

PARTY BUILDER

SWP Organizational Discussion Bulletin

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PARTY BUILDER

The January 2-4, 1976, National Committee meeting authorized a written discussion in the *Party Builder* on implementation and organization of party building activities outlined in the report to the National Committee on Implementation of the Party Turn.

The *Party Builder* is open to all members to exchange experiences in various fields of our political activity and to put forward suggestions for making this activity more effective.

The *Party Builder* discussion is not for the purpose of determining political line; its specific purpose is to serve as a medium to aid the implementation of the decisions of the August 1975 convention and January 1976 plenum.

The *Party Builder* is now open to all members of the SWP. All contributions must be submitted on white paper in typed, triple-spaced format to the national office and should include title, author, and author's branch. Contributions must be typed 60 characters or less per line to facilitate typesetting for the bulletin.

The Political Committee suggests that contributions be held to no longer than 20 triple-spaced pages. If comrades have several topics they are writing on it would usually be more effective if they break them into separate articles.

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PAT WRIGHT ELECTION CAMPAIGN

by Nancy Fields

Downtown Brooklyn Branch
New York City Local

The Brooklyn branch began its work during the fall period with the aim of carrying out in practice the perspective adopted at the August 1975 party convention. This meant that the branch had to find a way to reach the workers who lived in Brooklyn and who were being hit directly by the impact of the economic crisis. The student work of the Young Socialist Alliance, of course, continued and grew at Brooklyn College and important beginning work was done in the high schools and at a few of the community colleges during the cutbacks struggles. In addition, important trade union work was conducted by comrades in the teachers union and particularly by Pat Wright herself in the day care struggle. However, for the branch itself to have any real life independent of the YSA and the work of a few trade union comrades, this turn into Brooklyn's working class was critical.

It should be understood that Brooklyn is an immense area with a huge population. Separated from the rest of New York City, it would be the third or fourth largest city in the U.S. It is overwhelmingly working class in composition, with a heavy majority of minority workers, largely Black, but also with a significant Spanish-speaking population. In addition, it is a center for Caribbean immigrants, both English speaking and Haitian.

The 14th Congressional district—Wright's district—is almost entirely made up of minority workers living in the Bedford-Stuyvesant, Fort Greene, Williamsburg and Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. It has been one of the districts in the city hardest hit by the racist nature of the cutbacks. Unemployment is at 40 percent and the city is now threatening to close the only two hospitals in the area. Already ten day care centers in the district have been closed. The largest industrial employer in the area—Seatrains at the Brooklyn Navy Yard—which had a program to train minority workers in the District was closed down last year and has only recently reopened with a skeleton force.

We began our work with the sale of the *Militant* coordinated with the Wright election campaign. Our aim was to develop some roots in the community, understanding that these roots in turn could only strengthen us in the unions because, after all, trade unionists lived in these communities.

The branch started sales in several housing "projects," some public, some cooperative. It was a period of

experimentation. However, we did have some ideas of where to go before we began. First we steered clear of the oldest, most rundown public housing because these projects are crime and drug ridden, people fear to open their doors, and they are largely made up of welfare recipients who are quite demoralized. It was clear to us that we needed to build a base as much as possible in areas of predominantly employed workers.

We did not do any door-to-door work in the low rise, largely family owned, housing that makes up the bulk of the working class housing in the borough for both Black and white workers. This is not because such work would not be fruitful, but rather because we began our work as the cold weather started and the housing projects, because of their concentration of people, offered an easier place to get a start. I mention this because in many other cities in the country housing projects are far less numerous and in even worse shape than in New York, co-ops with minority populations are non-existent, and thus, this type of work will necessarily have to be carried out through door-to-door work in a specific neighborhood.

We started in four housing complexes: Wyckoff Gardens, Lafayette Gardens, Ebbets Field and Lindsay Park Houses. Both Wyckoff and Lafayette are public housing projects but they have been built more recently and have a largely working class population. Wyckoff is in an area known as South Brooklyn which is largely Spanish with an old Italian population as well, but the project itself has many Blacks in it. Lafayette is on the border line of the massive Bedford-Stuyvesant Black area.

Ebbets Field is a Mitchell-Lama Co-op in the Crown Heights section of the city, an area which has a large Caribbean population. It has relatively high rents and is considered by its Democratic Congressman, Fred Richmond, to be "middle class." It is actually composed almost entirely of minority workers with a large percentage of recently-laid off city employees. Because of our forces and the distance between these projects, we did little work in this Co-op in the fall period. However, since the division of the Brooklyn branch, it has become an important area of work for the new East Flatbush-Crown Heights branch.

In fact, during the recent Marcia Gallo speaking tour in East Flatbush, the Ebbets Field Tenants Council invited Pat Wright to speak at their meeting which was attended by approximately 100 tenants. The campaign committee distributed a leaflet stating the SWP candidates support

for the tenants struggle against impending rent increases. Wright was introduced by the president of the tenants council, who told the audience how pleased she was to see that their struggle was gaining support from groups such as the SWP. Pat was able to introduce Gallo as the senatorial candidate. One interesting feature of the meeting was that Pat spoke before a leading Black Democrat, and when he got up to speak he was forced to try to sound more "militant" than Pat by declaring that he not only supported the tenants fight but he personally would lead it. It is highly doubtful that many of the tenants sitting in the room believed that.

The fourth area we began to sell in was the Lindsay Park Houses. I will concentrate on this work because it was at Lindsay Park that we began to gain a real base for our election campaign and it has led to the first beginnings of recruitment of minority workers directly to the branch.

Lindsay Park is the largest city-financed Mitchell-Lama complex in New York. It is composed of seven 20-story buildings with 18 apartments on a floor. In total, over 2,000 families live there. While it was set up to provide subsidized housing for moderate income families, rents have risen quite drastically in the last few years. It has a highly integrated population, with two buildings being composed almost entirely of old Jewish workers. The other buildings have a mixed Spanish-speaking, Black and white population. However, most of the younger workers are Black and it has been among them that the campaign has gained the biggest response. The houses have a strong tenants organization, with floor captains on each floor, various community activities and their own newspaper.

We actually started this work in an accidental way since this complex was the furthest from the downtown Brooklyn hall, is only partially in Wright's district (while the other three mentioned are entirely in her area), and lastly, it seemed from a "surface" look to be middle class. However, since the branch had a Black supporter, who had attended NSCAR activities and ERA forums, and who lived in Lindsay Park, it seemed like a logical way to involve her immediately in campaign activities. Once started, we found an immediate response. We discovered that most of the tenants were union workers in some of the most important unions in the city.

I wish to stress that the work began as a coordinated effort between the campaign committee and the *Militant* sales work. When we knocked on the door of an apartment, we announced ourselves as "so and so from the Brooklyn Socialist Workers Campaign Committee. We are running in this district against the Democrats and Republicans. Our candidate, Pat Wright, is a Black worker who opposes the cutbacks and rent increases. We would like to talk to you."

Once the door opened, and in almost all cases it did, we would then use the *Militant* reprint of the "City Crisis" campaign statement to discuss our program and candidates concretely. It was only then that we would introduce the *Militant* as the *campaign* newspaper both for the campaign here and nationally. We found that by beginning with the campaign we could sell the *Militant* to every door that opened. We have found that, on the average, a team of three comrades can sell at least 30 papers in a little over an hour's time.

As we began to carry out this work on a consistent basis,

we developed a list of contacts who wished to learn more of the campaign and to help us if they could.

It must be emphasized that the entire branch was not involved in this activity. Some branch members were doing campaign work in the other three projects mentioned, while other members were involved in other areas of branch activity. The work at Lindsay Park never really involved more than three comrades and our campaign supporter at any one time. Our supporter and myself were the only permanent members of what might be loosely called the campaign team which tried to do work at Lindsay Park at least once a week. I think that the important thing to note if this work is to be successful and lead to real recruitment to the party, is not the number of branch members who carry out the work but the consistency with which it is done.

It was shortly after this work had just begun that the Willie Mae Reid tour took place. We decided to organize an informal social in the Lindsay Houses. We got the agreement of our supporter to hold a reception for Willie Mae in her apartment. On short notice we were able to build a social of approximately 20 independents. With the exception of one new student contact and the party members themselves, the independents were young Black workers. Many came from the building where the reception was held. Pat Wright introduced Willie Mae who gave a short presentation that was followed by an extremely lively discussion on the nature of capitalism, why we think socialism will work, etc. Almost everyone there signed up to support the campaign.

One of the residents who attended the meeting was a Black organizer for the Drug and Hospital Workers Union, Local 1199. It was through our contact with him that we learned of a bitter strike the union was conducting at a nursing home in Mount Vernon in Westchester County. We learned that they were mobilizing 1199 workers from the entire New York City area to attend a demonstration to bring forth the strength of the entire union against the reactionary nursing home owners. We were able to send a group of party members from branches throughout the city and to introduce the socialist campaign to this very important section of the working class in this way. Pat Wright marched on the picket line and introduced herself as the SWP candidate from Brooklyn.

It was soon after this highly successful Willie Mae event that the decision was made to divide the branch into two new branches: downtown Brooklyn and East Flatbush. As part of the concept of moving to smaller branches to facilitate the turn into the working class projected by the party's political resolution, it seemed to this writer that this decision could only strengthen our work *if* it was understood that the work in Lindsay Houses, and related work which would have to begin in Bedford-Stuyvesant proper around the Wright campaign and the sales of the *Militant*, would become the heart of the new Downtown branch. The East Flatbush branch would then be able to develop new work the old branch could not do in Ebbets Field and Crown Heights, while the Brooklyn College YSA concentrated on campus work as well as developing high school work.

I think it is important to emphasize that when I am talking about seeing the campaign concentrating on a neighborhood area such as Lindsay Park and Ebbets

Field, I am not talking about the branch simply becoming a community branch doing tenant organizing work. I think it must be seen that, through the use of the campaign, these areas provide the branch with a base for the many other areas of party activity, particularly in the antiracist and cutbacks work as well as in the trade union work of the party as a whole. By seeing the campaign as the heart of the branch's activity and focusing in on a highly concentrated section of the candidate's district, a very small branch can actually facilitate its ability to recruit new members as well as to win many more as campaign supporters.

It was following the division of the branches that we stumbled upon a whole new aspect of the struggle there. As mentioned earlier Lindsay Park is part of the joint city-state wide system of housing set up under Mitchell-Lama Housing. This housing act was established in 1955 as part of a joint city-state venture to provide low cost, decent housing to middle income workers. In order to qualify for a Mitchell-Lama apartment, a family had to meet a certain means test to show that they actually "deserved" state subsidized housing. Under the program, 50,000 city-financed Mitchell-Lama apartments were constructed and 52,000 state-financed units were built.

The most famous Mitchell-Lama unit is COOP City in the Bronx which has 60,000 residents and has been on a rent strike for nine months now. What becomes obvious from these figures is that, in the midst of the New York City and state financial crisis, the struggle over the rent increases the city and state claim they must enact is no minor issue.

Lindsay Park tenants began to hold meetings to discuss the situation at COOP City, understanding that if the COOP City struggle was defeated, the way would be open for wholesale rent increases on all Mitchell-Lama housing. Through these meetings we learned of a proposal for a city-wide demonstration of all Mitchell-Lama residents to be held at COOP City in support of the strike there. At this point, we saw our opportunity to make our impact in the co-op more concrete as fighters in defense of the working class. We contacted the City Office to propose a citywide participation in this rally. This proposal was taken up and as a result, we had a very successful intervention with our candidates talking to many workers and with the *Militant* being the predominant paper at the demonstration. At the same time, this action encouraged many other branches in the city to look to work in co-ops in their districts—and there are co-ops in every district in New York where we are presently working.

I think this is an important illustration of some of the strengths that can come from the new party structures that are emerging in the increasing number of cities with multi-branch situations. Here an initiative came from one branch. It led, through the intervention of the City Committee, to a concerted citywide intervention far more effective than one branch could make. This, in turn, has encouraged other branches in the city to try out new areas of work they were previously unaware of.

Immediately following the COOP City rally, a joint campaign dinner sponsored by both East Flatbush and Downtown Brooklyn was held in a home in downtown Brooklyn. We were able to bring several key people from Lindsay Park, several high school students and West Indians from East Flatbush, and we made more than three

times what we had originally budgeted for the affair to help the campaign financially.

This struggle in housing is just at a beginning stage. The Beame Administration has just proposed that a provision of the Mitchell-Lama act (known as the Merola Law), which prohibited rent increases in Mitchell-Lama units more than once every two years, be scrapped. Beame's proposal only needs the approval of the Emergency Financial Control Board to be approved. What this means is there will be immediate drastic rent increases for tens of thousands. At the same time, the State Legislature approved a bill which would allow private investors to purchase the notes on the mortgages in Mitchell-Lama in order to bail out the crisis-ridden State Housing Agency. These two plans together will mean the end of any type of moderate income housing in New York City whatsoever. The very threat of the implementation of rent hikes has led to increased tenant organizing throughout Mitchell-Lama with plans being made for united rent strike action if these hikes go through.

There is another important political feature of the struggle. The Communist Party is very heavily involved in these co-ops through its influence in the Metropolitan Council on Housing and through many CP members and especially old supporters of the CP who live in these co-ops. Their orientation is, of course, to turn the whole struggle into the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Our action in this struggle can be important in breaking the hold of the CP in this area. In addition, many newly formed coalitions are developing to organize a fight against these attacks and we can play a central role in them.

Also, it can be an important base for an initiative to bring about a united struggle against the cutbacks—combining with the students, the unions etc. It gives us another area of support, in addition to the students and our beginnings in some unions, to bring about the kind of united conference we are seeking and to further our conceptions of building a labor party.

Future plans for the campaign are now being worked out. We plan to continue the work at Lindsay Park with regular sales of the *Militant* and to have both Pat Wright and Marcia Gallo speak at various tenants meetings. We also just held an informal meeting at the home of our former campaign supporter (she is now a provisional member) to discuss the possibility of a new members and contact class at Lindsay Park. Another new campaign supporter (who has also expressed interest in joining the party) brought three of her friends to this meeting who were interested in attending, as well as helping to build, a basics class on socialism. A five part class series has been worked out.

We plan to hold an outdoor barbeque in May (yes, in Brooklyn we do have backyards) with tickets at a reasonable price sold well in advance. We are sure that at least 100-200 people can be brought to such an event to meet the candidates, hear a short presentation, and become involved in the campaign.

We are presently discussing with the East Flatbush branch the possibility of a joint election campaign around Pat Wright. One of the main areas East Flatbush works in is in Pat's Congressional District. The idea would be that each branch would have its own campaign committee and work. However, they would share the candidate and put

out a certain amount of election material jointly with both branches addresses on the material. Such an arrangement would allow both branches to grow and have independent experiences and still would give the Wright campaign a very powerful thrust in the borough.

Other plans that the campaign committee is making include setting up campus speaking tours for Wright, Gallo and particularly around the Peter Camejo tour. Since the Downtown Brooklyn branch does not have a YSA connected to it, we see the use of the campaign to begin to form a students for Wright movement on these campuses (the four we are investigating are all in the 14th CD) as a way to lay the basis for the future development of YSA chapters at these schools.

One final point should be made about the campaign committee itself. We have attempted to see that the campaign committee is an open one where all supporters are invited and can actually bring their ideas into the campaign and help the campaign in carrying out its plans. We see that the campaign committee meeting is often the best place to invite potential recruits (rather than to immediately bring them to a branch meeting). It serves as a way to integrate new supporters into our movement,

introduce them more fully to our politics and finally to give them an idea of how the party actually functions.

We are trying to hold regularized meetings on the same night each week so that new people can know when to attend. The entire branch is aware of the time and place of these meetings and everyone, not simply those directly involved in the campaign, can bring their contacts to these meetings.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the work being done at Lindsay Park and now beginning at Ebbets Field has extreme importance for the election campaign. In addition, we can see its direct relation to *Militant* sales, recruitment, educational work and the general party struggles against cutbacks and racism. However, this work can only be fruitful if three or four comrades are free to devote their time on a week-by-week basis to this work. The area must be visited at least one night a week and on Saturdays so that the comrades become known throughout the area and are actually seen as fighters in the developing struggles. As I emphasized before, the key to success in this area of work is not the number of comrades involved but the consistency in which the work is actually carried out.

BUILDING A "NO-FRILLS" BRANCH

by Jane Roland

East Flatbush/Crown Heights Branch
New York City Local

THE PROBLEM: To build a branch of the Socialist Workers party with 24 members—12 of whom are on full-time national assignment and 9 who are in the YSA—plus 4 provisional members, without a headquarters, without a full-time organizer, and without much money.

BACKGROUND: At the end of December, 1975, the Brooklyn SWP voted to divide its membership and its resources into 2 branches, so as to better build our movement in Brooklyn. If it were a separate city it would be the third or fourth largest in the country, with the largest Black population of any city in the country, the largest Haitian and Jamaican populations and a large Puerto Rican population.

The new Downtown Brooklyn branch is presently still in the old headquarters orienting to the immediate area, around it and is in walking distance of 4 campuses. The rest of us moved southward to East Flatbush/Crown Heights in central Brooklyn. We had 13 locally assigned members, four of whom were to devote all their political energy to building the YSA at Brooklyn College.

THE SOLUTION: For most of us, "branch" had always been synonymous with "headquarters," a physical hall, and also, for most of us, a small branch was a new and unusual experience. Comrades liked the idea of working with a clearly defined smaller team, but were wary of what we could do to build the SWP without a physical base and without a full-time organizer to pull these things together. So we carefully assessed what we could do and how we could best utilize our resources.

From the beginning it was clear how important each individual was to our branch. If anyone did not carry out their assumed assignment, the task would not get done. Comrades responded and began participating in and heading up work with the obvious understanding of the importance of each of their roles in our work overall. This article will discuss those aspects of our work that especially pertain to building a branch without a headquarters—finances, sales and election campaign, and forums.

On Finances: We agreed that a branch of our size did not need nor could it afford a full-time organizer. And we made the decision not to look for a headquarters; that is, to put off securing a headquarters until we could save up the money on our own. This would have the additional benefit of us getting our office after we were more familiar with the specifics of our new turf and could place ourselves in the best location politically.

Our major source of income is the sustainers of a small branch. Our sustainer base is about \$200 a week (which includes sustainers from 12 nationally assigned comrades

with limited incomes). We had no windfall to draw on, but did have \$200 left over from last spring's tax-rebate Party building fund. That was our initial allocation towards our office.

We did not want to neglect our responsibilities to the Party nationally and from the beginning budgeted a sustainer to the N.O. of \$15 per member per month, as well as the several dollars per member per month each branch in the New York City local pays to sustain the city office and regional work. We made a tight budget, projecting a couple of hundred dollars to be put aside each month for our headquarters fund. However, because of back debts owed by a number of comrades to the old branch, we weren't able to set aside this much for the headquarters fund. However at the end of our third month it looks like we'll pick up a lot of what we missed in January and February and end up with over \$400 after our bills are paid. So, as usual, comrades' back debt has been our biggest financial problem.

We project locating a headquarters in April, paying the lease and renovating costs with our headquarters fund, and have budgeted \$200 into April and subsequent months for rent.

Each comrade in the branch is familiar with our budget projections. Everyone, of course, wants a headquarters. And the budget makes it clear that we can get one in a few months if sustainer is collected. Just like in taking on assignments, the importance of each of our financial contributions is obvious, and a number of comrades immediately raised their sustainers. (Conjunctural factors have since led to some decreases as well, unfortunately.)

Functioning without a headquarters: Most of our members live in the same neighborhood. We hold exec meetings in one apartment, branch meetings in another, and dispatch sales from another. We keep *Militants* in the sales director's home, campaign literature in the campaign director's home, Pathfinder literature in the bookstore director's home, etc., and the organizer was given an office in the Downtown Brooklyn hall to work out of, so there would be one clear place where comrades could locate her and where mail could come to.

Without a public headquarters or bookstore for the foreseeable future, we had to rely on several campaigns to publicize the SWP in East Flatbush and in Crown Heights: our sales and election campaign, and our forums.

Sales and campaign: We chose to concentrate on a housing complex in Crown Heights—Ebbets Field Houses—where the old "Brooklyn United" branch had done some beginning work, and began an intensive sales drive there, utilizing the election campaign of Pat Wright, SWP candidate for Congress. The tenants are almost

entirely Black and Caribbean, and the development was build under New York's Mitchell-Lama law, making it a sister development to Co-op City in the Bronx, where there has been a months-long rent strike. We sold scores of *Militants* and a number of subscriptions and distributed hundreds of pieces of campaign literature. Because of our work, we were invited to speak to the Ebbets Field tenants meeting. We also targeted a number of sales areas in the Black and Caribbean community where we wanted to be seen regularly and become known.

Forums: In the beginning we suspected that, because we had no headquarters, our forum series would be sporadic and low-key. We quickly found the opposite to be true: because we had no headquarters, our forums took on special importance as the one time each week that we had a place to invite people to. We aimed our forums squarely at the Black and Caribbean population—our first four topics were on the struggle in Jamaica, on Malcolm X, on the role of women in the African revolution, and on the struggle in Haiti. We utilized outside speakers from Jamaican and Haitian support groups, from the Pan-African Student Organization of the Americas, from the Zimbabwe African National Union, in order to establish good working relations with organizations in our community. We held our forum on Jamaica with the YSA at Brooklyn College and drew in dozens of Caribbean students. The others we hold at the First Baptist Church of Brooklyn and a local poverty agency storefront. Both the church and the storefront are well known to the community we are reaching out to, and so even the fact of the locations helps draw people to the forums. Because of the role our forums play in developing our branch as a public organization in East Flatbush and Crown Heights, we are conscious of not letting publicity slip; we send weekly mailings, followed up with phone calls, and publicize the forums on campus, in subway paste-ups, and classified ads in the *Militant* and the *Amsterdam News*.

We've drawn large crowds—up to 50 to a forum—all Black and Caribbean independents. As well, we attract some people who relate to whoever's place we hold the forum at. For example, several of the poverty agency people came to the Malcolm X forum held at the storefront, and were visibly impressed, during the questions session, with our defense of the call for federal troops to Boston to

ensure desegregation. These people will be future contacts for our antiracist work. Several people have been returning to our forums, that is, we are beginning to develop our own new contacts and future members.

Holding our forums outside a headquarters has been so successful that we are discussing the idea of continuing the practice even after we have a headquarters—bringing the SWP to the community, rather than waiting for the community to come to us. As well, knowing we can hold forums outside our own offices gives us more flexibility in securing a headquarters, which will not need a meeting hall that seats fifty.

On not spreading ourselves too thin: Working without a headquarters is a definite handicap. It's difficult to build the Party without a place to bring people to, without an address to hand out. As well, there are other problems. Comrades work alone at home each night, instead of together at a central base. Even a simple matter of getting *Militants* to comrades to sell becomes a chore. If a meeting location changes, we run the risk of losing someone in the change. It's a strain, so key to our work has been establishing priorities and sticking to them. As well as our sales and campaign work and building our forums, we are engaged in antiracist work around the proposed re-zoning and desegregation of schools in Brooklyn and women's liberation work through NOW. But pacing our work is the major responsibility of the exec.

For example, we initially proposed running an election campaign against Elizabeth Holtzman, Congresswoman in the 16th C.D. She's a good candidate to run against, an outspoken Zionist, a white woman in a district becoming more Black each year, a liberal who has so far refused to take a stand on the question of school desegregation. However, we've decided instead to build a Crown Heights campaign committee for Pat Wright for Congress in the 14th C.D. Wright was initially fielded as the Downtown Brooklyn candidate; however, a large section of Crown Heights, the area we are working in, is in the 14th C.D. Our community is essentially split between the 14th and the 16th C.D.'s, so we were able to make this choice based on our resources rather than on geography. Although the campaign against Holtzman is tempting, with a handful of comrades, our resources would go much further in developing, together with the other Brooklyn branch, a strong campaign for Wright, than by each of us straining to run a campaign with limited forces.

SUGGESTIONS ON BRANCH EDUCATION

Submitted by the National Education
Department

During the past two years, the National Education Department sent out mailings containing reports and evaluations by comrades on branch educational activities. Such reports have made it easier for branches to share their experiences, and to profit from the innovations, errors, and insights of other branches.

Such sharing of experience is going to be particularly important in the next period, because of the vast number of new experiences our members will be having. They will be in smaller branches with new arenas of work, a changing relationship to the YSA, a provisional membership category, and a changing composition of our prospective and new members.

Following are seven selections from communications to the National Education Department which I think will be particularly useful. The first consists of excerpts from the spring educational suggestions sent out by the National Education Department. The other six are from communications to the National Education Department by branch activists.

The turn we are making, and the large number of new branches, make such reports to the National Education Department more indispensable than ever. Every branch without exception has experiences in its education and recruitment work which it is important to make available to the movement as a whole.

All of the items below have been excerpted and edited from longer communications by the National Education Department.

Fred Feldman
March 1976

1. Some suggestions for branch education (from the spring educational proposal of the National Education Department), by Fred Feldman, January 28, 1976.

Following are some suggestions from the National Education Department on the organization of branch educational programs for the spring.

1. *Education for Provisional Members*

In order to facilitate recruitment to the party, we have established the category of provisional members.

Thus, it is important, now, for branches to establish educational programs to introduce these comrades to the basic political ideas and history of our movement and help them make the final decision about membership.

Provisional members vary widely. Some will be workers, others students; some will have considerable knowledge of our ideas and activities, while others will know very little;

some will have been active in struggles, while others may never have participated; they will be of different nationalities and may be comfortable in different languages. They will have many different questions and concerns—some may have questions about religion, others about what socialism is, and still others may have questions about Maoism.

To be effective, our educational programs for provisional members must be tailor-made to the specific needs of each individual. In reality, there will need to be as many educational programs as there are provisional members.

A key role will be played in many cases by patient and extensive individual discussion. Branches may want to consider assigning comrades to work with provisional members—answering their questions, helping them prepare reading programs in line with their particular needs and interests, and carrying on general political discussions. In some cases, it may be desirable to suggest that provisional members attend contact classes on socialism. In still other cases, provisional members may be ready to participate in the regular branch educational programs without special assistance.

Because of the wide differences among provisional members, it is impossible to develop one or two programs that will meet all their needs. Great flexibility and imagination will be needed.

All provisional members will benefit from a study of the party's political resolution, "Prospects for Socialism in America." By now branches have received the five-class study guide on this topic that was prepared by the National Education Department.

2. *Recruitment Classes*

As our prospects for recruitment continue to grow, recruitment classes will play an important role. There are at least two basic types of recruitment classes.

One are classes aimed at drawing new people to our movement. They are basic, introductory classes on the ideas of socialism and are often held at the party headquarters. Branches should seek to establish such classes as a regular part of branch activity. Consideration should be given to publicizing the class schedules through leaflets, through advertisements in the *Militant* calendar, and by other means.

Branches should also be alert to possibilities to establish small classes around a workplace, a neighborhood, or among the activists in a particular struggle. Such classes may be more specialized than the advertised contact classes, depending on the interests of the specific group of contacts. They may center, for instance, around our strategy for the labor movement. Such classes can be

particularly effective in drawing people closer to us because the participants already know each other and have areas of mutual interest.

3. Branch Internal Education

The aim of the spring class series should be, to the greatest extent possible, to involve every member in a class, with each having the time to devote study to the subject. In many cases, this can best be accomplished through a concentrated class series, limiting class sessions to a realistic number (three to five) over a short period of time.

One method that has often proven effective is the holding of special branch educational weekends organized around a single topic. This allows the branch to organize its work to allow for a brief period of concentrated educational activity. Such classes are also usually very attractive to contacts, although their primary aim should be education of our members.

Some branches are experimenting with smaller class sizes in their internal educational programs. In some cases, this requires holding several classes concurrently. This may increase participation in discussion, and may also provide greater flexibility in the scheduling of classes.

4. Socialist Educational Weekends

Socialist Educational Weekends, when well-organized and publicized, can be useful recruiting tools. Such weekend activities, unlike the branch educational weekends described earlier, are not primarily internally oriented, but should be seen as propaganda activities for our movement.

The most successful Socialist Educational Weekends have concentrated on a single topic like African liberation, the women's movement, or the economy. Branches or locals that decide to hold such activities will want to link them closely to the Camejo-Reid campaign.

5. Party Publications

The following publications are available from the National Education Department:

a. *Guide to Marxist Education* (Education for Socialists, \$.90)

This publication contains eight study guides on basic topics, such as party organizational principles, the Chinese revolution and Maoism, united front vs. popular front, etc. In addition, it contains an article by Gus Horowitz on party education, a listing of some of the tapes available from the National Office, and other items.

b. *Twelve Study Guides for Classes* (Party Builder, Vol. 8, No. 3, 32 pp., \$.40)

This contains study guides on Chile, the history of the Fourth International, Dobbs' Teamsters series, *Speeches to the Party*, *Black Liberation and Socialism*, and other subjects.

Both *Guide to Marxist Education* and *Twelve Study Guides for Classes* are very useful for those who want to study topics individually, as well as for branch education.

c. *Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, by Farrell Dobbs (available in Internal Information Bulletin No. 7 in 1974, 96 pp., \$1.20)

The Education for Socialists publication containing Dobbs' lecture series is out of print. However, it appears as an appendix to Internal Information Bulletin No. 7 in 1974. This very useful bulletin also contains the 1965 resolution on "The Organizational Principles of the Socialist Workers Party," Cannon's "Internationalism and the SWP," and Jack Barnes' August 1974 talk on "Secret Factionalism—a Threat to the Unity of the International."

Copies of this bulletin are available to all party members, provisional members, and YSA members.

6. Education for Socialists Publications

The past few years have seen expansion in the sale and distribution of the Education for Socialists series. These publications are among the main publicly available sources for studying the thinking of our movement on a wide variety of important subjects: the theory of the state and its applications; the use of the transitional program in the antiracist struggle; our position on Zionism and Palestinian nationalism; the history of the world movement; tactics and strategy in the antiwar movement; how to fight against fascist and ultraright attacks, and many other issues.

Branches should give serious consideration to ways to better use and promote this series. Sales to nonmembers of the party have been on the increase.

Consideration should be given to placing some of the more appealing bulletins (*From Mississippi to Boston*; *Israel and the Arab Revolution*; *The Fight Against Fascism in the USA*; etc.) into bookstores and other outlets that carry political pamphlets and periodicals.

The branches are encouraged to get standing orders of the Education for Socialists publications and to consciously increase their efforts to get comrades to read and study these bulletins. The Education for Socialists series represents an extraordinary value. The 96-page bulletin on *Revolutionary Strategy in the Fight Against the Vietnam War*, for instance, contains material that would fill a 225-page book.

Brief reports (not just announcements) should be made when a new Education for Socialists publication is issued. They can also be used for pre-branch-meeting educationals.

In the future, the *Militant* will be advertising new Education for Socialists publications as they appear, and will carry occasional reviews of them.

2. Report on recruitment and new members classes in Washington, D.C., by Jim Rousey, December 1, 1975.

Following is the reading list and class schedule for the party new members and prospective members class. The new members class has been going on for three weeks; it draws an average of nine comrades and is based on a similar class from the spring.

The format is an informal 15 minute talk with an hour and a half for discussion. The questions from the *Guide to Marxist Education* (Education for Socialists, \$.90) are used as a general guide to the discussion. I've enclosed the ones we used for the class on the Transitional Program.

The contact class is an attempt to fill a need in regard to our contacts who are not members of the YSA.

* * *
Class on "What is Socialism?"

(Branch prospective members class held Sunday afternoons at 2:30 pm)

1. Why Socialism is Necessary.
2. Racism, Women's Oppression, and the American Socialist Revolution.
3. How to Fight for Socialism.
4. Role of the Party in the Building of the Revolution.

Readings: James P. Cannon, *Socialism on Trial*; Stephanie Coontz, *What Socialists Stand For*; *ISR*, November 1975, Prospects for Socialism in America

* * *
New Members Class

(also held Sunday afternoons at 2:30 pm)

Class 1: Cannon, *History of American Trotskyism*, Chapters 1-6; Auxiliary Reading: *First Ten Years of American Communism*, pp. 35-228.

Class 2: *History*, Chapters 7-12; Auxiliary Reading: *Revolution Betrayed*, Chapters 4, 8-11.

Class 3: Leon Trotsky, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, pp. 72-112, 162-203; Auxiliary Reading: *ibid*, pp. 9-70, pp. 113-161.

Class 4: Cannon, *Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, pp. 1-75; Auxiliary Reading: Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism*.

Class 5: Cannon, *Speeches to the Party*, Introduction, pp. 25-91; Auxiliary Reading: pp. 92-123, 163-222.

Class 6: *Structure and Organizational Principles of the SWP, Constitution of the Socialist Workers Party*.

3. Materials (letter to friends and class outline) from a San Francisco recruitment class, December 1975

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY
1519 Mission Street
San Francisco, Ca.
Phone: 483-8919, 863-2205

Dear Friend,

During the month of December, the San Francisco Socialist Workers party is holding a series of classes and discussions on *What Socialists Stand For*. As you have expressed an interest in Socialist ideas, we are sending you a leaflet describing the classes, along with a list of optional readings for each class which might be helpful to you as background material. We are also enclosing a copy of the Political Resolution passed at the recent convention of the Socialist Workers party, the reading for the last class. We hope you will read this resolution, write down

any questions which you may have, and come and discuss them with us during this class series. Also, if you don't already subscribe to the Militant, we are enclosing a subscription blank for your convenience. The first class is on Saturday, December 6th at 3 p.m. Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,
Frank Calcagno
Socialist Workers party

* * *
WHAT SOCIALISTS STAND FOR
A SERIES OF THREE CLASSES

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS 3:00 p.m.—1519 Mission St.
(near Van Ness)

Class 1—*Marxist View of Economic Crisis—December 6*
What is the meaning of New York's impending default?
What caused today's depression?
What should trade unions be doing about it?
What are socialists' solutions?
Will socialism have inflation, unemployment, recessions, etc.

Suggested Readings: *Intro. to Marxist Economics* (pamphlet) by E. Mandel; *Capitalism in Crisis* by Dick Roberts.

Class 2—*What is Socialism?—December 13*
Can it solve today's problems?
Aren't American workers too conservative?
How can it be won?
Can human nature be changed?
Suggested Readings: *What Do Socialists Stand For?* (pamphlet) by Stephanie Coontz; *Socialism—Utopian and Scientific*.

Class 3—*The Political Program and the Organizational Structure of the Socialist Workers Party—December 20*
What does the SWP stand for?
What has it done?
What is its history?
How is it organized?
What is democratic centralism?
How to join?
Suggested Readings: 1975 SWP Political Resolution; *The Revolutionary Party* (pamphlet) by James P. Cannon.

LABOR DONATED (1975)

4. A brief report on Portland new members' classes, by Stacey Selgle, February 20, 1976

Our new members class was based on the class outline from the National Office. The problem with the series was lack of discussion, too much of a lecture format.

We had the first class last night in a new series on the 1975 SWP political resolution, *Prospects for Socialism in*

America. In the teachers meeting we held before the class, we tried to stress listening, discussion and being flexible as opposed to lecturing. Comrades report that it went much better, although we still tend to be overbearing—hopefully, comrades will ease up as we get accustomed to being around all these new people! We followed San Francisco's method: sending out an invitation to the class with a copy of the resolution, and a class outline. One new member, one to-be provisional member (as of Monday), three close contacts, and two relatively new contacts attended. Two more new contacts will be attending; one had the flu, and the other went to an abortion meeting with me. I think we will have a more rounded experience once we're into this series a little bit. The YSA's report by Miesa Patterson and the winning new members discussion in the builder both stressed the listening side; I suppose it can't be stressed too much, and I think we'll have more concrete and positive suggestions in a few weeks.

5. Report from Houston on post-class discussion and leadership role in education, by Mike Cracraft, October 1975.

Houston's summer school project focused on two class series, one on *Dynamics of World Revolution Today* and another on the Transitional Program.

After each class, reported education director Mike Cracraft, "the discussion session was conducted by the teacher rather than breaking up the audience into smaller groups. We found this format a more than adequate alternative and there was generally good participation by all, especially newer comrades who we initially felt might be intimidated by speaking before the full class. This was not the case, however, and the discussion was open and sometimes quite lively. Class attendance averaged around thirty-five which is testimony to the enthusiasm that the summer school engendered in comrades to assimilate the important readings."

Cracraft's report also takes up another key point:

"I think that certain important factors can be isolated to account for the phenomenal success of the summer school. On the objective side the usual necessary work of putting out study guides and leaflets, helping the teachers prepare good presentations, and promoting the series in general was important. On the subjective side, however, is perhaps a more important point. The branch leadership as a whole made the conscious decision that the summer school was a primary area of our work, and consequently promoted, attended, and participated in all of the classes. The importance of this cannot be underestimated.

"Our earlier experiences with education show that no matter how well advance preparation and organization are carried out (the 'objective' factor), if the branch leadership

does not get behind the educational effort, the chances of success are limited. This means that education cannot be considered as an activity to be engaged in if time permits. Branch education is a necessary activity in training leaders and providing all members with the tools of the trade of revolutionary politics.

"When planning education it is essential to select a format and a schedule realistic to the life of the branch so that the leading members will look upon participation as an important responsibility and will encourage the rest of the organization likewise. If this occurs education will be placed in its proper framework and will be a long way toward its goals."

6. Report on the use of study outlines in Los Angeles, by George Johnson, October 1975

The Los Angeles summer school focused on the transitional program and its application to the United States. Summer school director George Johnson sent in the following comments on the development of study guides:

"We prepared our own study guides for this series. In general, we used the National Office study guides and modified them for our own specific needs.

"This is a point that needs emphasizing. The study guides are very useful—my opinion is that they have gotten much better in the last couple of years—and the series are organized well, but *they are only guides*, and it is usually necessary to modify them considerably because of time considerations and current political requirements.

"In addition, Evelyn Sell came up with an idea which has a great deal of merit. For her class, we prepared a study guide. Evelyn also prepared a list of questions for the discussion. She also prepared a 'crib sheet' for the discussion leaders, which answered the questions.

"In such an arrangement, the *study guides* would then be used as a guide to reading and preparation before the class. The *discussion questions* (or *topics*) can then be geared much more specifically to the presentation.

"The usual procedure in organizing a class series is to prepare a study guide at least a week in advance for the students. Unfortunately, the preparation of the presentation, or at least the polishing-up, often occurs in that last week—especially in cases such as ours where National Office suggested outlines are heavily modified. Invariably, our study guides tend to be much more general than the actual presentation, since they are prepared prior to the completion of the presentation.

"The separate preparation of the *study guides* and the *questions* or *topics for discussion* can make the actual discussion much more concrete. It helps to focus on what the teacher (in collaboration with the education committee) wants to stress, which is always more limited than the questions in the National Office study guides."

7. Chicago's experience with a new educational format, by Howard Packer, June 23, 1975.

Our method was developed under the impetus of necessity. In 1974 the Chicago branch had the problem of organizing a series of educational classes on an important aspect of party history; reading-outlines and questions for discussion were available from the National Education Department.

1. The Problem of Time

To deal with the material adequately, an evening or two per week devoted entirely to the class series would have been desirable. From a practical point of view, we recognized that the load of comrades' activities was so heavy that attendance would be sparse if a separate evening were set aside for classes. Nevertheless, the subject matter was important for all SWP and YSA comrades.

Nearly all comrades would be present for the regular branch meeting each week, but time for a serious educational presentation and broad discussion was very limited at a branch business meeting.

2. Format

We decided to experiment with a special class format for part of the branch meeting time, on the grounds that it was more important to reach many comrades than to do a more thorough job with fewer comrades.

Branch meetings were started one-half hour earlier than formerly. The first one-and-one-half hours were devoted to educational presentation and discussion; the remaining time of one-and-one-half hours was reserved for branch business.

The classes had to be thoroughly organized, with strict attention to time limits, and operated with almost military precision. The comrades were prepared beforehand with detailed explanations and instructions.

An instructor's presentation began on the dot and ran for thirty-five minutes maximum. Comrades were allowed five minutes to arrange themselves into several discussion groups, each with a pre-assigned discussion leader. At first all comrades were pre-assigned to discussion groups, but this arrangement was dropped later.

Discussion of the questions, which were available on duplicated sheets, proceeded for forty-five minutes. Within five minutes thereafter the comrades reassembled for the start of the business meeting, which was organized by the Executive Committee to cover essential points, with time limits for each point.

There was no general discussion from the floor or questioning of the instructor. All discussion was conducted in the separate groups. The instructor became a discussion leader in one of the groups. Each group comprised about six to twelve persons. Class readings and questions were made available to comrades each week for the following week's class.

3. Meetings of Instructors and Discussion Leaders

A separate instructor was assigned for each class of the series. The instructors all served as discussion leaders for their own and others' classes; other comrades were also drawn in as discussion leaders.

An important part of the class preparation was a meeting each week, several days prior to the class, for the cadre of instructors, discussion leaders, and educational committee members to discuss and prepare for the next class. The instructor for the next class offered an outline of his or her presentation for criticisms and modification. Then the questions were discussed one at a time, the instructor taking the lead in order to insure agreement among the discussion leaders on a common approach to the questions and on the major points to be emphasized. Uncertainty on any point, or disagreement on interpretation, was discussed out until the teaching group reached a common understanding.

The policy agreed upon was to place major emphasis upon broad participation in the discussion groups. The instructors' presentations were not intended to answer the discussion questions on the sheets; they were intended, rather, to present an overview of the evening's topic, supply relevant factual and historical material, and lead up to the questions to be discussed -- while leaving the answers and interpretations to the discussion groups.

Since the questions which were prepared by the National Education Department were invariably too many for coverage in the time available, the pre-meeting selected questions for discussion, modified them if necessary, and designated their order. The discussion experiences of the previous weeks class were reviewed for criticism and suggestions.

4. Value of the Meetings

The meetings of instructors and discussion group leaders proved to be interesting and valuable. Deeper insight into the subject matter was gained by the participants, and the interest generated was so high that sometimes the meeting could not be adjourned at the designated time. Instructors and discussion leaders were better prepared for their tasks,

and the class group discussions were more effective as a result. Without the pre-discussions, the class series would have been less successful educationally.

5. Results of the New Format

Of course there were deficiencies and "hitches" in the classes. Reading of assigned material by all comrades was encouraged, but was not followed universally. The degree of reading participation was probably higher than in previous classes.

The experience of the first class series proved that by stringent organizational discipline, and by thorough preparation of instructors and discussion leaders, it was possible to:

1) Carry out a reasonably effective educational class series within a limited time framework;

2) Develop a cadre of instructors and discussion leaders. By collective effort we substituted a teaching corps for the individual highly talented teacher who was not available.

The procedures described above were adopted for several educational series. We conducted a class series on party history and on the Spanish Revolution, as well as the 1974 summer school on the history of the international, Stalinism, and the labor movement. YSA members and close sympathizers were invited to most classes.

Although the techniques were first devised to utilize limited class time, they have been extended beyond that function. We have recently applied the techniques in the ambitious project of simultaneously studying Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution (ten weekly classes) in summer school and, on branch-meeting night, studying educational material as background for the preconvention discussion.

OUT OF THE BOOKSTORE AND INTO THE STREET

By Marc Lichtman

Downtown Brooklyn Branch
New York City Local

In 1975, Brooklyn Militant Bookstore sales totalled more than \$3,700, up 38 percent over the previous year. This enabled us, in addition to the more obvious gains, to increase our rent to the branch from \$50 to \$75 per month. The way we were able to increase sales this dramatically was by running an interventionist bookstore; 49 percent of our sales were outside the store. Fifteen percent of our sales were at special events (city-wide forums, rallies, demonstrations, and Caribbean cultural festivals), 16 percent of our sales were on campus (Brooklyn College), and 18 percent of our sales were on sidewalk campaign/literature tables, set up on Fulton Street, in the heart of downtown Brooklyn's shopping area, just a block away from our headquarters.

It is the last of these that I will discuss in this article, since many branches have not tried sidewalk literature tables, and a few have tried this idea without much success.

We started the tables as an experiment in February of 1975, but they soon became a regular branch activity on Saturdays, with the only interfering factors being bad weather, or other political priorities for the branch that day. Comrades at our table have always been conscious about selling the *Militant*, so that the table has been seen as a part of our Saturday *Militant* sales, rather than as cutting into them. But it is important that such projects be discussed beforehand with the sales director and the organizer, and then evaluated after initial experience.

In addition to Saturdays, we set up a number of times on Thursday nights, when the stores are open late, and on holidays. We managed to set up 31 times during the year, and sold an average of \$21 per time out, with the table being up perhaps an average of 3 hours each time.

We give everyone who comes up to the table a copy of the Bill of Rights for Working People, a leaflet advertising our bookstore, and whatever leaflets we have on upcoming events. A number of people who received leaflets subsequently visited our bookstore. We also approach everyone to buy the *Militant*, and have sold quite a few at the table, and in the area, when we had additional comrades selling nearby. In general, the table makes the SWP quite visible in the downtown area.

One of the first things that we learned is the elementary fact that there is a correlation between the number of titles displayed and the quantity of sales. Put more simply, the more you have, the more you'll sell. We now use a 7' by 3' table, and take as much literature as will cover it, with titles partially overlapping each other. It is also possible to display additional books between bookends placed on the rear of the table. The literature should of course be placed under rows of string, so it doesn't blow away. Two people

are needed to staff a table this size, and we frequently have other comrades selling the *Militant* nearby. The majority of the titles we sell at the table are on the Black Struggle and Latin America; most of the street crowd is Black or Puerto Rican. But there is interest in other topics, and sales of such titles as *Life In Capitalist America*, and *What Socialists Stand For* have been good.

When we first started setting up the table we had some harassment from the cops, who told us that we needed a license, and so on. We firmly, but politely explained that this was a table of the Socialist Workers Campaign, and that it was a clear question of freedom of speech. We have now clearly established our right to have sidewalk tables, and if the police bother us, we tell them to call their precinct office, which then informs that that we have the right to be there.

Other branches may not have sales locations as good as Fulton Street as close to their headquarters, but they may want to look around and see what places may be good for literature tables. With smaller branches, it is more important than ever that all comrades take part in the distribution of our literature, and I think that comrades will find that there is more of an interest in our books and pamphlets than ever before.

As a postscript, let me just add how we did at our most recent table as of this writing. On March 6, two comrades staffed the table for two and a half hours. We sold \$32 worth of literature, including 5 copies of the new *Angola* book. We also sold 15 copies of the *Militant*, and met a professor who may be interested in having a Party speaker address one of his classes.

APPENDIX: Top 15 Sellers on Fulton Street in 1975

- 33 *FBI Plot*
- 30 *Last Year of Malcolm X*
- 25 *Malcolm X: Man and Ideas*
- 24 *Autobiography of Malcolm X*
- 23 *Assassination of Malcolm X*
- 23 *Fight Against Racism in Our Schools* (including 8 in Spanish)
- 22 *Guevara's Guerrilla Strategy* (including 8 in Spanish)
- 21 *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*
- 21 *By Any Means Necessary*
- 20 *Black Women's Liberation*
- 16 *Malcolm X Speaks*
- 16 *Who Killed Jim Crow*
- 15 *Black Power in the Caribbean*
- 14 *Black Liberation and Socialism*
- 13 *Che Guevara Speaks*

HOW TO SIMPLIFY BOOKSTORE INVENTORIES

by Brett Merkey

Pittsburgh Branch

Whether storefront or walk-up, our bookstores are an important part of our public face. They play an essential supportive role in the development and education of political activists drawing closer to us. To aid in the organization of this political task is the test of a good inventory system.

A practical inventory system can smooth and simplify the bookstore committee's work, lay bare inconsistencies in operation and create conditions which allow the committee to take advantage of opportunities to expand the influence of our bookstore. Finally, an inventory system is a *precondition* for tightening bookstore finances, reducing waste, and establishing a meaningful budget.

Most branches operate small bookstores. This size encourages the adoption of sloppy or highly idiosyncratic inventory methods. One archaic and wasteful practice is to painstakingly count the number of each title in the store and document the results in some permanent file every month. Other systems may combine this horror with sloppy routine which, over a period of time, piles anomaly upon quirk until a reassignment of bookstore directors is a spectacle rivaling the changing of the Guards at Buckingham Palace. Even if these systems may work now, in all probability they will not be adaptable to changing conditions. However, there is a method which is easy to set up that will work for small and large bookstores, that will take a rapid expansion of titles in stride, and that can smoothly switch gears in rate of turnover.

That method is the hooked card or Looreen inventory system.

Looreen Inventory System

The Looreen inventory system is used by many commercial bookstores. That's not much of a recommendation of course, since our bookstores have a different function. The bourgeois managers prefer the Looreen system because they would lose their profit margin if they closed their stores long enough to complete a conventional inventory.

But we should be just as stingy with comrades' time and just as demanding in accountability of our assets. The system does all that and more, is easy to set up and simple in design and function.

The central feature of the Looreen system is a small card which is hooked onto each book on display and which is removed at sale. These cards, in conjunction with a master index file described below, allow us to reorganize hours of drudgery out of existence.

Setting Up the Looreen System

The Looreen cards, each prepunched to form a hook, can be ordered from Harper and Row Publishers. I recommend buying the cards. Makeshift cards are not as convenient, almost as expensive and very time consuming to make. Additionally, the professionally printed cards are distinctive enough in appearance as to prevent them from being inadvertently lost, destroyed or swept into the trash bin.

The cards have space for information that will uniquely identify the book in which it is inserted. Essential points include title, author and publisher.

The next stage involves taking a full conventional inventory, counting each book and pamphlet on display or in storage. As each title on the display shelves is counted, the appropriate Looreen card is inserted and the book is returned to the shelf. Next, the information from the inventory should be compiled in a master index file. Cards especially printed for this purpose can be obtained at office stationery stores but there is no overriding reason not to use simple, lined 5 x 8 index cards.

The information at the top of the index cards should include title, author and publisher. The remaining portion of the card is reserved for inventory and reordering information. This includes date, number of copies on hand and space for a running tabulation of number sold. For example:

Expendable Americans
Paul Brodeur ; Viking Press

1/9/75 ; 13 copies inventory ; # sold HHH 11
3/18/75 ; 5 copies arrive on order
3/18/75 ; 11 copies in store ; # sold

Note that a conventional inventory was not taken on 3/18/75. The figure of 11 copies is arrived at by simple calculation from the information on the card.

The procedure requires that upon sale the Looreen card is removed from the book. At suitable intervals the card is collected, reinserted in a replacement copy and returned to the shelves. A notation is made in the master index file (as shown above) that a copy has been sold. There are several ways to handle these steps. Pick the most convenient considering the configuration of the store, established money handling procedures, frequency or existence of staffing, etc.

Advantages

As described, the Looreen system is a natural for branch bookstores. Given a little respect, the system practically takes care of itself. That's a big plus for our movement which must have professionally run bookstores with irregular staffing.

The procedure is readily adaptable to rapid changes in turnover. The only limit is how often a bookstore staff person checks the accumulation of cards from sales and replaces the books from storage.

Expansion in titles requires only a Looreen card and master index card addition. The limit here is shelf space, not such a moot point in cramped movement halls.

However, the system makes more shelf space available since only one copy of each title need be on display. Replacements can be stored in cabinets, protected from loss and shelf wear. Better use of shelf space makes for a "cleaner," streamlined display. More room can be used for SWP campaign, YSA, and PRDF information areas. In total, the inventory system creates conditions for the maximum political use of the bookstore.

Imaginative use of the Looreen system allows the bookstore committee to whittle away more time consuming chores (e.g. monthly financial statement inventory, display maintenance, gauging turnover rate, reordering, etc.) to a series of quick mechanical operations. One special application is consignment handling. A bookstore with an intervention perspective needs a consignment procedure that can move literature from the bookstore to a campus table or political gathering and back to the bookstore again with a minimum of fuss and forms. One approach using the Looreen system is to take the literature from the bookstore shelves, removing the cards and placing them in a marked envelope which stays in the bookstore. When the consignment is returned, the cards remaining after matching with the literature provide an irrefutable sales record.

I have outlined just the bare bones of the possibilities of the Looreen system. To flesh it out requires only a little experience spiced with creative proletarian aversion to busywork.

CASHIER: REMOVE WHEN SOLD			
		HOOK OVER CENTER PAGES AS BOOKMARK	
PUBLISHER:			
BOOK NO.:			
TITLE:			
AUTHOR:			
SUBJECT:			
<div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>IMPORTANT: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LOOREEN® INVENTORY CONTROL SYSTEM DEPENDS UPON THE CAREFUL HANDLING OF EACH CARD. AFTER REMOVAL FROM THE BOOK, THIS CARD SHOULD BE PUT IN A SAFE PLACE (PREFERABLY THE CASH REGISTER)—UNTIL AN ACCUMULATION CAN BE TURNED OVER TO THE DEPT. MANAGER. THANK YOU.</p> </div>			
1 XXX	2 XXX	3 XXX	4 XXX
Distributed by Harper & Row, Publishers			
5 XXX	6 XXX	7 XXX	8 XXX
9 XXX	10 XXX	11 XXX	12 XXX

QUESTIONS FROM A PROSPECTIVE PROVISIONAL MEMBER

by Claire Moriarty

Downtown Brooklyn Branch
New York City Local

A young Black woman expressed an interest in joining the Downtown Brooklyn branch of the SWP. During the course of a meeting set up to discuss it, the organizer asked her if she had any questions. The woman said yes and produced the following list of written questions. Her experience in the National Organization of Women, where "leaders make all the . . . decisions" and there are many "conflicting problems," had made her very thoughtful about the norms of any other organization she might join. These and similar questions are probably on the minds of many who are considering joining the party. Organizers and recruitment directors may find this list useful for discussions with sympathizers, potential recruits, and provisional members.

Questions Prepared by a Prospective Provisional Member

1. What is expected of me as a member?
2. Are there any rules and regulations that I as a member would have to adhere to?
3. Who would I talk to in case of any conflicting

problems? (i.e., political or personal disputes that might arise within a fraction).

4. Who are the leaders that make all the political policy decisions?
5. How does appointing a member to an assignment come about?
6. Can you refuse an assignment?
7. Explain to me about a provisional member. Is it done because a potential supporter might become indecisive about joining the party?
8. Can you become a member, resign, and later become reinstated?
9. What if a member wants to be transferred to another branch, in another city?
10. (For now) I would like to avoid confrontation with other organizations that differ from our political perspectives and goals. Who are they?
11. I would like some info on them so I can become familiar with them.
12. What political issues should I be abreast of firsthand?

STATISTICS ON PARTY GROWTH

	<u>Sept. 1 to Dec. 1 1975 (3 months)</u>	<u>Jan. 1 to March 1 1976 (2 months)</u>
Total number recruited to SWP	112	148*
Total number recruited who were not previously YSA members	40	72
Total number recruited from YSA to SWP	72	76
Percentage of recruits or provisional members who were not previously YSA members	36%	49%
Percentage of recruits or provisional members from the YSA	64%	51%
Composition of new and provisional members recruited to SWP:		
Black	13	30
Chicano	5	2
Puerto Rican	0	5
other oppressed nationalities	3	0
women	36	56
in trade unions	27	30
Composition of party as a whole, not including provisional members		
Black	64	74
Chicano	22	20
Puerto Rican	8	10
other oppressed nationalities	11	14
women	527	531
in trade unions	313	374
Percentage of SWP members in YSA	41%	25%

*Most were taken in as provisional members, but a few of the 148 persons were taken in as members before the category of provisional membership was established in mid-January.

Note: Figures are not available for period between Dec. 1 and Jan. 1

