

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE HEADQUARTERS

Ottawa, 4th November, 1936.

SECRETNO. 831WEEKLY SUMMARYREPORT ON REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONSAND AGITATION IN CANADAReport

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada recently addressed a letter to the National Council of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation proposing a joint meeting of the two national bodies for the purpose of co-ordinating the forces of both parties behind the "Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy" or, failing that, joint or separate statements by the two parties urging their membership to increase their efforts to aid the Madrid Government. The letter also reminds the national leadership of the C.C.F. that the last National Convention of the C.C.F. pledged support to the Popular Front Government of Spain.

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APPENDIX NO. I: GENERAL

1. The Young Communist League and the Students Movement

During the first week in September there took place in Montreal, Que., a conference of Communist students from McGill, Queens, Varsity and Dalhousie Universities as well as from two high schools in Montreal. The conference was called to discuss the Young Communist League perspectives

for progressive students' activities during the coming year. These new perspectives include the building of the broad "front of the young generation" among the student body, the establishment of left wing student membership organizations on the campuses, on the model of the Social Problems Club, at McGill and the setting-up and the widening and strengthening of the Young Communist League students' groups to include all those interested in working for a new social order.

The agenda of the conference consisted of: (a) A general report dealing with the objective political situation, ideological trends among students; (b) A report on the Students Peace Movement and the Youth Congress Movement; (c) A report on work in the high schools; (d) A report on left wing student membership organizations and the Young Communist League.

The majority of the delegates were from Montreal and because of this predominance of Montreal delegates the deliberations of the conference centered largely on Communist activity in McGill and in the Montreal high schools.

The conference adopted a number of resolutions to serve as a basis for activities for the ensuing year.

(A) Resolution on High School Work (abridged)

While the general task of counteracting the influence of Capitalist ideology and propaganda in the schools remains, the main task at the present moment is the directing of the increasing social consciousness of the students into progressive channels, while at the same time developing cadres for university and general youth work. The carrying out of this task requires proper combination of broad campaigns on specific issues (economic, peace, etc.) with a careful fostering of permanent student organizations.

In all high school work two facts must be constantly remembered:

(1) The youth of the students, and the consequent lack of sharply defined political or even class-ideological barriers, as well as lack of organizational experience and therefore an even sharper problem of leadership.

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(2) The great variation of conditions from school to school due to differences in social composition, leadership, traditions of the school, and the personality of the principal.

Hence forms of activity must be considered very carefully in each school; no stereotyped formula can be given.

In general, three types of organization are envisaged in a school:

(1) Student Peace Movement or Canadian Youth Congress Committee. (2) A Progressive Club. (3) Young Communist League.

(1) Students Peace Movement. This is to be introduced into the schools where it does not exist with the co-operation of the principal and the boards of education, using the prestige of the university S.P.M. (Principal Morgan of McGill, etc.) All students of the school are members. The active body is a school Peace Committee with (wherever possible) elected representatives from all class rooms. The elections should take place after a general meeting of the students of the school addressed by a university student on the meaning of the S.P.M. to assure that students most interested in peace will be elected. Where student self-government bodies exist, an attempt must be made to draw them into specific peace activities.

During the year a few big meetings on peace are to be arranged with prominent speakers. In addition one or more discussion groups on peace should be set up under the leadership of a university student — a special attempt must be made to educate the members of the committee.

Where the principal refuses his co-operation and the use of the school building, an attempt must be made to set up a similar form of organization outside of the school, until he can be persuaded to change his mind — but on no account must the S.P.M. become an illegal body.

It might be advisable for representatives of high schools in a given locality to set up a high school peace committee (with university leadership) to co-ordinate the work and help spread the S.P.M. to schools where it does not yet exist.

Where the Canadian Youth Congress has a greater prestige than the S.P.M. a C.Y.C. committee should be set up in the school instead of a S.P.M. committee. There is no room for both in one school and it is advisable that only one form be used in all the schools of a given locality. Everything said about the peace committee (representation, discussion groups, etc., etc.) applies to the C.Y.C. committee. Peace must be its main activity, and in addition it must undertake the popularization of the "Youth Act".

(2) Progressive Club. This is a membership organization, independent of any interference from the staff or people outside of the school — though wherever possible a university student should be invited in an advisory capacity and progressive teachers be used for talks, advice, etc. These clubs will have no definite program and their political position will vary from school to school. In the majority of cases they will not be Socialist, though as a rule they will be against war and Fascism.

The greatest possible diversity of activities must be insisted upon in circles organized by the club (debating, dramatics, choir, ping-pong, chess and checkers, stamps, ski-ing, etc.). These circles must not be confined to members only. Socials and parties are an essential part of high school work.

The club should affiliate to the C.Y.C. and send a representative to the local council. Where no C.Y.C. committee exists in the school, popularization of the Youth Act falls on the shoulders of the club and should be a major part of its activity.

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The club must be alive to all the needs and grievances of the students, of whatever nature they may be, (cost of school books, extra fees, lack of athletic facilities, etc.), and wherever a widespread sentiment exists, start a campaign on the issue, organizing at an opportune moment a broad representative committee to conduct it further.

Co-operation between clubs in different schools should be organized (debates, exchange of speakers, joint big meetings, etc.).

School papers are very important means of influencing the students, and hence they should be established wherever possible. They should be issued either by a broad representative editorial board and thus have an official standing in the school or by the progressive club. In the first case attempts must be made to reduce staff interference and censorship to a minimum, in the second to obtain for the paper and hence for the club official standing.

Two examples from Montreal will make clear what can be achieved in this direction.

In Baron Byng High School such a paper was started by a group of people in the fourth year, who invited to the editorial board representatives from every class room. They obtained the co-operation of the principal who wrote an editorial for the first issue. The paper was at first mimeographed on the school machine and later it was printed, coming out once in two weeks, it reached in a period of four months a circulation of 800 in a school of 1,100 students. The paper took a good stand on such questions as the Olympics, war, etc.

In Strathcona a similar paper was issued by the Strathcona Student League. It carried news of the school, the club, as well as short articles on war Fascism, Olympics, etc. It was mimeographed outside the school. It also came out one in two weeks and in a period of five months its circulation grew from 75 to 400 in a school of slightly over 600 students. Now negotiations are going on with the Student Council with a view of joint issuance of the paper; this will probably be achieved.

Wherever any sort of school paper exists capable people must be assigned to work on it with a view of giving it a progressive character.

Every effort must be made to have progressive students elected (or appointed) to student self-government bodies, where such exist. Where they do not, a campaign for their institution, if properly organized, might be very advantageous.

(3) Young Communist League. No consistent activity is possible in a school without the direction and leadership of a Young Communist League unit. The Y.C.L. must preserve in the schools its unit structure (not branch structure) in the majority of cases. Its membership must, on no account, be confined to convinced Communists. The age of admission may be lowered in certain cases to as early as 14. The unit must discuss consistently the work of all student organizations in the school. On the other hand the larger part of its work must be of an educational character (say every second meeting purely education — a class perhaps — the other half educational — (say current events). Dry as dust meetings are even more dangerous in the high school Y.C.L. than elsewhere.

On no account must high school Y.C.L.'ers be burdened with general Y.C.L. work, though the tendency for complete isolation of the school units must be guarded against.

The first step might well be letters to the principal and the Student Council asking for representatives to a Student Peace Conference called by the local university. One or two might show up. These will be found helpful in setting up a School Peace Committee — for as a rule a number of interviews with principal both by university students and pupils of his own school will be needed.

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When one or two contacts exist in a school they should be talked to with a view of organizing a club — as a rule they will be on the progressive side. The exact situation in the school must be found out from them, so that it becomes clear what type of club and activity are best suited. After three or four failures they get together between half a dozen and a dozen of their friends. After persuading these that the club must be neither a collection of intellectual giants nor ostensibly be interested in nothing but ping-pong while in reality acting as a snare for unsuspecting innocents, the club is under way. In two or three weeks, with constant prodding, its membership will be over 15, and then it is high time to organize circles and activities. The circles can meet once in two weeks in members' houses, the club as a whole meeting on the alternate weeks in a bigger house, a hall, or the school. Expert direction for the circles is not indispensable — practice both in debating and chess is the best teacher.

Parallel with the building of the club it is necessary to concentrate on the most active and developed people for the Y.C.L. As soon as half a dozen of these is available a unit should be set up. If not enough Y.C.L.'ers are found in one school, the unit might cover two or even three adjacent schools, but these should be separated as soon as possible.

The prestige and leadership of a successful club should be used to help to establish similar clubs in other schools. The rest is only a question of work and intelligent discussion.

A further example from Montreal will show the extreme importance of leadership within a school as well as what can be done if the above line is properly followed. We started at the beginning of last year with one or two contacts (non-Y.C.L.'ers) in each of the two schools Commercial High and Strathcona. These were able to get together groups of four or five students in each school. In Commercial the people were not sufficiently popular, alert, and above all persistent. The group went to pieces within a month. In Strathcona we started with the right people. The club grew to between 60 and 70 members by the end of the year; the Y.C.L. unit has now over 15 members; the peace movement is very strong.

(B) Resolution on University Individual Membership Organization.
(abridged)

It is obvious to everyone who has followed the trends and developments on the campus, that there already exists a considerable section of students who are interested in social problems (e.g., war unemployment, socialism, fascism) and who are desirous of studying these carefully and consistently. It is necessary to find the organizational forms on the campus which will consolidate all this desire and give it progressive direction.

Where there are no groups on the campus readily transformable into broad, progressive clubs, we propose the following:—

(1) That a club be organized of individual dues-paying members, which shall meet regularly, and be led by efficient, popular leaders. Dues payment and regular attendance are essential for cohesion. At the same time they make quick, intelligent reactions to immediate problems much easier. Inexperienced executives should rapidly be trained to lead.

(2) That the leadership and members of the club must take the responsibility of reacting immediately to all questions of international, national, local and campus import with well-arranged open meetings, addressed whenever possible by prominent authorities. The executive should adopt a bold policy of inviting the most outstanding professors on the campus, and outside celebrities who may be visiting the city. In this way a club will become known as the most alive and sensitive group of progressive students on the campus.

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(3) That linkage between the club and the labor movement must be developed. This must not be done mechanically by a wholesale affiliation

to working class organizations. Each locality will have different methods of approach. The following are suggested for consideration:—

(a) At McGill University, right after the 1935-36 session, the Social Problems Club together with the Students Christian Movement held a six-day "Student Industrial Inquiry" dealing with conditions of labor, unemployment, and the position of the middle class. Talks of a theoretical and practical nature were given by prominent trade unionists, unemployed leaders, etc., on the history of trade unions and unemployed organizations, their present state of development and the trends they are following. A symposium was held with a prominent Fascist and a student Socialist on the respective "ways out". Combined with this, arrangements were made to visit local factories, unemployed homes (visited singly or in pairs), slum dwellings, etc. The results were excellent. A mimeographed report of 35 pages was issued which will be reprinted in the "McGill Daily". Such projects can also be arranged elsewhere dealing with the rural as well as the industrial community.

(b) Connections and affiliation with the Canadian Youth Congress — the spreading of the Youth Act amongst the students.

(c) Students should be made acquainted with working class activity through speakers, visits to strikers' picket lines (the employers and the strike leaders may be invited both to state their cases), aid to government of Spain.

(4) That the club should be mainly of an educational nature in the widest sense of the term. This should include Marxist and social problems study groups as well as current event talks. But the club must not degenerate into an "all-talk-no-action" group. Interesting projects of all kinds must be carried through such as contact with non-student groups, investigation of strikes, speakers provided for other organizations and leadership on issues of importance to the campus.

(5) That no attempt be made to form a national student "league" this year, since few clubs exist now. The main task at the present moment is the building up of these clubs everywhere. National co-ordination will take these forms:—

(a) Correspondence:

1. From the national student fraction to the national buro of the Y.C.L. and from that body to the district Y.C.L.S.
2. Between the fraction secretaries of the various clubs — L.S.R. at Queen's, Social Problems Club at McGill.
3. Between the official secretaries of these clubs. This should be of an informal nature for the purpose of obtaining information, sharing experiences, etc.

(b) Putting into practice the conference decision of sending one of its representatives through the country in the middle of the school year.

(C) The Young Communist League on the Campus.

Only a well knit Y.C.L. on each campus can provide consistent and correct leadership to the various movements and clubs. We can convince many people that they can be given more consistent, collective guidance and leadership when they are within our ranks, regardless of whether they accept fully the programme of the Comintern. For only in our units on the campus can students from diverse backgrounds pool their experiences and achieve a well integrated plan of action for their various groups. For instance, at McGill several religious students were recruited on the basis of their being more effective in their work for a new social order as members of the Y.C.L.

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The meetings of the Y.C.L. must be largely educational. The following agenda for meetings has been found satisfactory:—

1. Current events (talk and discussion) — 20-30 minutes.
2. Student affairs and activities — 45 minutes.
3. Theoretical talk on some aspect of Marxism-Leninism — 45-60 mins.

The theoretical talks should be arranged weeks beforehand so as to be effective in scope and content.

There should be a constant circulation of books, *Advance*, *New Masses*, *New Frontier*, *Clarions*, *Inprecorr*, etc. This most important and most obvious type of educational activity must not be neglected. It is particularly essential for students who tend to be cut off from the real world. For this same reason the strong emphasis on revolutionary theory has been made in the above agenda.

The Y.C.L.'ers must establish friendly personal relations with many students on the campus. They should try to keep their social and cultural activities on the campus (dramas, etc.). In other words, they should try to be students while they are in college.

2. The Canadian Labour Defence League Revived

[~~deletion:1 3/4 lines~~] A. E. Smith submitted a report on the present situation in connection with the league. He outlined to the meeting discussions in regard to the Canadian Section of the International Red Aid which had taken place in Europe during his recent visit there. The proposal (endorsed some time ago) to liquidate the Defence Movement in Canada as organized in the Canadian Labour Defence League was regarded as totally untenable, he said.

He further remarked that the opinion was strongly held in the I.R.A. that there must be no weakening of the Canadian Labour Defence League, even in face of the development of the United Front of defence. He quoted the following paragraphs from a recent letter from the International Red Aid;—

“The role you have played in the creation and growth of the Citizens Defense Committee, particularly in Toronto and Calgary Conference, is a noteworthy example. You have been a leader in the glorious fight which has brought about the repeal of Section 98. The letter you received from Mr. P. M. Draper, president of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, is a testimonial to your increasing strength in the Trade Unions. All of these successes show that you are making a turn, that the sectarianism and other weaknesses of the CLDL are being overcome”.

“It is obvious that there can be no talk, particularly at this moment of liquidating the CLDL. To talk of liquidation, even if we place the event in the distant future, is dangerous. There are forces which would like nothing better

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than your liquidation. You should not liquidate yourselves, you should merge yourselves into this broader more powerful, more representative movement and organization. But you will not do this instantaneously. YOU CAN ONLY PLAY THE ROLE NECESSARY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS UNITED FRONT BY THE FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF YOUR OWN WORK AND APPARATUS. THE DEEPENING OF YOUR PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE, THE BUILDING OF YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION’.

Reports were read from several District Committees notably one submitted by Beckie Buhay Ewen from Vancouver under date of 7th September last. The report included the following recommendation to the National Executive Committee:—

1. That we decide to maintain the apparatus of the CLDL in Canada and that the NEC shall undertake to lead in the rebuilding and strengthening of the organization of the CLDL with a view to carrying on workers defence in all its requirements and, when the time is ripe, with a view to assisting in building the broader defense movement of the united front.
2. That a statement be issued at an early date to this effect, which shall be given wide publicity by the NEC.
3. That we take steps to reorganize the NEC — open an efficient office.
4. That we endorse the proposed tour of A. E. Smith across Canada during which he will undertake to assist in every way possible the rebuilding programme of the CLDL.

5. That we elect a secretariat of five members.

Beckie Buhay Ewen's report was fully discussed and on a motion was adopted. A new secretariat was also appointed consisting of [3<deletion:3/4 line] The question of reorganizing the National Executive Committee was referred to the Secretariat with power to act.

There are already indications that the Canadian Labour Defence League is being revived and strengthened in some cities, notably Montreal, where the league has never been fully liquidated.

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[3<deletion:1 1/2 lines] to discuss the latest developments in Montreal where the Spanish envoys touring Canada were prevented from addressing public meetings. A delegation from Montreal composed of Stanley Ryerson, Fred Rose, Evariste Dube attended the meeting. After a lengthy discussion the Bureau decided to inaugurate a wide

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campaign to involve all "progressive elements" under the slogan of "Save Democracy in Quebec". The meeting also decided to organize a squad of 200 to 300 "Leftists" to combat any further disruption by physical force. The squad is to be armed with black jacks, knuckle dusters and other weapons suitable for street fighting.

4. Unemployed Movement in Western Canada

Although Communist agitation against the Government Farm Placement Scheme continues, transients are accepting positions under the Scheme in greater numbers and conditions generally appear to be quiet.

On 26th October approximately 400 unemployed attended a demonstration staged under the auspices of the Single Men's Association of Calgary while a delegation of their's waited on the City Council. The demonstrators amused themselves by singing songs but otherwise created no disturbance. When it was learned that the City Council had granted the delegation permission for a Tag Day on 31st October the crowd dispersed in an orderly manner.

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APPENDIX NO. II: REPORTS BY PROVINCESI. BRITISH COLUMBIA5. The C.P. at Vancouver

Generally speaking, Communist Party activity is at present concentrated on the affairs of the transient unemployed, the Press drive and the campaign in aid of the Spanish Popular Front Government.

The League Against War and Fascism is getting little response to its propaganda and funds are low. Its meetings show an increase in attendance but a decrease in donations.

The proposal of the Provincial Executive of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation to hold another convention will be bitterly opposed by the Communist Party members in the clubs. It is believed by the Communist Party leadership that a convention held at this time would see a bigger bolt toward the Counell Group than is realized by the Telford faction and, therefore, any idea which may tend to lessen the sphere of Communist influence in the C.C.F. is opposed by the leadership. The Counell Group is known as being strongly anti-Communist.

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[deletion: 1 1/4 lines] stated that he was getting "fed-up" with Communist Party work and as soon as the present press drive is over he intends to ask for his release. He was particularly bitter over the fact that he was supposed to have the month of May for a holiday but the Communist Party kept him working. [deletion: name] has stated that he is practically assured of employment.

II. MANITOBA6. Ukrainian "Higher Educational Course" Completed

A farewell concert in the Ukrainian Labour Temple at Winnipeg, Man., on 25th October marked the termination of this year's "Higher Educational Course" conducted by the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association during the past six months at their Parkdale Institute.

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The concert was staged by the students attending the course and the affair was exceptionally well patronized.

The signing of the "International" by the students' choir marked the opening of the concert. John Boychuk presented the graduates, 39 in number,

to the audience as "young leaders and teachers to perform their duties to the toiling class; 24 as teachers to take charge of schools in various localities and 15 as organizers." He added: "They were well prepared for their task and general work in the revolutionary movement".

The concert was well conducted. During the intermissions speeches were given by three of the students — Filipowich, Dobrowolski and Kostyniuk, the latter a girl. They pledged themselves to work loyally in return for the effort made by the organization in giving the education. Student Dobrowolski thanked the Workers Benevolent Association for its contribution of \$2,000 towards their education.

At the conclusion of the concert M. Shatulski addressed the audience stressing the importance of "working class education".

The course is said to have been the most successful yet held. It is not without interest to note that the W.B.A., ostensibly a sick benefit organization, subscribed the sum of \$2,000 towards the cost of the course.

The League Against War and Fascism at Winnipeg, Man., held a mass meeting on the afternoon of 25th October in the Concert Hall of the Civic Auditorium. There were approximately 700 people present, the place being well filled. L. St. G. Stubbs acted as chairman and the speakers were Alderman Margaret Crang of Edmonton and A. A. McLeod, national chairman of the league. Both speakers recounted their recent visit to Spain and generally dealt with the present situation in that country and the events leading up thereto. A. A. McLeod, referring to the opposition encountered at Montreal, warned his audience that they should allow no such action in Winnipeg and should insist that the Civic authorities give the Spanish delegation a public reception on their arrival in that city. It was estimated that the collection netted approximately \$160.

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James Litterick, Communist M.L.A.-elect, addressed a public meeting in the City Hall at Brandon, Man., on the evening of 23rd October. There were approximately 200 people present and his talk centered around the Spanish situation. He charged that the Rebels in Spain were being supplied with arms by Germany, Italy and Portugal. He predicted that Madrid would not fall and that in the end the Popular Front Government will triumph. The amount of money collected at this meeting was not announced.

III. ONTARIO

7. C.P. in Hamilton to Contest Civic Election

Communist Party candidates to run in the forthcoming Civic election in Hamilton were nominated at a Communist Party Convention held in the Popular Hall on 30th October. The convention is said to have been attended by 53 Party delegates from all over the city and the Aldermanic candidates nominated were: Palmer, to run in Ward 5; John Hunter, for Ward 6; Phil Luck and Peter Boychuk, for Ward 7 and Ward 8, respectively. All four candidates are devoted members of the Communist Party.

IV. QUEBEC

8. Communists in Montreal Organize "Shock Brigade"

The Communist Party in Montreal is reported to have organized a "Shock Brigade" to protect their property from "Fascist attacks". Members of the "Brigade" are being armed with hardwood clubs and placed on duty at the various premises controlled by the Communist Party. Recently 22 members of the "Brigade" were seen on duty at the "Modern Book Shop" and another group of 35 at the Clarte office.
