

## REPORT ON STATE OF ORGANIZATION

A New York Du Bois member who went to the New Politics Convention said something to me earlier this week that stays in my mind. She related the tremendous response which greeted Ronald Lockman after his speech to the entire Convention. The three standing ovations Ronald received by the three thousand assembled delegates represented the high point of unity and enthusiasm at that gathering. She said she was so proud of the Du Bois Clubs she nearly cried. Well, I don't like to get mushy, but you know--I know how she felt. Just think about the significance of that event. Ronald Lockman, a brave black youth, a member of the Du Bois Clubs of America since its founding, represents the very best of his generation and of his people. Through his simple courageous act, he helped unify the movement which is charged with the responsibility of transforming America. That such a man developed his ideas and strength through his work and association with the Du Bois Clubs makes us all tingle with a sense of great pride.

You know we have a lot to be proud of. Along side of Ronald stand Dennis Mora, David Samas and Jimmy Johnson- the Fort Hood Three, who took the very same stand that Ronald takes today. Of these three heroes, Dennis also was an active member of the Du Bois Clubs. Tom Shields, a Du Bois Club member from Milwaukee, is presently engaged in a battle with the Selective Service system for his refusal to accept induction into the armed forces. These young men, again the best that our generation has to offer, are the true patriots of the America of the sixties. They are setting the pace. They are providing the example for all to follow. They stand at the head of the growing tide who proclaim "Hell No-We Will Not G ! "

And we have others to be proud of. Rberta Alexander, a member and leader of the Du Bois Clubs from Berkeley, along with two colleagues, was booted out of fascist Spain with the help of the State Dept. earlier this year because of her anti-war activity there.

Mike Myerson, as International Secretary of the Du Bois Clubs was the first American to travel to North Viet Nam in order to affirm the solidarity of growing numbers of American people with the struggle of the Vietnamese people.

Bettina Aptheker, member and leader of the Du Bois Clubs at Berkeley together with Mario Savio, was the most important leader in the historic FSM. Impending motherhood prevents her from being with us today.

Jim Peake, national leader of the Du Bois Clubs for the past three years, has spent almost as much time in jail as out in these last years for his active commitment to the fight for freedom.

And of course there is George Vizard whose tragic death this past summer deprives us of a vital leader and organizer of the Du Bois Clubs of America. He lived his commitment to building a better America and a better world. His life and work will continue to inspire and activate those of us who must continue this struggle.

These are the few who represent the many in the Du Bois Clubs. They exemplify the kind of spirit that has become identified with the Du Bois Clubs. There is real reason to be proud; the Du Bois Clubs draws the very best from our generation into its membership.

As an organization too, we have much to be proud of. It was the Du Bois Clubs which initiated the Sheridan Palace fight in 1963, the fight which opened up San Francisco to the freedom movement of the sixties.

It was the Du Bois Clubs which initiated some of the first support actions for the Delano strikers.

The Du Bois Clubs was one of the main initiating forces bringing the teach-in movement to campuses such as CCNY, UCLA and many others-a movement which helped bring the issue of Vietnam to millions of students.

In its three years of existence, The DBCs have helped spark community movements in the Lower east-side, in Bedford Stuyvesant, West-side Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh and in many other communities.

On campus (at New Paltz, Brooklyn College, Bloomington, Temple, Champaign-Urbana) battles sparked often by their attempt to charter a DBC on campus. All these struggles have contributed to the expansion of democratic rights for all students.

As an organization we have weathered more frequent and more vicious harrassment from the government authorities, from college administrators, from local police agencies and the right-wing than any other section of the Movement except the Southern freedom movement. And believe me, this is not an exaggeration. Our resistance to these continuous attacks is an accomplishment that cannot be sneezed at.

Yes, there is much to be proud of. And we have just begun. Let me say here and now-**THE BEST IS YET TO COME!**

Let us look at where we stand today-

Organizationally, we have large numbers of people throughout the country who consider themselves members of the Du Bois Clubs or closer to the DBC than any other organization.

We have, I believe, won a standing in the Movement and the respect of many, including those who do not always agree with us.

But along with the above, we have also seen a decline in the past year in the number of functioning clubs.

There are many reasons for this decline. For the past six months we have not in effect had a functioning National office. No consistent publications, political or ideological leadership came from the National Office. Many clubs, thinking that the NO had closed down, either folded up or stopped functioning regularly.

The reasons for the non-functioning of the National office are many. Chiefly they were: a severe personal crisis. Several full-time people left the NO for various reasons and there were no replacements. This left an overwhelming burden on those few who did remain. On top of this, Jim Peake and Franklin Alexander had to serve jail terms of several weeks. This left only Hugh Fowler in the National Office trying to run the show alone. It was an impossible situation.

There was also an acceptance of a certain approach of de-emphasizing the role of the National Office as a service agency for local clubs. Added to this were severe disagreements within the National Office about the way in which the Du Bois Clubs should deal with many problems. These disagreements often made it impossible for the National Office to function.

I think we also learned that insufficient attention was given to building up the DBC base in the host city of the National Office, Chicago. Because no attention was given here, Chicago proved to be too weak to support the National Office. This aggravated all the other problems of which I have already spoken.

We have some immediate organizational tasks to carry out after this Convention. We must pledge to accomplish them.

They are : to re-establish a functioning, vital National leadership and National office which will give political initiative, do extensive traveling and issue regular publications; to re-consolidate the Du Bois Club members in different sections of the country who presently have only a member-at-large status, into active, functioning clubs. I will project specific goals later on.

But there are deeper problems that we must confront besides those of the National Office.

The Du Bois Clubs has had many identity crises. I am not sure we have all always been fully sure of the kind of organization we were trying to build. In the first period of our existence our identity centered around the fact of our being expressly socialist whereas other groups such as SDS, did not proclaim a socialist goal. But this obviously was not sufficient to define our identity. With more and more people and organizations talking about socialism each day, the question came up-well how do we really differ?

In many cases and in many areas we had another problem. The Du Bois Clubs has continually been the initiator of movements against the war, against racism, and for campus democracy. We became identified solely with one or another single issue. We were among the best organizers of these single issue movements. However, when new single issue organizations naturally arose out of these activities such as FSMcomms., Viet Nam comms., etc. Du Bois again facing an identity crisis. What was our unique role when another coalition organization was fighting around the same issue, making much the same demands, but without the "hang-up" of red-baiting?

In some circumstances the DBC went to the opposite extreme. We tried to set ourselves up as the ideological leader of the left and of the movement and played little or no role in initiating issue movements. In these cases, the DBC faced an internal contradiction. On the one hand, as an organization, we made no commitments on many ideological questions and on the other, we proposed to lead the left ideologically. In these cases, the DBC remained small, isolated-its existence tenuous.

By far, our greater mistake was in attempting to be only action oriented, day-to-day oriented; non-ideological and non-controversial, thinking all the while that this was the meaning of being broad-based. What it is crucial for us to understand at this time is that the DBC has no meaning if it is non-ideological. It becomes colorless. Without ideology and commitment its guts are missing so to speak. One of its essential roles must be to provide a place where people can together study about and probe the ideas of socialism and fight to win others to these ideas. The DBC cannot exist without this element. With a generation like ours, which is constantly searching for answers, direction and purpose, it would be a crime for us not to place this quality of the DBC on the forefront.

I think we have to see that, yes, we must be the best organizers of the immediate battles for a better life under this system but unless we always

represent something more-unless we try to embody the future of these battles the socialist goal will always be replaceable.

What is our identity? We are a socialist youth organization which seeks to win young people to the ideas of Marxism and socialism; WE ARE an organization which defends and advances the interests of young people-especially working class and Black youth. against the encroachments of the Corporate Establishment; we seek to win all young people to the support for the movement of the working class and for the fight for a socialist America. This is our identity. This is our role.

We have had other problems. Perhaps the greatest of these has been the lack of experienced leadership on a National and especially local level. This lack proved itself in many areas, especially in the inability of many Clubs to organize and sustain ongoing programs. It showed itself also well in many areas where the DBC was not adequately equipped to respond to the attacks on it and to develop strong offensive posture.

And we have been too anarchistic. Some have put it well. They say that everybody in the Movement talks anarchy but the Du Bois Clubs is the only one that practises it! This is not far from the truth. We have been too lax about functioning Clubs, established leadership, membership, dues payment and the rest. For many in the DBC clubs, the DBC has been more a happening than an organization.

Perhaps the second greatest problem, after leadership is the lack of a developed educational program. This problem is related to the identity crisis and has been the greatest single lack over the past years. We talked about it again and again, but we just never understood the significance of an educational program. The National Office took some very good initiatives last year but we never followed through. This has got to change

We must begin to remedy all these problems. First, the Convention must adopt goals on re-consolidation. I propose that we set the following goals:

- to insure the existence of a functioning club in every major city in the country within six months.
- to insure that in every given area where there are five or more people they should be formed into a functioning club right away.
- that we secure membership cards from all present members.
- that we aim to double the membership within one year
- that we place the National Office and one person in National leadership in particular overall charge of directing such an organizational drive.
- that to facilitate this we publish Jarvis' address as a popular pamphlet, a statement of what the DU BOIS CLUBS IS AND WHERE WE STAND. We must prepare other appropriate material for such a drive.

On education: The DBC must develop and launch a rich educational program-both internal and external. It must strive to become the organization where ideas are happening. We should try to follow the example set recently by the NY DBCs which established a New York school for radical study. Though they have had organizational problems, their initiative has been a real success. We must encourage the setting up of schools, classes, seminars, as well as less formal forms of education, such as films, tapes. Some of the critical areas that a National educational program should take up are: Paralellism and Black-white unity; the relationship between the Black liberation movement and the fight for socialism in America; racism and white supremacy and the way in which these express themselves even among progressive whites; the American working class-its present situation and potential role;

the Du Bois Clubs—their purpose and role in the Movement and in the nation. Our education program, of course, should include topical issues as well.

**WE MUST ESTABLISH A NATIONAL DEPARTMENT ON EDUCATION.** We must encourage every club to have a director of education. We must organize at least one National training conference to help develop discussion leaders and educators.

On the problem of leadership. We have treated it very haphazardly. If some people emerged naturally on their own, they become leaders. There is nothing wrong with this as far as it goes. But we have to be more conscious about developing people. There is great talent latent in our organization. It's not true that leadership qualities are some kind of magic that some have and most don't. Leaders can be trained and developed. In a lot of ways that's what our organization should be all about—a place where people can learn to become leaders—in their communities, in their schools, on their jobs—leaders of movements, fighters for revolution. What happens if you don't have a conscious approach towards training leaders is that only a select few emerge. They dominate the pictures, sometimes thwarting the development of others. We can't afford to waste a single ounce of human potential. We don't have that luxury. We must break with past practises and begin to train DBC leaders and organizers. This is long overdue. I propose that we organize at least one National training school in this coming year and that we encourage those local and regional areas that are strong enough to undertake similar efforts. These schools would cover discussions of theory as well as techniques in preparing meetings, public rallies, leaflets, public speaking, preparing agendas, leading discussion and the rest. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this area of work. If we are going to build the DBC in a significant way it is a must that we address ourselves to this problem.

On organization and structure. We must overcome the anarchism that I spoke of earlier. Specifically, I would propose a change in the Constitution on sections concerning the National Co-ordinating Committee and National Executive. I believe the present structure is unreal and cumbersome. With all those theoretical titles, we end up with an NCC, each time attended by different people from local clubs. Anyone who pops in can vote. Let me tell you, we've had some interesting people that nobody ever saw before coming into NCC meetings and voting on National policy. It's absurd. You can't guarantee any continuity and consistency that way.

I think that this Convention should elect a National Executive composed of 15 people. Of these, four full-time officers should be elected: National Chairman, Executive Secretary, Educational Director, and Director of Publications. This National Executive together with one bona fide representative from each local Club, would constitute the NCC. The National Exec. would meet every two weeks and be the regular, continuing leadership of the organization. This means that the non full-time members of the Exec. would have to be drawn for now from the East Coast region. The National Executive would be charged with convening an NCC no less than three times a year.

I think this formula is within our means and also combines the qualities of stable consistent leadership with the need for local representation. I believe we should also try to single out certain key people in different to begin again to keep an eye on regional developments. These people would be among the most active in their local Clubs and would undoubtedly be represented on the NCC as Club delegates.

**IN ADDITION, THIS CONVENTION SHOULD ESTABLISH THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL DEPT.S:**  
**A TRADE UNION DEPARTMENT, A DEPARTMENT ON THE PROBLEMS OF BLACK AND MINORITY YOUTH: A STUDENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AND A HIGH SCHOOL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.**

These Departments would be responsible for systematically staying on top of the special problems of these various sections of young people. They would be responsible for developing and co-ordinating program for these sections, organizing special conferences when necessary, helping to prepare special publications.

In general, they would insure that consistent attention is given to all these sections. The Departments would be National based, with people from all around the country working with them on a correspondence and periodic meeting basis. The National Exec. members would also be assigned to work with various Departments.

I BELIEVE WE MUST ALSO REVIVE AND EXPAND THE IDEA DEVELOPED ORIGINALLY AT THE FOUNDING CONVENTION OF "ASSOCIATE STATUS".

This is a structural provision for allowing friendly and fraternal organizations and groups to have close ties with us without actually becoming DBC chapters. I believe that there are many local unaffiliated groups now in existence who would like to work with us but are not prepared to affiliate directly. Many more groups which agree with and like our ideas and goals will be formed in the future. These groups may be unsure about becoming part of a national organization or, while they may like some of our programs, they may not be ready to commit themselves to our overall goals.

There are also many independent, all-Black youth organizations developing in communities around the country - many with a Marxist orientation. People from these organizations may have a friendly interest in the DBC, but are not yet interested in becoming a chapter of the DBCs. We must take special steps to make organizations like these welcome in the DBC. We must try to develop the closest relations possible with them on the basis of equality. Many would be willing to federate loosely with us. We must have the kind of organizational flexibility and creativity that will provide for this. The Convention must establish or re-establish the status of associate or fraternal organizations and provide that all groups that choose to federate to the DBC in this manner shall have a voice and a vote on our NCC.

But we are not just trying to build the DBCs for building's sake. I think all of us here are convinced of the importance of the DBC today. But what is potentially the DBC's most profound contribution to America today?

I think the answer to that question is clear. It rests on our ability to prove in life the possibility of building a united movement of Black and white to overhaul these United States. No other existing youth organization has the possibility of demonstrating the viability of that kind of movement. I repeat no other organization. No other youth organization could have played the role of unifier that the DBC played at the NCNP Convention. No other organization was in a position to do what the DBC did through Ronald Lockman - bring that whole Convention, both Black and white, to its feet in a powerful display of unity. No other organization could have fought the way we did among whites at that Convention for an acceptance of the demands of the Black caucus. What other group was in a position to present both white and Black speakers, arguing eloquently on that Convention floor for an acceptance of those demands? Think a minute; what other group could have done it? Was SDS able to do it? Was YSA able to do it? Were any other student organizations able to do it? NO! - the DBC was the only one. This is so because we understood the significance and importance of this problem; because we strive to unite both Black and white and, if fact, do unite today both Black and white in our organization.

But in this regard I want to address myself to the white youth seated here. I believe that every white person here has heard and accepted the challenge placed before white radicals by the Black people of this country. That challenge is to accept the fight against racism as their number one task. But how many of us have really understood this challenge? You may be wondering how this relates to a report on organization: there IS a crucial relationship.

How many of you come from predominantly white or all-white DBCs? And how many of you would explain that your Club is all-white because your college is predominantly white or because your community is predominantly white? And how many would be satisfied with this explanation? Well, I want to say that if your Club is all white, there

is only one reason: YOU ARE NOT FIGHTING RACISM IN YOUR COMMUNITY. It means you have no program to challenge it or educate against it. If yours is an all-white Club, then there is something wrong, basically wrong with what you are doing. If you were fighting racism and if you had a program around that fight, your Club would be an inter-racial organization. If your Club were actively engaged in the fight against racism, it would follow logically that the Black youth on your campus or in your community would find themselves interested in the DBC. Too many white radicals have interpreted the parallel movement concept to mean that Black youth will fight racism while white organizers will work around the separate self-interest demands of white people, excluding the problem of racism. This is a complete cop-out. It misses the whole point. I ask: is there only greater self-interest struggle for white people today than the fight against racism, police terror, the destruction of democratic rights and liberties and the turning of America into an armed camp? Can there be any battle more urgent for whites? Of course not!

But the cop-out idea has affected white people in the DBC. And we must tackle it. One of the main goals we must project in the coming year is to work to end situations where we find all-white DBCs. The new National leadership must pledge itself to helping to guide that fight with a strong National program. Local Clubs must pledge the same. We cannot rest until that fight is won.

SO...the message of my report is simple. This country needs the DBC. It needs us real bad. If we can deal with some of the problems outlined in this report, and in the spirit of the address presented by Jarvis yesterday, we will be unbeatable. And like the words of the song, "Ain't no mountain high, ain't no valley low" enough to turn us away!