters on what is socialism to which people will be invited to come all the time. Every night there's an introductory class on what is socialism at 873 Broadway. Come down at 8:00 and get a chance to meet some people and talk with them.

An organized effort to reach out to some new strata, especially the young would be involved. You know, not having any illusions about masses of people, but being prepared to find some response among young people, some curiosity to find out more about the program that this candidate or slate is putting forward. That would require a decision -- maybe I'm overanticipating the response, but I think there would be some. That would require organizing the party on a different basis, having a different attitude toward people coming around, a different use of the headquarters.

The literature. One thing we should try to do is make the Militant the campaign paper. I didn't conceal my dissatisfaction with the Militant as a campaign paper in 1968. It was inadequate as a campaign paper whatever its other qualities were. In 1969, I don't think the Militant will be able to devote all that much attention to a local campaign that it didn't devote to a national campaign in 1968. But I think that the Militant can be planned to

be a central organ of the election campaign.

If nothing else, the back page of the Militant can be a campaign page. We can sell the paper from the back page. And we can have a continuous and running treatment of the issues of the campaign in the Militant. At least, this would be most desirable if we can do that. Then that would give us a paper to sell. That would give these non-party people who try to gather around us in the election campaign something to do. They can get out on the streets and sell the Militant which has this headline story about Paul Boutelle and what he's saying this week. That would be a way of increasing the circulation of the Militant. That would be the best thing, although the whole Militant is not going to be turned into a New York paper.

In addition, perhaps we could try to get out a pamphlet. Sixteen pages, 8 pages, 20 pages. I would be in favor of getting out a standard pamphlet with the program or with a statement about the program by the candidates which could be sold throughout the entire election campaign at a relatively low price, certainly not higher than 25 cents. And which we would try to get real wide sales of. That is, in the tens of thousands. And it would be part of the supporters' activities to distribute and sell this. A basic pamphlet on what we want to do to make New York a livable place for working people, whatever title. Or, "I, Paul Boutelle" --- something like that, personalizing it, maybe. But a single pamphlet explaining our transitional program as we draw it up to this point. Then you have leaflets from time to time on different issues and on the different things that occur.

But the two basic things would be a fundamental pamphlet, cheap, for mass sale and the Militant, the main voice of the campaign. Organize the thing early so that by the time the spring comes and the weather allows it you can look forward to a real, large scale campaigning activity in the streets. Get a station wagon or something with a sound system, paint some signs on it and go around the city and just barnstorm in front of plants, in front of schools. A kind of campaign car activity, a mobile campaign where we go all around the city, where you have trained speakers, maybe get some sympathizers to perform some skits.

My idea, you know, is really to get radicals to endorse us. Then, after having endorsed us, to help us. Not just to put their name on a sheet of paper, but to demand more of them than that. To demand that they do something. For example, go to professors and ask them to endorse us, but also ask them to write out ideas for us, to make suggestions to us. I'd try to go to some of these radical professors at Columbia who've been advising CORE and other groups like that and try and get them to endorse us. And if not, ask them to help us work out a concrete housing program, whatever it is that would be within their field. Attempt to reach out and to get other people to feel that this is their campaign

by not just signing their name or giving a few dollars, but getting them to do something in the course of the campaign so that other people besides ourselves are spreading it.

Some of these ideas are probably not feasible. I hope you're taking them in the spirit in which they're extended. Just think about them if they seem worthwhile and don't bother with them if they don't.

The main problem is the political problem. That is, deciding on what kind of an approach we're going to make to the election campaign, what the slogans will be, what the demands will be. And that will help to form the other concrete tasks.

One of the things we should hammer away on is we want to lower the voting age. We always just say something about it and drop it. We want to lower the voting age to 18. Boutelle can make a separate talk or something like that on why we want it done.

I think it would be a very good idea if Jeff (Mackler) would be a candidate. You should find out as quickly as possible about the legal requirements because we don't want to end up with this write-in kind of stuff we had this last time, Derrick being our candidate in such and such a district and we never really made an effort to get him on the ballot. There's no reason for that. A write-in campaign is something we don't need when we're able to get people on the ballot. If it's too much work to get all of them on, then, all right, we'll have fewer candidates.

Jon Britton (New York organizer): Yes, this needs to be investigated further. But it appears as though we can get as many as five candidates on the ballot. Three of those are city-wide and two are Manhattan candidates.

Breitman: I think, though, that this time we'll be able to get more petitions that we've ever gotten before. And if you get these high school brigades you can get more people to do petitioning work. The capitalist candidates utilize these high school kids to get their petitions. But we don't have to worry too much about that. We can do it too if they can do it. How many high school members do you have now in New York?

Jon Britton: Active members, about five in Manhattan, one in Long Island, and two or three junior high in addition. Obviously the high school area is one where there exists a great deal of potential and we have to think out how to most effectively reach the high school students. One idea is a separate high school campaign committee. Another idea was running a high school student as a symbolic candidate, not attempting to get them on the ballot because they wouldn't be qualified to be on the ballot. My initial reaction to that idea is that it wouldn't be taken seriously.

Breitman: But a campaign committee, or a high school group campaigning for a candidate is taken seriously because that's done now. To have their own apparatus would give them the feeling of self-determination in the campaign; make their own plans, jointly with others, but also independently about how they want to reach out into the high schools. Try to get official high school status for such committees and gear in debates and have forums at or near the high schools.

On the college campuses we could organize groups, campaign committees for our slate. Paul will be very attractive to these people when they meet him. He'll be able to evoke their enthusiasm and their activity.

Jon Britton: We may want to run a special fund drive. There was no special internal fund drive in the course of the past campaign. It was difficult to meet those expenses out of the routine income sources of the branch. There were fairly successful efforts to raise money outside from our periphery and through film showings and things of that kind. But it didn't meet the needs.

Breitman: You can spend a good deal on an election campaign if you set out to do it. I think there should be a considerable amount spent this time because I think that the results would be probably better for us than any previous campaign we've had. We should plan the thing very closely, don't utilize the money unnecessarily; try to come out even at the end of it.

Make yourself a budget. I don't think this was done with the national campaign. You may not adhere to it; you may be above or below it. But it's a working thing to guide you when you're departing too much from it, then you know there will be problems. And you won't have to wait until after the campaign is over to know you're going to be in debt. We don't want to go flat broke out of an election campaign. But we want to try to raise the necessary amount to get the maximum returns. A budget, even a modest budget, is important in reminding people that you don't have unlimited funds to work with and you're trying to utilize everything you have in the most effective way.

Jon Britton: I'm interested in the point you made about aggressively seeking endorsements and following up endorsements to involve those who endorse the campaign. I got the impression that you anticipate that if this were done that we would have considerable success in gaining such endorsement even from groups or political tendencies that haven't in the past.

Breitman: If I gave that impression let me correct it. I don't know that we'll get that many organizationally. We probably won't. Most groups will support somebody else or run their own candidates. But a way to reach them, the members, the ranks of the organization is by making a formal appeal to the organization

which then has to discuss it. Some of the people in the organization will be struck by the reasonableness of endorsing. They discuss it among themselves. You're able to win a few people every time you make such an effort, to win the sympathy of people who feel that you're constructive, that you're not sectarian. It helps to combat all of the images which our enemies try to create about us. We're reasonable. We're not asking them to agree with everything. We're asking for a unified struggle against the capitalist enemy in the election campaign. Out of it, some individuals, then, will become supporters.

I think that we'll be able to get more independent individuals to endorse us than ever before because the choice is going to be rather limited. There's going to be some conservative hack as the Democratic candidate. And there'll probably be Lindsay for the Republicans. And there is likely to be a conservative. And then there will be us. And that's what it will amount to. Maybe somebody else will get on the ballot.

The choice, if we present a positive or radical program around transitional demands will be very attractive, will be different from everybody else on the ballot. And a number of people who became radicalized during this last campaign -- who went through the McCarthy experience and all that -- will be friendly toward us. I think some fairly large endorsers lists can be made up. But the idea would be, if possible, to try to get them to do something beyond that.

I'm very impressed with what Ron has been doing with these artists for the SMC. Try to get some of them to do things for Boutelle. When people sign, they expect to do something; they expect to be asked to do something. If we can think out the things they can do -- maybe they can run a meeting in their house, or arrange a meeting on campus for us of other professors to whom Boutelle could talk. You know, we should always be trying to find something for these people to do and asking them to do it. In that way, we may get several hundreds of people who will do something for us besides give their name and pull a lever. It won't be a mass phenomenon, but I think it would be greater than we've had in the past. There were almost 100 people like that who signed in the 1965 campaign. I think it can be several hundred more if we go about it right.

Paul's role will be very important in the whole campaign. The planning of his talks, the discussions about them, the understanding about how to handle all the different problems that come up -- how we answer the sectarian arguments about voting doesn't mean anything. All these things should be thought out and talked over and worked on.

You should have a live campaign committee that would meet

frequently and not only plan new things but look back at what has been done in the previous week or two and attempt to be critical about it and to learn from whatever mistakes we make. If we don't do as well as we could, learn how to improve what we do. And getting a free and easy-going spirit about the campaign so that the whole membership feels this is really the thing we should be doing and this is the thing that every member in some way or another is contributing to. It's not that there's just a campaign committee, but that I, as a rank and file member of the party, feel I'm part of it. If I have any ideas, people will listen to them. If I want to propose an action that's reasonable, somebody will think about it and try to organize it. So that you get a real wide participation.

Jon Britton: I have a question on what might possibly be a significant political issue, given the large Jewish population in New York. And that is the role of the Middle East situation which could blow up and could become a big issue in New York.

Breitman: If it does, we would have to take it into account and include it. The blowing up of the Middle East situation isn't going to help our election campaign because our position will be relatively unpopular. It will enhance our prestige among a minority, but it will not make it easier for us to get our ideas across. It will be a distraction and a diversion. But if it occurs it will be politically necessary to take the party position and try to explain it in the most effective way.

Jon Britton: One thing that comes to mind conceiving of this campaign as revolving around people controlling their government and institutions, prices, taxes, etc. -- the transitional program approach to the campaign -- is the possibility of also linking up these concepts with the developments that are going on in Europe now with the student radicalization, the student struggles, the labor struggles, the French events, Czech situation.

Breitman: It could be. We generally use a local campaign as a pretext just to discuss the national issues, because the national issues are predominant. But it makes me unhappy when we do that because there are so many burning local issues which people feel more directly and more closely. If we know how to present them, we can have a radicalizing impact on them equal to these national issues. Maybe I have some kind of a defect in my vision on this point. But to discuss what you're going to do in a single city you've got to discuss the national questions.

I mean, where's the money going to come from for a housing program? For one thing, you've got to have a national housing program. But until you have a national program, then you should have a city housing program. This city government has the power -- this

is what some of those professors could look up for us, so that when Paul talks about some of these things he knows what he's talking about -- to go onto 10th St. and to tell the landlords to live up to the housing code. And if the landlords don't do it, they have the power to fine them so heavily that, in effect, they can take over that property. Then if they want to they can raze the property and build new houses there. They don't have to wait for the national government to do it. They can begin a housing program to house the poor people who need it now. And they can tax the corporations in the city to help pay for it, to begin it.

But, of course, you're not going to have socialism in one city. This is something we've got to explain. What socialism is, what socialism would do, and we'll have to explain that you can't accomplish socialism in one city, but you can take the preparatory steps. The preparatory steps towards socialism are to take the power away from the capitalist class in a particular city and begin to use that political power in that particular city for the benefit of the working people instead of for the benefit of the capitalists. That you can do, even while capitalism still exists. And you can begin to change the conditions of life under which people live in that particular city. This is very much related to the question of black control of the black community. What can you do if you take over the community? There's a lot of misunderstanding about this. The black work fraction is doing some work on this; eventually, we hope that we'll be able to give a forum; Tony is working on it. And that eventually this forum will be translated into a pamphlet. But it's the same issues; what can you do in a single city?

You know, there was the Paris Commune. And what we're saying is, let the people of New York take the city away from the capitalists politically and begin to use whatever laws there are for the benefit of the people. And then let's concretize. What are we going to do about the police department? And what are we going to do about the schools? Now what is possible about housing? If we have a housing program, we can put all of the unemployed in New York to work building houses. This is a transitional program. It can begin with a reformist connotation, it can begin with a radical connotation, depending on what you're trying to do. But it doesn't sound unreasonable to people whom we're talking to about it. This is not something unreasonable, that we should use the political power that resides in the majority of the people to inflict some blows on the capitalist class in the city, as we try to help the economic and other interests of the working people.

There's the entire question of welfare. There's been a move started now to give the welfare workers a voice. That also is going to be an important issue. Because there are people in motion around

that now. We want to learn what they're doing, we want to specialize in that, we want to take a position on that. We want to come out for a minimum wage in the city. That's not reformism, you know. That's a concretization of the sliding scale of wages and hours. Maybe \$3.00 an hour -- whatever it is that would add up to a minimum budget according to the Department of Labor.

That's the kind of thing that I think we should do in the campaign. Now some ultralefts would say that this is reformist, sewer socialism, and so on. I don't think that we should worry about them. This is the kind of election campaign we used to run on a local basis. This is the kind we're going to run in the future when we've sharpened up our understanding of the transitional program. The question in my mind is whether I'm right or whether I'm wrong in thinking that it's now the time when we can reach some other people besides the ones we've tried to reach in 1968. That's the crucial question in my mind. And I'm not at all sure about it. I have no way of judging, of testing for sure the things that come into my mind. This is a crucial question that I think you should think about. And from it a number of other things flow. If the answer is no, then what we're going to have is very largely a repetition of the 1968 campaign -- that kind of campaign on a local scale.

Jon Britton: Well, there's no question at all that there's a great potential in the high school area of the campaign. Outside of that, I think there's a question as to how many people we can recruit.

Breitman: Well, how many people voted the Conservative Party in 1968 in this area? It was either half a million or a third of a million in New York. But, a good part of that was gotten not just out of racism, but out of concern about taxes and concern about inflation. I think that it's important that somewhere on the left, in an election campaign there begin to be some attention paid to these questions. Otherwise, we are defaulting to a part of our potential audience.

There are workers in this city who are very fed up about the taxes and about the inflation. They're in effect earning less than they did a year ago, because the inflation is taking their money away, and they're very sore about it. They're ready to consider some kind of alternative to Lindsay and the Democrats. We're not going to get a mass response from this, but we might begin to get a small scattered response from young workers who are having these thoughts and these feelings and these concerns. Maybe not, but I think so. And Boutelle can address them on this. He can talk to them about this. Properly discussed and motivated, he can make an impact on anybody with this question, better than any other candidate in the campaign.

The question is whether it's worthwhile doing it or just concentrating where we were before. I'm inclined to try this, because these high school students come from working class families where these are the questions. The possibility is, that when you reach high school students, you can reach their parents. There's that possibility. I anticipate that we'll be able to organize some hundreds of high school students in this campaign to be for Boutelle, actively for Boutelle, and that at some point, this may really seem farfetched, at some point they can call a meeting to which their parents will be invited, where Paul will talk to them about what their kids are doing, and about what he's trying to do. Or if not a citywide thing, I can see the possibility of a dozen such meetings on a local basis. In somebody's house, where Paul could talk to them.
(end of tape)