

(FOR MEMBERS ONLY)

# Party

## CONTENTS

THE BUILDER NEEDS MORE COPY ..... 1

ON THE STATE OF THE PARTY -  
by Ernest Erber ..... 1

HOW TO INFLUENCE CONTACTS AND  
WIN MEMBERS - by S. Booth ..... 3

CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEW MEMBERS -  
by F. Harper ..... 4

WE NEED A PARTY EMBLEM - by Hal  
Draper ..... 7

REPORT ON THE SAN FRANCISCO  
BRANCH - by Larry O'Connor ..... 12

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA CONSUMERS  
AND TENANTS LEAGUE - by E.  
Fox ..... 17

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# Builder

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OF THE WORKERS PARTY

## THE BUILDER NEEDS MORE COPY

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As the comrades have been informed, the scheduled September 24, 1946 issue of the BUILDER did not appear. Difficulties created by the absence of the Editor from the National Office made it impossible to publish that issue. However, we hope to be able to avoid skipping further issues and will do our best to establish the regular monthly appearance of the BUILDER.

The comrades have not yet learned to take advantage of the BUILDER. Despite the fact that the Editor has written personal notes to individual comrades all over the country urging them to contribute their ideas and the lessons of their experiences, not enough copy has been forthcoming. It is hoped that the comrades will respond with more copy for future issues.

The Party comrades who operate in New York or in areas not too far from the center have no idea how far away and isolated the comrades on the west coast feel. The BUILDER is one instrument that can help span the distance between the comrades and tie the organization closer together. Comrades get the "feel" of a national organization when they read about the experiences and activities of the Party in all sections of the country and are able to build locally upon the experiences of other branches. Remember, the BUILDER should be used for the exchange of ideas and experiences, for the reporting of activities, for the conveying of lessons, for the criticism and stimulation of discussion in the Party on organization questions and problems of Party building.

Articles in this issue are more or less representative of the sort of thing that is needed. Comrades should send in reports of their activities around the Program of Action which appeared in an earlier issue, descriptions of their new headquarters and reports of how the same are decorated and used by the branches, accounts of means and methods used to sell and promote LABOR ACTION, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, other literature, discussions of trade union and fraction work, educational activities, work in the AVC and other outside organizations, Party recruitment and integration of new Party members, schemes for improving the technical work of the organization, leaflet designing, sign making, etc. - in other words, write on anything having to do with Party building, organization and improvement.

As can be seen from the contents of the BUILDER up to now, any and all articles are published as submitted with only minor technical editing. Do not rely upon the Editor's picking up reports sent into other departments of the Party for publication in the BUILDER. Write your material specifically for the BUILDER.

Let's make the BUILDER a party builder.

- Editor

## ON THE STATE OF THE PARTY

By Ernest Erber

My recent tour of the Eastern and Mid-Western branches permitted me to gain a comprehensive picture of the party in its first stages of post-convention re-organization and expansion. The latter period really covers the months of June, July and August.

The over-all picture is a most heartening one. The effects of our re-organization and the expansion of party institutions nationally is everywhere in evidence in the local work. Compared to our under-staffed, draft-depleted party of a year, the progress is striking.

Almost every department of activity records progress, although unevenly from branch to branch. In the field of organization, almost every branch has been strengthened by the return of service-men. In most cases this meant in the first place a strengthening of the branch leadership. Local headquarters, full-time organizers, increased income, improved records and correspondence are either partially or wholly an aspect of the progress everywhere.

Industrialization is making slow but steady progress. The effects of the strike wave in slowing down reconversion (above all the steel and coal strikes) caused the industrialization program to get a belated start in most cities. Actually, a census of the party today would reveal a much better situation than at the time of the industrial census shortly after the convention. In at least two cities, the local industrialization awaits the opening of new plants scheduled for the near future (Chicago and Louisville). As a result of the recent progress made in this field, most of the fractions are new and, consequently, as yet without influence. The latter is above all true in Detroit, Buffalo, and Cleveland, with the Akron situation only slightly better. However, the work of the fractions generally shows an increase in maturity and experience over the period when the war-time fractions first established themselves.

Though my tour took place so shortly after the eight-page paper was launched that a sound estimate of its effect was not yet possible, it was already making its presence felt in the increased interest and pride in the paper shown by the members and close party supporters. The only complaint of busy party members was that they did not have enough time to read the expanded paper as carefully as they wanted to. The Shachtman book, the pamphlets and the educational outlines have re-armed our branches in the field of propaganda and education. It was a pleasure to see literature tables at my public meetings which were covered with party literature, rather than the general Marxist material we have had to rely on in the past. The party has likewise taken a renewed interest in The New International and local efforts to stimulate newsstand sales and other types of sales were in evidence in most cities.

There is as yet no sizeable recruitment. However, of the period under discussion was not one in which recruiting was to be expected. The re-organization and expansion has, until now, been an internal process to prepare the party for genuine growth later. Our outlays in money and effort have been in the direction of enlarging and modernizing our "capital goods" (party institutions) rather than toward selling "new customers." The newness of the fractions in most cities (Detroit is a striking case in point) has made successful public meetings and classes difficult due to our lack of contact. Added to this is the fact that our members have, in these cases, entered after the strikes when the possibility of making headway as newcomers was least favorable.

The increased staff of organizers, the eight page paper, the party publications, the enlarged staff at the national center -- all this represents, in a sense, a "living beyond our means." The heavy strain it places upon us (heavy, but in no wise impossible) is a sacrifice which must be made if we are ever to quit being a party of a few hundred and get over the thousand mark. The expansion of the party institutions is an investment that has as yet not begun to pay off, nor can it be expected to for another six months minimum. We have laid out money to equip our party with out-size garments in the full confidence that the new period will see us fill them out. It must be remembered that we can handle three times our present membership with only slight additions to our staff. Yet the increase in membership is impossible unless the expansion was made first. This is the key to the present period of party life. In order to become a party several times our size, we must dress ourselves like one and seek as best we can to act the part. My observations on the tour indicate that with the exception of one or two weak spots, the internal process of re-organization is well under way. I am confident that the effects of this progress will begin to tell in enhanced external activity which will inevitably result in growth of influence and recruitment.

## HOW TO INFLUENCE CONTACTS AND WIN MEMBERS

By Sylvia Booth

Recruit, Recruit, Recruit! An ever resounding theme, at conference and convention, city or national, included in one fashion or other in every internal party program, trade union as well as educational, organizational as well as financial! For those who think that recruiting will take on less importance at any point in the development of our party, it is necessary to point out that this will never be the case. Not until we stand on the threshold of the revolution will this ever present task be waived, and then only to take on a greater significance in a new stage of development.

How can we achieve even the modest goals we set ourselves, seems to be the key question. As every comrade knows, each situation contains conditions and poses problems which can be answered only by those familiar with these problems and questions. There is, however, a method of procedure which can be employed universally, once individual conditions are considered. And thus I relate the experience of the Brooklyn (downtown) Branch.

Way back during the subscription drive we got the brilliant idea of noting down immediately subscribers who seemed to have the best possibilities. (Our campaign was carried on in a housing project.) When the campaign ended, we had a contact list fresh as new picked parsley. The next step brought results beyond our wildest dreams. Each comrade who undertook an assignment came back with ever growing enthusiasm. Each report was more optimistic than the last. Anxious to corral this into something more tangible, we set ourselves a date a few weeks in advance to announce the beginning of a contact class. (This was to be held in the house of a comrade in the project.) All contact assignments from then on pushed and advertised the class. The first session opened with five contacts present. The attendance varied, however, stabilizing itself at three. Our discussion mostly centered around the Fight for Socialism. Within a reasonable amount of time, our contacts were asked to join the Party. Three new members were recruited in this manner. Of course, we shall continue along the same lines.

The effectiveness was a result of the way activity was planned and carried through. Nothing was left hanging in mid-air. Each new phase was taken into consideration before its time, to make one continuous and consistent line of activity. Hand in hand with this goes hard work and persistence. Mostly hard work! The importance of continually plugging can never be overestimated. Combined, these factors can spell only one word....Success!

CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEW MEMBERS  
by F. Harper (Philadelphia)

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A lot of attention in the Party is being given to the problem of attaining "grass roots", that is, to the problem of obtaining new members who are not revolutionary socialists of many years standing but who are ordinary shopmen and office workers recently convinced that only socialism can solve the basic problems of our society. This attention of the Party is being directed along two main lines: the first is usually referred to as the "proletarianization of the present Party members" and the second is the assimilation of new worker members into the Party.

The Party program for the assimilation of new members seems to be based on the conviction that the Party and the several hundred members therein have to make a readjustment to meet the moods and the needs of the new worker members. This conviction is probably quite valid but a more logical and fruitful approach might be to start with the realization that the new member and not the Party makes most of the adjustments during the process of assimilation. Over a period of years the complexion of the Party will change as a result of its collective experience and a new membership composition. This change is important but no less important is the comparatively rapid change that must take place in the individual new member as he adapts himself to the Party environment.

It is essential that the individual's adaptation to the new environment takes place as rapidly as possible so that he does not feel a stranger in the Party midst but at the same time is of such a nature that the newcomer's very important contribution to Party life is not obliterated. This important contribution is the keen awareness of the gap between the Party and the needs and the interest of the ordinary working men and women and the individualist and fresh approach to solutions for bridging this gap. There is small chance that a new member will make any really new contribution to socialist theory but he can contribute something the older members cannot contribute.

The newcomer must resist the desire to become a story-book type Marxist intellectual but must nevertheless make a strenuous conscious effort to adapt himself to his very new and stimulating environment. Since mental attitudes are important factors in adaptation to environment, a few are listed below with some substantiation in relationship to the objective situation in the Party and also to the expressed Party aims.

1. The newcomer must be prepared to meet, analyze, and tentatively accept or reject new ideas. He will discover that there are concepts in the Party that are held by practically all of the members but which are nevertheless strange and foreign at first sight. He will also soon discover that the last word on socialism has not been said - scientific socialism is still being created.

2. The newcomer must understand that Party membership is demanding of talent, time, and money. Because of the small size of the Party, everyone must contribute heavily or else he is adding to the burden of the others. It is a tremendous job to help build a revolutionary socialist party with limited means, to attempt to raise the political consciousness of the people, to engage in union and other activity, and at the same time to provide subsistence for a family.

3. The new member must properly evaluate the gap in theoretical socialist knowledge which exists between himself and the older members. The gap is more apparent than real but the new comrade must partially bridge the real gap by individual study of at least a few basic classics and by being honest enough to admit his deficiency and by seeking information from those better informed.

4. The newcomer must understand that the Party and the socialist movement has a tradition on which it relies but should not rest. One aspect of this tradition is the peculiar lingo or terminology. One must perceive, however, that holding to tradition may become an excuse to avoid meeting squarely a new and disturbing problem and that using the lingo may degenerate into mere name calling or a substitute for critical thinking.

5. The newcomer should not expect that joining the Party will eliminate personal maladjustments either for himself or the other Party members. Many of the comrades in the Party have experienced terrible economic conditions, unhappy home life, failures in chosen vocations, race oppression and religious hypocrisy. A socialist concept enables one to see which troubles are beyond the power of the individual to remove and indicate how these evils may be eliminated in a different social order. However, it is still necessary for the individual to attempt to make the best possible personal adjustment within the existing social framework in order to make his fullest contribution to the Party.

6. The newcomer must believe that the Party, even though very, very small is a most important factor on the current political scene because it has a program to the interest of the common people of the world. It is important also to firmly believe that the Party must grow until it is that party (or part of that party) which gives the people control of the country.

7. The new member should be determined to make his association with the Party as pleasant as possible since a large portion of his time will be spent with Party members to the neglect of other interests and associations outside of the movement. Some of the Party members act as though they alone are carrying the burdens of humanity on their shoulders. There is nothing to be gained by considering oneself a martyr. In fact, if one does not believe he is, under the given objective and subjective conditions, living the fullest possible



life by belonging to the Party, it is quite likely that he will be able to find some excuse for withdrawing his membership.

8. Finally, the newcomer must understand that he is to play an important part in keeping socialism from becoming conservative. Much has been written about the congealing of Party structure, that is, the growth of a bureaucracy with a blind and hero-worshipping following, and our Party has constantly combatted this menace. At the same time there is the danger of solidification of ideas. Every older member has spent a great deal of his life examining ideas and situations, trying to correlate, sift, accept and reject this and that concept. Finally he tends to hold to a fixed set of ideas - a personal philosophy of socialism. He might even be inclined to believe that because he has beaten all the conflicts into a well-ordered pattern for himself he has done it for everyone else. Consequently, it is not surprising if the older member is actually sometimes resentful when the new member confronts him with the same questions, doubts, fears and prejudices that he thought he had laid to rest years ago. However, where the newcomer has honest doubts he should raise them even though he knows they have been raised and answered dozens of times before by minds more capable than his.

Now the reader may well ask what this article is meant to accomplish. This article has tried to show that the newcomer and his fresh ideas are the best guarantee the Party has of remaining vital and not becoming conservative. The article also contends that the individual adjustment of the newcomer to the Party is a more pressing problem than the adjustment of the Party to the newcomer and should be given more consideration. The suggestions of desirable mental attitudes given herein are obviously only a partial and imperfect solution. It is recognized by the writer that the approach tends to be negative, the tone to be sermonizing, and the mood to be somber.

The success of the Party's attempt to obtain "grass roots" as is mirrored in its internal publications will be proportional to the number of articles contributed by Party newcomers, not by members of the Political Committee, organizers and old-time comrades. This last statement is held to be true not because "petty bourgeois intellectuals do not understand these things as well as do raw workers" but because the roots of the Party are in the sections where the interest level is the highest. If the interest of the Party is not keenest among the newcomers, then the roots will not be of grass.



WE NEED A PARTY EMBLEM  
by Hal Draper

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Nobody in particular disagrees with the statement in the title. Also, nothing has been done about it. Also, nothing is likely to be done about it, unless -- .

As of now, the N.C. has on the books a motion which I made over a year ago that certain steps be taken which would result in the adoption of a party emblem. I shall discuss it here. There may be a better way, in which case let someone turn it up in the pages of the Party Builder. But there is no use waiting till someone gets a brainstorm, produces a design which sweeps everyone by storm and spontaneously gets itself adopted. This won't happen. But we can make something else happen.

Probably the strongest reason why we need a party emblem is for purposes of identification. The good Marx knows, there is a variety of workers organizations sufficient to confuse anyone. For us, the names Workers Party, Labor Action and New International are tied up in one bundle as a trinity -- three institutions, one movement. In addition, there are pamphlets, forums, classes, banners, etc., which go with the bundle. But there is no symbol which ties up the bundle for the uninitiated. That is the first job which the party emblem does. It tags that which is ours.

Anyone is free to think up a dozen other reasons why we need a party emblem. (It can be decorative, for one thing!) But since no one disagrees, it is not even necessary to pursue the point. The question is what to do about it.

Emblems in the Past

The original emblem of the Trotskyist movement was simply the Comintern's hammer-and-sickle. It was freely used especially before 1934 when the Trotskyist movement considered itself a part of the Communist Party, its left opposition. When we broke with the Comintern definitively and oriented toward an independent party, a different symbol came to be used, though I do not believe it was ever officially adopted by the Fourth International as a whole. This was the Lightning-Over-the-Globe. If you have back numbers of the New International dating back to before our entry into the S.P., you will see this emblem on the N.I. cover in technicolor. It was also used at least by our British comrades at that time and perhaps by other sections.

But then the British fascists (Mosley group) began to use an emblem similar to it, and besides, in America the Trotskyists entered the S.P. and no longer needed an independent party emblem. The Lightning-Over-the-Globe disappeared.

When the Trotskyists re-formed the movement out of the S.P., founding the original S.W.P., the new party adopted no emblem. Neither the S.W.P. today nor our own party has an emblem. For electoral purposes, especially in the New York elections, our New York local has been using an emblem consisting of a single arrow pointing up and to the right, though I believe its direc-

tion has twirled around somewhat from election to election. (It is undoubtedly one of the weakest party emblems ever conceived.) In addition, our youth organization, before its merger with the party during the war, was using as a specifically youth emblem the monogram L-L-L, which was supposed to mean Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg for those in the know.

The European Trotskyist parties, most of which use the name "Communist" in the titles of their parties, also use the hammer-and-sickle as their emblem today, modified by the addition of a background "4" for Fourth International.

There is nothing in all this that we can use. In other words, we have to invent a new emblem.

### Characteristics of a Good Emblem

What kind of emblem do we want? What are the characteristics of a good party emblem? To "deepen" and "render profound" and otherwise practical problem -- what are the "theoretical" principles of revolutionary heraldry?

It seems to me there are five considerations to be kept in mind, one or more of which has been commonly violated in tentative doodling for emblems which I have seen. And I think that any emblem which fails to satisfy any one of these five conditions is not a good emblem.

(1) It must be distinctive. This follows precisely from the fact that the main job of a party emblem is identification. If it is not distinctive enough to identify at sight, it is doing no job other than decoration. The old socialist emblem of the Three Arrows (or a Fourth Internationalist version with four arrows!) cannot be considered for this reason alone, although it has virtues. The hammer-and-sickle (with or without the "4") is otherwise one of the best party emblems ever used. But unless we are also willing to do in America what the Trotskyists do in Europe -- call ourselves "Communists" -- it is not available to us because it blurs the distinction between ourselves and the contemporary Communist Parties.

(2) It must be meaningful, with a readily intelligible meaning. It cannot be merely a design. This would be all right if its purpose was only to distinguish. That is often true of a commercial trade-mark, for example, which often enough is only a distinctive design. A party emblem is more than a trade-mark. It ought to be charged with a certain amount of emotional and moral appeal. But that is lost if the meaning ascribable to it is too esoteric or far removed from the direct meaning of the emblem, or if this is true for most people. The L-L-L symbol of the youth suffered because of this consideration. The monad symbol of the Technocrats falls down on this score also; true, the Technocrats give it a meaning, more or less loosely derived from its ancient roots, but the whole point is that the meaning has to be given it -- it possesses none at first blush. The Nazi swastika has something of a greater advantage because it harks back to the cross -- a symbol which already possessed emotional power.

(3) It must have a class meaning. This was the trouble with the Lightning-Over-the-Globe. The proof was that the fascists could take it over with no difficulty. The swastika could be a good symbol for the fascists precisely because it meant nothing, or rather, could mean anything to anybody, exactly like the fascist program. With us, as with our program, the emotional and moral import which we want to convey must have a political root. It is silly to talk in terms of finding an emblem which will "summarize" our political program, but the sine qua non which must make it our emblem is its class import. In a sense, this is also the shortest way of summarizing our political program.

(4) It must be simple and not too complicated. In thinking up emblems, don't run to pictures and cartoons. Those are something else. For example, side by side with the hammer-and-sickle, which was an emblem, the old Comintern also used to use a design depicting a worker breaking the chains of the world. Some emblems have been pictures, but they have, therefore, been bad emblems: such a one is the picture of two hands clasping each other, presumably signifying brotherhood. It is very difficult to draw it and its usefulness is thereby limited. The S.P. torch is something of a picture but simple enough to be free of the curse; its defects are other, especially when the supporting arm is included in the picture. One thing which tends to cause people to forget this consideration is the impulse to cram too much into an emblem, in an attempt to make it convey more meaning than a mere emblem is capable of.

(5) It must be easily duplicated -- "scrawlable." This is related to what is said above. It is one of the reasons why the hammer-and-sickle and the swastika were successful emblems. The Lightning-Over-the-Globe and the Three Arrows are also eminently scrawlable. The more easily reproducible the emblem is, the more it will be used and become widely disseminated. That is what an emblem is for.

#### HOW TO ADOPT AN EMBLEM

How shall we find and adopt an emblem?

There are three ways in which an emblem can be officially adopted by the party -- by a national convention, by the N.C. and by a membership referendum. I prefer the last. In the first place, it would be foolish to take up the valuable time of a convention with this matter. And in the second place, one of the main things we want to be sure of in adopting an emblem is that it will be popular, in the first place with the party membership. I think this indicates a referendum vote. The mechanics would be simple enough, inexpensive and decisive.

Let the N.C. announce to the party membership that we are going to adopt an emblem in, say, six months. All party members are invited to send in designs (not merely worded descriptions, but designs). These proposals will be mimeographed in the Party

Builder as they are received, numbered for purposes of identification, and tagged with their sponsor. At the end of this "discussion" period, at a branch meeting, the members will cast their votes. This may be a simple vote for one, or a preferential list for three or so. The two or three designs receiving the highest votes should be run off again for a decisive majority vote. This latter provision is made because it is quite probable that a number of designs may be similar to each other and, therefore, divide the vote in a way which could not be determined except by preferential voting, or a run-off, or preferably both.

Whichever way it is done, let us adopt a party emblem. I may also add in a whisper that especially since the S.W.P. has none, the emblem which we choose will be THE Trotskyist emblem.

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A PROPOSED EMBLEM

Naturally, the above could have been written only by one who has been thinking of possible party emblems in odd moments -- which, by the way, are good times to think of them. In fact, I shall summon up the courage to propose an emblem to take its place in the projected competition. (There ought to be a prize, too!)

Now, we shall all find that the first reaction to any and all proposed emblems is that it stinks, since no emblem can do perfectly all that is expected of it by some, and because it is simply unfamiliar. With a certain amount of bravado, therefore, I submit the design to the critical rods of the reading public of the Party Builder. If a number of comrades are moved to disdainful imprecations, they may also be moved to do better.

I would merely point out that the proposed emblem does at least satisfy the conditions I have imposed. While it is sufficiently distinctive, the reader will note that it is reminiscent of both the hammer-and-sickle in a general way, and also of the Lightning-Over-the-Globe. To my mind, this is an advantage on both counts. The meaning of the Lightning-Over-the-Globe was, of course, Power and Revolution (stormy action). This aspect is retained and the class symbol of the hammer added. The four stars, while not a necessary part of the design, tie it up with the Fourth and also round it out when it is enclosed in a circle.

Now - have at it! Here's the chance to harness even your idle doodling to the cause of the revolution.



REPORT ON THE SAN FRANCISCO BRANCH  
by Larry O'Connor

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(NOTE: I wish it understood that this report represents my personal estimate only and has not been discussed with other members of the branch, except insofar as the situation in the branch is generally a subject of discussion among us. Larry O'Connor - 8/29/46.)

A. The Membership.

The San Francisco Bay Area branch has 22 members on the books. At the moment, however, there are only 13 members of the branch who are participating fully in its work. The following table will indicate why:

- 13 members available and active
- 3 members in New York, more or less indefinitely
- 2 members at sea
- 2 members on vacation (will return in couple of wks.)
- 1 member working irregular shift, cannot be counted upon for activity of any specific character
- 1 member inactive for personal reasons.

It can be stated that at the present time the usual number of active members of the branch (and, of course, this covers a range of degree in activity) can be placed at 15-17 members.

(1) Occupational Distribution:

Of the members who are usually available, 9 are industrial workers, distributed as follows: 1 longshore; 2 railroad; 3 auto (one of these not yet definitely); 2 seamen; 1 bookbinding.

Of the remaining members 2 are students, 3 white collar workers (one temporarily unemployed) and 1 is a housewife.

(2) Geographical Distribution:

The membership of the branch is spread throughout the whole of the San Francisco Bay Area. In the East Bay, 2 live in Richmond, 9 in Berkeley and 2 in Oakland. Six members live in San Francisco. Of these one is at sea, one commutes to work in Oakland and one is not generally available for the usual branch assignments as he performs a special work for the Party. One other is the comrade listed "inactive for personal reasons."

(3) Activity in Outside Organizations:

Ten members of the branch are eligible to membership in the AVC by virtue of being ex-servicemen or ex- or active seamen. Of these seven have joined in Berkeley, one will join next week. The other two are eligible to join in San Francisco (one is at sea). Except for the seamen who are out of town, all are more or less active members.

So far we have only three people really active in their unions. The longshoreman is a permit member and cannot be ac-

tive as a union member. Two men recently colonized have either not gone to work yet or have not been able to join, but will as soon as they go to work. One seaman in the NMU is inhibited for obvious reasons, and the other one (now at sea) is very inexperienced and lacks confidence as a speaker, etc. The office workers are active only sporadically.

Two members of the branch belong to the Berkeley Interracial Council, a group which seeks to improve racial relations, and in which there is currently a battle going on between Stalinists, conservatives and liberals for domination.

#### (4) Length of Party Membership and Experience:

It should be noted that almost all members of the branch are relatively new to the movement. We have six members who have more than three years in the Party and of those, two have been colonized here within the last month. Five members have been in the movement about three years each. Eight members have been in the movement less than one year.

The important thing to note from this description is that even those who are functioning in outside organizations are generally very new and young members, and, even more important, most of the older and more experienced members are not able to function with the new ones and lead them. Guidance has to be by advice, but this is much less than adequate.

#### B. Characteristics of the Area.

##### (1) Geography:

In paragraph (2) under the previous heading the geographic distribution of the membership was mentioned. It is necessary here to go into more detail so that you can understand what this means for the functioning of the branch.

San Francisco and the East Bay are two completely separate, distinct and separately integrated metropolitan areas. Each has its own industrial, labor, community and cultural life. Most points in the East Bay can be reached from San Francisco in 40-45 minutes by trans-bay train or bus, plus the time it takes to reach the terminal in San Francisco from a given point in that city, plus the time it takes to reach a given point in the East Bay from bus or train stops in that territory.

This distance and time element, however, are not too important as they do not exceed distances and times in other cities. Much more important, however, is the integrated nature of the two areas. People live either in San Francisco or in the East Bay, they do not live in the San Francisco Bay Area. This means, specifically, that if a meeting is held on one side of the bay it is next to impossible to get any but the very closest and most enthusiastic sympathizers from the other side to attend. Contacts made on one side will not attend a class or forum on the other. Members active in a union or other organization on one side can be of next to no assistance to members active in another local or chapter of



the same union or organization on the other, for the two lead as separate lives as say, a local of the UAW in New York City and one in Newark, N. J. A headquarters on one side of the bay would do next to no good to the members and contacts living on the other side, etc.

The East Bay Area stretches, for practical purposes, for about 15 miles from Richmond to East Oakland. Although Richmond, Berkeley and Oakland are separate cities, they are much more integrated among themselves than any of them with San Francisco. Even here we must, in time, have the perspective of separate branches in these cities, but this is not nearly as important as separate branches in San Francisco and the East Bay as a whole. Members living in the three East Bay cities can work together in the same unions and other organizations. A headquarters or meeting, more or less centrally located, can hope to attract contacts from the whole East Bay.

Further, the East Bay as a whole is, for the West Coast, a heavily industrial area. As a whole it has a population not too much smaller than that of San Francisco, and undoubtedly has more industries. San Francisco is overwhelmingly a shipping and commercial center, with longshore, warehouse, trucking and seafaring as major industries. The East Bay has, in addition to these, a considerable automobile, electrical, chemical, canning and engineering (machine shops) industry.

A couple of years ago we discovered that a majority of our members live in the East Bay. At that time we decided to try to concentrate most of our work in the East Bay, and therefore have urged as many comrades as possible to move there. We try to get all new people colonizing here to live and work in the East Bay if possible. If and when we can get a headquarters, it will be here. The comrades who find it necessary, for one reason or another, to live in San Francisco, have a very hard time integrating their work with ours. Most distributions are in the East Bay, and our sub drive was conducted there. Classes and meetings are held in the East Bay. Thus, the comrades living in San Francisco have to spend much of their time in travel, and if and when they get a contact in their shop or by some other means of contact in San Francisco, it is very, very difficult for them to get such a contact to branch activities or otherwise involved in the work of the branch.

In time, of course, this will have to change. Once we have thirty or forty active members of the branch, we will have to concentrate on San Francisco, and even colonize there if necessary. We do not want to do this, however, until we have enough people so that both branches will be able to function as full-fledged, efficient units of the Party. The comrades know that a branch of 8 people has at least twice as hard a job per member to carry out fruitful work as a branch of 16 (which means four times as hard for the branch as a whole). But until the happy day when we can establish two full-fledged branches, it means that the effectiveness of our San Francisco members is about half what it could be if they lived over here. This should be taken into consideration when judging the relation of our size to our effectiveness.

(2) Stalinism:

San Francisco and the Bay Area undoubtedly rank among the major strongholds of Stalinism in the U.S. The CIO is completely controlled on both sides of the bay by the CP. This applies to every single local. In the AVC there is still something of a balance of power, with the CP getting stronger much faster than the liberals. Interracial groups, organizations of all kinds have a heavy CP contingent if not control.

The most important element the branch lacks in fighting the CP in these organizations is not simply numbers - but experienced members. Most of our new members have absolutely no previous political experience of any kind. Few of them have any organizational experience of any kind. It will take some time for them to learn how to fight in mass organizations, during which period we can be counted upon to make our share of mistakes in learning. This explains to some extent the reason why it is necessary for us to move cautiously in mass organizations. And this is particularly true in the places where all our members are inexperienced, that is, where we do not have a single experienced person to lead and direct the others.

C. Activities of the Branch

Until recently the branch has engaged primarily in what can be called "internal" activities. That is, we did not have a number of veterans in the AVC or others active in unions. Educationals, socials, occasional public meetings, distributions of the paper at union meetings - these were the weekly round of activity. As we had no full time organizer, it was difficult to give the branch a really planned direction and then carry out that direction. The branch tended to drift for more or less long periods, and then to jump into some activity or campaign which had little relationship with its general kind of activity and which took up a lot of energy, but could rarely be followed up sufficiently well to produce results.

The present activities of the branch are as follows:

(1) Branch meeting every other Friday. We are trying, with more or less success to hold business down to one hour and devote the rest of the time to an educational.

(2) On alternate Fridays a class open to sympathizers and the public. In the past few months we have used the two Blue-cover outlines for this class.

From now on these alternate Friday meetings are to be turned into a regular bi-weekly public forum on topics of current interest. These meetings are held in a small hall in the area where we sold most of our LABOR ACTION subs during the last drive. This is a predominantly Negro area in Berkeley, about half way between Oakland and Richmond.

(3) Classes: One elementary class on the foundations of Marxism. One more advanced class on the nature and meaning of the Transitional Program. Both classes to meet weekly.

(4) Sales of LABOR ACTION at three union meetings in the East Bay (UAW, CIO Machinists and AFL Central Labor Council) and one or two in San Francisco (longshoremen, seamen) - all of these weekly.

(5) Personal contact work, with concentration on readers of LABOR ACTION and contacts made in union and AVC meetings. Right now much of the "contact time" is being spent following up LABOR ACTION subscribers for renewals.

D. Estimate of the Situation and Perspectives.

It may seem from the above that the branch is carrying out a full schedule of activities and that there are no serious problems. This would be more or less true if the above activities, plus the outside activities, were carried out as per schedule, efficiently and without undue friction. That, however, is not the case. With the membership scattered over the area, with some people inexperienced and others beset with personal and family problems, and with yet others requiring constant supervision, checking and encouragement to carry on their work, the lack of a full-time organizer has been felt very keenly. The most responsible and experienced member of the branch works at a trade which takes him out of town for days at a time and on such an irregular schedule that he cannot make appointments from one day to the next except when he lays off work. The result is that simple things like distributions get balled up, the younger comrades do not get the necessary direction in their external activities, education, particularly systematic personal education is a hit and miss proposition.

One thing striking about the branch is the slimness of its "good" contact list. With the boys working in AVC and with a general tightening up of activity I think this can be overcome. The colonization just completed, with the addition of Comrade Milton Miller should provide what was lacking: experienced people and a full-time organizer. The prospects are now good that when we do get a good contact we will have enough competent people in a position to talk to him and educate him. In some ways, the selling of the paper is an advantage as those who buy regularly can be tabbed as contacts, while those who took it when it was free were too many.

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(NOTE: Since the above was written (August 29, 1946), a number of changes have taken place in San Francisco: Comrade Milton Miller is now there as full-time organizer; the branch has just rented a new headquarters in Oakland. In the near future we hope to publish a report of developments in San Francisco by Comrade Miller. - Editor)

SOUTH PHILADELPHIA CONSUMERS AND TENANTS LEAGUE  
by E. Fox (Philadelphia)

-17

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The Consumers and Tenants League was the result of the lifting of price controls and a conscious effort on the part of a handful of women to organize themselves and become part of the consumers' movements that were sweeping the country.

Our C.T.L. started in a Spanish colony in a rather poverty-stricken section of the city. I would call them not a permanent proletarian element but a declassed group of people. I believe the lumpen nature of this group was the cause for the final disintegration of the C.T.L. Had the composition of the C.T.L. been that of workers' and unionists' wives, the final outcome of our particular situation would have been entirely different.

During the formation of the C.T.L. the spirit had been excellent and we were all anxious to get started. The idea of permanent organization was strong during our first few weeks of existence. We received a tremendous amount of support and cooperation from the entire Spanish community. They gave us free use of the Spanish Club for headquarters. A Spanish cafe owner supplied our picket line with coffee and doughnuts, etc.

At the first meeting we decided to begin with a demonstration. We selected the largest neighborhood meat market to picket on Friday and Saturday, the most important shopping days. Although we had no long range plan, we found ourselves following a pattern. At a later date after getting some U.A.W. bulletins, we found that we had not missed a trick. The manner in which we worked was effective. This is a simple outline of the action taken by the C.T.L., on which I shall further elaborate:

1. Select the most strategic shopping center for picketing on the most important shopping days.
2. Go back to the picketed markets to solicit for pledges with the C.T.L. to stay at June 30th levels, under the threat of further picketing.
3. A price negotiation meeting held with all retailers, the C.I.O. and the C.T.L.
4. Investigating Committees -
  - (a) Check to see if retailers are keeping pledges;
  - (b) Publish a consumers' guide to be distributed widely with blacklist for violators and recommended lists for those who are cooperating. Plus further picketing of violators and those who refuse to cooperate.

Our attack was directed mainly against the retailer. It was the retailer we had to pressure in order to force his cooperation in a boycott against the wholesalers and meat packers.

Our picket line was successful. We picketed for two entire days. Business dropped to about less than 10% of normal. The butchers were anxious to come to terms with us. They took our organization seriously. Other demonstrations in the city were not nearly as effective. Most of them were C.P. affairs. They picketed for an hour or two; their action was never followed up in any way; the results were nil except for some newspaper publicity.

When our Committee went back for pledges, we had rather involved discussions and were forced to call a larger meeting including all of the neighborhood meat retailers. To take action on an individual butcher or group of butchers meant nothing except hurting his business. This had to be worked out on a much broader basis, first locally, then city-wide, state and nationwide. Which meant that this was a job for the C.I.O. working hand in hand with organized consumers groups. We, in the meantime, had to do an effective job locally and appealed to Moyer, who is the Philadelphia C.I.O. head of Buyers Committee, to broaden this action and make it city-wide and then to try to make contacts through the national C.I.O. organization or at least work it out with neighboring cities. Although he told us we were doing an excellent job and was very anxious that the C.I.O. do the negotiating with us at our meeting, he felt that that was sufficient, that no more had to be done, that the C.I.O. was doing an effective enough job. He was not interested in drawing the union rank and file into this movement nor was he interested in the further development of our league. He had gotten sufficient publicity and that was enough for him.

Mr. J. McBride represented the C.I.O. at our meeting, at our request. We had a good representation of retailers not only from the neighborhood but merchants in other sections of the city heard of it and attended. A large meat retail chain had several representatives, including their lawyer - all of these factors indicating the seriousness with which they took our movement. The outcome was that they could absolutely not keep at the June 30th level. After having it out on the floor, the butchers accepted part of the guilt in the small scale profiteering that came about with the lifting of controls. It was accepted unanimously that they would keep to prices established by the C.T.L. after our thorough investigation of their receipts, etc., and they pledged fullest cooperation. We had won a real victory. And again I must repeat that this had to be national policy. When the C.I.O. representative spoke, he spoke in terms of national policy - otherwise we would have been laughed out of the meeting, because they felt, and rightly so, that even if the entire city were organized into a boycott against wholesalers and meat packers, they would not have been affected in the least - they would simply have shipped their meat elsewhere.

Meanwhile the C.T.L. had begun to disintegrate. The women began to lose interest. As each week passed, more women dropped out of the club. We had at our highest peak fifty women, but hundreds of sympathizers who would have come out with us on demonstrations. We had no solid corp on whom we could depend. There were just the three of us doing the bulk of the organizational work and just generally keeping activity

going. By the time our negotiation meeting rolled around, we had about 15 members.

Meanwhile the C.P. controlled C.T.L. groups got wind of this spontaneous women's demonstration and licked their chops like the cat about to swallow the canary. We visited several of them and found there were a few very active women (Stalinists) doing a great deal of organizational work but found them to be political incompetents. We would have met their challenge and worked with them with the purpose of winning them over but their organizations were not genuine ones. They had no outside following. The composition of their groups were Stalinists and sympathizers, and we decided it was best to keep away from them.

We made a break with Moyer after a rather heated discussion over the lack of C.I.O. interest and cooperation. We threatened to appeal to the rank and file and told him we intended to visit each union local and inform them of the role he was playing as head of the Buyers Committee. But we did not follow up our threat. With the dropping out of our members and the lack of C.I.O. support and the nature of other consumers groups being what it was, it was purposeless to continue our bluff. If one of these conditions had been otherwise, it would have been enough to go ahead. That is, if our group was strong, we could have accomplished something by an appeal to the C.I.O. rank and file for further C.T.L. developments throughout the city; or, if the C.I.O. had given us support, we would have disregarded the weakness of our group and gone elsewhere to organize militants' wives or even militant union women; or, if there were other worthwhile C.T.L.'s, we would have penetrated them or fused with them. But none of these factors were in our favor and we decided to dissolve at the following meeting.

E.G. and I are going to keep in touch with an Adults Activities Committee at the Neighborhood Center (which gave us quite a bit of help) in order to keep in touch with neighborhood activities.