

NEW YORK PARTY MOBILIZER



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THE INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN IN THE BRONX: SOME EXPERIENCES & LESSONS

This edition of the Party Mobilizer features excerpts from the discussion by Mike Zagarell, Independent Progressive candidate for Congress in the 19th C.D, to the special State Committee/actives meeting held on November 10, 1988 at the Unity Center Auditorium

An analysis of the elections,
the Party's role and lessons for
the coming period by Comrade Jarvis Tyner
will be the feature of the
next Party Mobilizer.

Following are the abbreviated comments of Comrade Mike Zagarell:

... (we were running for) an office ... that's for half a million people, (encompassing) a lot of the more conservative places ... a part of that district elects a conservative to the City Council, a Republican conservative, a real ultra-rightist. Then you had sections of Yonkers in that district ... this was not an easy district to run in. And we did not have a strong Party ... not all comrades, like myself, (had) tremendous mass ties ... we were not leaders of mass organizations. We did not have a deep base in this district ... in some ways it was like the last place you were considering.

Yet, ... a few months later I can say, really, that (an incredible) amount of work was done there and we ended up with a tremendous advance.

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This is the period of the greatest activity in the Bronx Party probably for thirty, forty years, in every way. In the course of the activity -- let me give you some figures -- we picked up considerable support; in all, about eighty people participated actively in the campaign ... A hundred people, almost all in the Bronx, gave contributions in their own name ...

We had fund-raising affairs. Almost all of the money came from residents in the Bronx. We had six house parties. We had a barbeque in my community with sixty people ... overwhelmingly non-Party; fifty percent of the people were Black, although there are relatively few Black Party members in the Bronx. We had a rally ... of 225 people in Co-op City. We were on television twice; on the radio twice. Those shows went to about fifteen million people on the radio and television. We participated in three debates with the other candidates. We raised, in all, close to \$5,000, all from people in the Bronx. In all, we had house meetings or rallies of close to 500 people who participated in some level or other ...

We produced nine pieces of literature for distribution. We distributed 100,000 pieces in all.

So that is ... quite an accomplishment for the comrades ... In addition to that, we had two car caravans. We participated in (a rally) sponsored by a union. And I am sure I missed a lot of other stuff that I forgot to jot down. But, it was one weekend after the other, speaking with people in mass.

We spoke to between 20 and 25,000 people directly on the street. And that's a modest estimate. We collected 6,000 signatures, as you know, which is probably at least 18,000 people spoken to directly right there ... I want to ... explain what two percent (of the vote) in Co-op City means ...

(Mike goes on to detail some of the objective problems in working out an electoral strategy for his C.D. in the Bronx, and explains that because of the complexities of that particular situation, ...) you had a very slim group you could appeal to, to leave the Democratic line. And most people came out to vote for the president, and then (voted on down the list). If they didn't know (about) the others,

they would vote straight Democratic. You had to ask them to go over here to vote for Charlene and myself. And not such a big group was left to do that ... (only) the most politically conscious group was left to do that. So when you hear two percent in Co-op City, and you hear 450 in Yonkers, that's what you're talking about.

Now in terms of where do we go from here. First, we are holding a meeting in a week to discuss perspectives with people in the campaign, Party and non-Party, and some broader leaders. Our view is: what we have started we will continue ... We have a mailing list of over 2000 progressive-minded people that we mail to now.

We had nobody, you know what I mean? We had a club with few contacts before ...

There were Union leaders ... We had met them in the course of this activity. So we have a list of over 2000 names in our immediate community. And we want to continue putting out a newsletter to form and build a coalition based among them.

We'll want to discuss the question of the school board elections, and putting together a united front movement with some of the broader forces that we have met and built relationships with in the course of the race.

The Stop Koch fight, which will also include voter registration, will help the whole progressive movement in the district. We'll want to talk about launching a united housing fight within the district. There are many projects, and there is Co-op City. And to unite those would mean building a very, very powerful base for the progressive movement.

Most importantly, we are organizing recruitment meetings. (As a result of our work,) the comrades have just drawn up a list of fifteen people that they're going to invite to that recruitment meeting. And we have already recruited two people: one wants to join the Party, the other one did join the Party in the course of the campaign. And I think we will get many more.

We held one meeting ... with non-Party people on the Upper West Side. They asked to meet with us. But they passed the hat, and each one put in a \$100; \$500 between those five couples. And they're not Party members. And they asked, when will we start an IPR movement in the Upper West Side? They want to help build it. I think that's an indication of the possibilities.

... we're going to have some discussion on the Puerto Rican community in the Bronx, which is very critical to us. So in all, this campaign has really advanced our work. The comrades made a tremendous contribution by helping us to do this.

I want to end by just telling you one story. There's a hospital in our district, very important. We wanted to do some work in that hospital. We talked to some comrades who were there, and they said, "You know, it's very hard for us because there are some people here

who are anti-communist, they're red baiters. We can't invite that many people; we could isolate ourselves." So we said: all right, we accept that; you know, that's where we're at.

We held that barbeque at my house ... We just sent out a mailing. We didn't even know all the people who were on our list. We got lists from different places. Low-and-behold, who shows up to the barbeque but that person who the comrades said was a red baiter. We had a wonderful discussion. He's come to two other activities since then. Then there was somebody else at that hospital that we wanted to involve in activity, and we said that we couldn't get them either because it just wasn't right. The rally took place in Co-op City. Who shows up? That same worker.

So what we're saying is, that this experience has tremendous lessons. The independent progressive concept allowed us to speak out in a broader way and build relationships. And my feeling is that this was the right way to go.

Thank you.

JOIN THE CAMARADERIE!

This summer our UNITY Center had an invigorating experience with the addition of a number of young students who spent the summer helping and learning. They ran the elevators, the switchboard, helped with mailings, pitched in to keep the building clean. In turn, we hope that they got a good deal by attending the updates given by Gus Hall, the various meetings and affairs in the building, as well as learning new skills and we hope got as much from their presence as we did in having them.

We can all be proud of our center -- the miracle on 23rd Street, which houses our Party, YCL, People's Daily World, Political Affairs as well as our outstanding bookstore and library. In these days of high rents, can you imagine what we would have to do if we did not have this precious building? (A note in the newspapers about a store on 23rd Street closing because they could not pay their rent which rose from \$3,000 to \$18,000 a month). Of course, our upkeep, taxes, heat, utilities have all gone up, but that is not a subject of this letter.

This is a call for all to help keep up this important institution and all the groups that inhabit it. We can take pride in what we have here and what it has done to help us be more effective in our work to reach the American people. It is our home and it has made it possible for us to be more productive.

What we need now is more people to help us keep up the building, and the institutions that live here. We need you and, to quote some of our volunteers, YOU WILL NEED US ONCE YOU JOIN THIS CAMARADERIE. Just talk to some of the volunteers who have been coming in: "I can't wait to get here" says the manager of our bookstore who makes the trip from Long Island. It makes me feel usefull. It makes me feel young again. It's not like working for a boss where you hate to go to work. Whatever I do to pitch in -- no matter how small makes me feel good because I know I am making a contribution. I came just as soon as my doctor said OK. It helped me get my mind off my problems to be occupied in something I want to do.

For those who qualify and are looking for a "new career," the PDW would like to train you. If you are an electrician, or a painter, or otherwise are handy, - we need help in sprucing up the building. And we want to help train young as well as old in the many things that need doing.

All jobs are necessary. Some more glamorous than others. But the beauty of it all is the camaraderie and being part of a team.

We are trying to organize a central staffing office so that we can attempt to fit you into something you can be most productive in. You can help make this the friendly place to work. If you have time during the day, evenings, or weekends, or if you are a new mother and can only come if there is childcare, we'll try that too.

So join us -- YOU WILL LIKE IT -- and together we can help keep things going even better than they are now.

S H O R T S

December 2 & 3rd - Club Recruiting Events

Willie Gerena (212-348-8004) has agreed to coordinate the recruiting events. Please contact him after 5:00 P.M. with your club plans and requests for speakers.

December 9th & 10th - Bazaar

The annual Bazaar is shaping up as one of the best ever -- with many new goods, including childrens' clothes, shirts, hosiery -- international goods and much more. We need your help to publicize it, donations of goods and as volunteers.

Registration -- This year there will be club, but not individual registration. Clubs will be getting the forms directly from National.

Carl Bloice

Will be speaking in Mid-February to kick off the PDW Fund Drive not in Mid-December.

Congratulations!

To Kute and BoB on the birth of James Kelly Arlo Martin.

CALENDER

- December 2nd & 3rd ----- Club Recruiting Events
- December 9th & 10th ----- Bazaar
- December 16th ----- Dinner/Movie
- December 17th ----- State Committee Meeting
- Late December ----- Annual Holiday Party -
Date to be announced
- December 31st ----- New Year's Eve Dance
- January 6th ----- Dinner/Movie
- January 20th ----- Dinner/Movie
- February 11th ----- Valentine's Day Dance to
start PDW Drive

CLUBS URGED TO MOBILIZE FOR HOUSING ACTION WEEK AND MARCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18

The biggest-ever week of activities on housing and homelessness will take place December 10-18, culminating in a march on Sunday, Dec. 18, beginning at 3:00 PM, at Columbus Circle.

The WBAI listeners' Action Network and the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness started this annual event five years ago. It has grown every year in breadth of sponsorship, depth of political demands, and turn-out.

Last year over 6,000 people (police figures) worked - the largest housing event in years. This year the march could attract two or three times more.

A number of unions including DC 37 and Local 1199 are actively organizing for the march. Jesse Jackson, who recently spoke to a kickoff rally of 5,000 at St. John the Divine Cathedral, has been invited.

The demands of Housing Action Week include: target a date for the elimination of homelessness; city, state and federal government to build permanent housing; strengthen rent control; pass anti-warehousing legislation; reform housing court to stem the tide of evictions.

What action can clubs take? Community clubs are urged to mobilize the turnout on December 18 by: (1) tabling on Saturday, December 4 and 11; (2) leafletting apartment buildings and housing projects.

Housing Action Week already has many neighborhood groups around the city signed up to do tabling. Your club can work with and add to those groups in your neighborhood, or initiate tabling if your community is not yet involved.

For literature and information, contact the Housing Action Week office at 212-222-1907, or the Housing Commission through the state office.

It is a good idea for neighborhood groups to write their own leaflet highlighting a local struggle (eviction, co-op conversion, warehousing, etc.) together with Housing Action Week.

A march of 15,000 or more tenants on December 18 will give a big push to the peoples' movement against Koch.

JOIN TO BUILD HOUSING ACTION WEEK

- **December 11th through December 17th**
Activities and events organized by participating groups focusing on the housing and homelessness crisis in New York City.
- **December 18th**
City-wide demonstration on Homelessness and Housing.

Join in creating Housing Action Week

- Plan an event in your community
- Help build the December 18th demonstration
- Tune in to WBAI-99.5FM—on Saturdays from 10:30AM to 12:30PM and Thursdays from 1:30PM to 2:20PM for updates and information

We will call for action on such basic needs as:

- Increased low and moderate income housing production and preservation
- More vigorous measures for tenant protection
- Greater enforcement of fair housing laws
- Reform of the housing court system
- Protection of the civil rights of homeless people

For further information call (212) 316-7544

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Affiliation _____

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____
to help build Housing Action Week.
(make checks payable to Listeners Action)

My group will organize an event during Housing Action Week.

My group will help build the December 18th demonstration.

Mail to: Listeners Action on Homelessness and Housing
1947 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10025

Participating groups to date include:
Listeners Action on Homelessness and Housing
The Cathedral of St. John the Divine
WBAI-FM
Coalition for the Homeless
Housing Justice Campaign
Metropolitan Council on Housing
Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing
Homeward Bound Community Services
The Learning Alliance



HOUSING FOR ALL • HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT • LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW!

BAZAAR AND BOOK FAIR

Friday, December 9

6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Saturday, December 10

noon-6 p.m.

Winston Unity Auditorium

235 West 23 Street

Spread the word!

JOIN THE COMARADERIE

Date _____

VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____ PHONE NO. _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

Do you have some special skills or interests _____

How much time do you have - _____
Hours Days

Evenings _____ Weekends _____

Is there any type of work you are most interested in doing _____

If we could arrange childcare, please explain when you would be available _____

PLEASE RETURN TO LOTTIE GORDON
7th Floor

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

CITY

Do you have any special skills or interests?

How much time do you have -

hours days

Evening

Friday, December 8

6 p.m.-9 p.m.

Is there any type of work you are interested in doing?

Saturday, December 10

noon-6 p.m.

Winston Unity Auditorium

235 West 23 Street

If we could arrange this, please explain what you could do for us.

Spread the word!!

PLEASE RETURN TO LOU ANN GORDON
1st Floor