

1733 Waller Street
San Francisco, California 941
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CONFIDENTIAL

Ed Shaw
National Office

Dear Ed,

I attended the Los Angeles City Conference yesterday and observed some important developments you should be aware of. I was in town to attend an anti-war meeting (the meeting Julius and Mike McCabe had arranged as a kick-off for the April 15 Mobilization). The LA branch had requested other West Coast Branches to send observers, and the SF exec asked me to attend in that capacity since I would be there anyway.

I spent the morning before the conference talking with Mike McCabe and Bill H. and, later, with other youth (mainly Julius and Herrel). I later talked with most of the others in the branch, though not at length, and with Mike G. and Ken.

I found that almost everyone in LA is demoralized, but for different reasons. The whole branch is unhappy because of the lack of youth there. During the conference a small section of the branch (mainly Steve) expressed their unhappiness with the party as a whole. This was not surprising to me. What I did find to be new (to me, at least) was a political division in the branch which follows almost exactly the division between the younger and older comrades.

The division made itself manifest during the discussion on the Los Angeles election campaign (upcoming) under the first point on the agenda-- "General Report; Experience, Evaluation, Perspective" by Oscar. During the report Oscar discussed the New Politics formation there. He praised our intervention in the Power and Politics conference, saying that it worked to build ties with the healthier elements in the group. He made no class analysis of the formation, saying only that it was moving away from the Democratic party, and that it was composed mainly of new radicals from the anti-war movement. Later in his report he made two motions (from the exec) in regard to the Los Angeles elections which are coming up soon. It seems that the only city-wide seats that are open in this election are those for Board of Education. Last week the New Politics group had a meeting to which they invited all candidates for these posts who had already announced themselves and were interested in New Politics endorsement. Four candidates were endorsed, including two professors and one SDS'er. According to Oscar's report, all four are running on a purely reformist program, none of them even mentioning the war in Vietnam. So the New Politics group has endorsed candidates for all of the seats which we could possibly run in. Nevertheless, the exec thought that we should run candidates on our program. So the two motions were: we run a candidate for the board of Education; we approach the GNP leadership and ask them to withdraw their endorsement for one of the candidates so we won't have to run against them!

During the discussion on the proposal Hayden raised the question whether we were going to offer to endorse the New Politics candidates in return for them not running against us (a question which flowed from the presentation Oscar made of how we were going to approach the CNP leadership, though not recommended by him). The younger comrades (mainly Mike M., Julius, Bill, and Heral) were sitting near one another, and Mike and Julius both took the floor and expressed disagreement with the whole approach toward the CNP. Mike made the point that comrades were talking about the campaign as if we hoped to win, and that the important thing was to get our program out, whether or not it meant running against the CNP. Julius made a similar point. Then, in answer to Hayden's question, Milt A. made the first class analysis of the New Politics formation (Mike and Julius had pointed out its reformist character). Milt described the New Politics groups as a petty-bourgeois reformist group and explained that it would be unprincipled to endorse its candidates. However, he said, there was nothing wrong with approaching the CNP leadership and making a deal with them not to run against them. He said that he understood that we were doing that in Berkeley.

I had been very torn over what I should do during the discussion. I was supposed to be there as an observer from the Bay Area (and a reporter on the anti-war situation) and, as such, I felt that I should not speak, especially since I am not in a leadership position in the party. However, the combination of the way the younger comrades took the floor and called for a reevaluation of our relations with the CNP, and the opening Milt gave me with his misstatement of what was going on in Berkeley, made me change my mind. My goal, frankly, was to encourage the dissidence of the youth and those others who felt that the approach which was being indicated we should take toward the New Politics group was incorrect. I began by saying that we had found the CNP to be an opponent group in that it was recruiting newly radicalizing youth and leading them away from revolutionary politics and to reformism. I pointed out that just the day before Bob Scheer had spoken to a meeting of the Young Democrats trying to build himself and his group a power base within the YD's from which to take over the CDC and, through it, the Democratic party in California. This I showed, was the direction the CNP was taking its followers in, building illusions about society and how it can be changed. Then I said that we had made one of our main goals in the Berkeley election campaign exposing the CNP and counterposing our revolutionary socialist program to their reformist one. I pointed out that one of our tasks was to win away from the CNP those young people who can be won over to revolutionary politics. For that reason, I said, we were running a full slate of candidates against those of the New Politics group. I explained how one of the first steps in the campaign had been the publication in the BARB of an analysis of Kete's, the candidate for Mayor, of the CNP.

I'm ~~not~~ glad now that I took the floor. While it increased the tension which exists between the party leadership in LA (mainly Oscar) and the Bay Area, my report served to solidarize the younger comrades and give them courage--they know they're not alone in the party. The vote on the motion to run a candidate was unanimous. The vote on approaching the CNP, however, was divided. All of the youth voted against it (shouting out that it was a principled question); some of the other comrades voted against it on the grounds of practicality (including Max, Sheavy, and Hayden). Milt chaired the meeting so he didn't vote. Most of the rest of the branch voted for the motion so it passed. (In his summary Oscar said that there were differences between the New Politics people in LA and those in Berkeley in that those in LA were again working in the Democratic party. In a discussion with him later, Mike told me that in his opinion there is nothing left of the CNP in LA but a steering

committee of about 12 people, allof whom are active in other groups.]

I made a point of talking with allof the youth after the meeting about the CNP. Though they are united in their opposition to the analysis and perspective re CNP offered by the branch leadership, they have different approaches on what they should be doing. Mike G. and Ken refuse to have anything to do with the branch, except for the younger comrades and Allen and Barbara. Mike says that he thinks that his father and the rest of the branch are politically at haywire and that it's too demoralizing being around them. Yet both Mike and Ken want to be fairly active politically. Mike McCabe, on the other hand, recognizes the problems in the branch, but he also recognizes a responsibility to do something about the situation in the branch. As a result, he is an extremely active branch member and accepts positions of leader in the branch (he's on the new exec). They are united in their strong & desire that new active, leading comrades be sent in so that they can begin to rebuild the branch there. (The whole branch wants this, too.)

The younger comrades are very encouraged with the plans for the April 15 Mobilization. They had a very successful meeting there last night to kick off the Mobilization--about 75 people, mainly students, signed up to work on it and to get their organizations to also.

One of the main things which encourages the younger comrades is that the Mobilization will give them a chance to work with the party as a whole and not leave them in their isolated position in the LA branch. They feel a real need and desire to become a part of the movement and to see it built in LA.

If I were in a position to make recommendations to the central party leadership, I would urge that reenforcements--strong ones who would have authority--be sent in to LA as soon as possible. There's a group of younger comrades who are anxious to help build the movement there who otherwise will probably be burned out before long and lost to the movement all together. And, as you know, there's tremendous potential for the movement in LA if it's put on solid ground.

I'm in somewhat of an awkward position now in regard to LA. I've built ties with the younger comrades there both on the basis of their seeking an alternative approach to the New Politics grouping (and the other things that flow from that), and on the basis of the Spring Mobilization and the fact that we'll be working closely together on it. At the same time I'm sure that I've become a Bay Area disrupter and agitator in the eyes of some of the branch leadership there (especially Oscar and Steve) and this is not good. I'm torn between my desire to work closely with and encourage the youth down there, and my desire not to further disrupt relations between the Bay Area and the LA leadership. I'd appreciate any suggestions you have.

I'm enclosing a copy of a report to DeLinger on the LA meeting. The younger comrades in LA, particularly Julius and Mike McCabe, did an excellent job in building the meeting. They were somewhat hampered by their own and everyone else's lack of experience, but they managed to get together a political broad group (and they intend to go further in this direction) which will probably serve as a nucleus for the organization for the Mobilization in LA. They now have an enthusiastic core on about eight campuses which they can work with to build the Mobilization--and the anti-war movement in the LA area. They're going to begin right away approaching ghetto leaders and trade unionists. Looks good.

Please give me your ideas on the other questions as soon as you can.

CC: Bob H. Peck

Comradely.

Kim