

STUDENT SOCIALIST

November 19, 1951

STUDENT-YOUTH SECTION of LABOR ACTION

Five Cents

Brooklyn College Scandal: Protests Reveal Administration's Role in Rigging of Election

By PAUL AXTELL

"Some of the finest speeches about training for citizenship are made by people who behave like autocrats when confronted with specific circumstances."—President Harry D. Gideonse of Brooklyn College, in a speech some years ago.

President Gideonse has been confronted with still another "specific circumstance," in the words of the above-quoted speech—which was obviously autobiographical.

This one concerns the role of the Brooklyn College administration in what is probably the dirtiest of all school elections in the college's history. [See the last issue of the STUDENT SOCIALIST for Oct. 22 for the background—Ed.]

The scandal centers around last spring's elections for the Student Governing Council (SGC) and in particular about the campaign activities of the pro-administration party in that election, the Campus Affairs Party (CAP), whose presidential candidate was Dave Goldman.

The CAP's presidential candidate was opposed by Willie Sandler, running for the Liberal Independent Party (LIP). Sandler had been a member of the Campus Coalition for the Reinstatement of Vanguard, the former college newspaper which Gideonse had autocratically suspended and replaced with the present Kingsman. The coalition had been composed of liberal and socialist students opposing the administration's assault on academic freedom. Sandler was obviously *persona non grata* to Gideonse.

The results of the election were announced as being extremely close and a series of recounts and checks took place. These showed fluctuating results, but in the last three recounts taken before the end of the spring semester Sandler was ahead by a steady margin.

THE ODOR MOUNTS

The elections committee then held a "final recount" during the summer, when most students are out and student political life is in suspension, and announced that the winner was—Goldman. Sandler and the SGC protested and asked for a new election.

The odorous history of this affair includes, among other things, the stealing of LIP campaign literature, the slashing of an LIP silk-screen, and the "disappearance" of statements by LIP candidates from the files of Kingsman. This campus paper, as the administration-sponsored successor to Vanguard, is run by a staff which is not very discreet in its exhibition of bias in favor of the CAP, of the fraternities and of the administration.

Some of the most outrageous electioneering stunts of the campaign, which received virtually no notice in the newspaper, were recently revealed by a Special Elections Investigating Committee report of the SGC and by a letter to Gideonse by Willie Sand-

ler, the LIP candidate who was counted out.

Sandler reports:

"The first morning of voting, every student upon arriving at school found upon his seat a booklet of approximately seven mimeographed sheets urging the election of Mr. Goldman and other members of his party. This oc-

curred in spite of an election rule prohibiting the distribution of campaign material in school. The regulation was clearly circumvented by a telephone call to Dean Marroney at his home in which the caller asked for permission to distribute the leaflets in school and neglected to inform Dean Marroney of the rule prohibiting such action. . . . The importance of this move and its skillful timing cannot be overestimated. It occurred the first day of voting when anything read by the students would still be fresh in their memories. It reached over 2500 students. It could have easily influenced over a hundred votes."

ROGUE'S GALLERY

Sandler also reveals that in order to mimeograph their material CAP members "illegally entered the school mimeograph room during the weekend before elections and

availed themselves of school property. To accomplish this they had to enter the school when restricted to do so and obtain the key to the mimeograph room. That they accomplished this without too much difficulty is characteristic of the entire election."

The Student Governing Council report reveals that Ed Karlin, CAP vice-presidential candidate and Kingsman business manager, was involved in this action. Karlin is further indicted by the report as follows:

"The advertisement appearing in Kingsman in the form of a letter to the student body [which lumped the LIP with a Stalinist "independent" candidate, who was also in the race, as birds of a feather—P. A.] and signed by Mr. Elliot Krasnick as the president of Common Cause [a right-wing student political club] is in the opinion of the committee a willful circumvention of [student] council's ruling on advertisements. Furthermore, we are convinced that Mr. Karlin, as business manager of Kingsman, was in collusion with Mr. Krasnick in accepting the ad. . . . The distribution of CAP pamphlets on the seats of Boylan Hall, with the permission of Dean Marroney, cannot be condoned by this committee. . . . This action was directed by the aforementioned Mr. Karlin."

This fellow Karlin got around, didn't he? . . . But the CAP rogues' gallery is not yet complete.

THE "GOOD CITIZEN"

We also have to introduce Daniel Schneider, president of CAP, who illegally entered and used the facilities of the registrar's office for the purpose of printing campaign literature. Comments Irwin Lainoff, a member of the Elections Committee, in yet another protest to Gideonse:

"For this action Mr. Schneider was dismissed from his position [by the administration] only to be rehired days later. Certainly this act by the president of CAP should have been brought to the

attention of the proper authorities, if not the entire student body." (My italics—P. A.)

Campus politics make some not-so-strange bedfellows. We now have a flesh-and-blood example of what Gideonse means when he speaks, as he does so often, of the "good campus citizen."

On the ballot-counting itself, we again quote Willie Sandler:

"The last and final count of ballots spelled victory for Mr. Goldman by a margin of 23 votes. But this was only one of a long series of conflicting counts and checks, the results of which fluctuated anywhere from 5 to 40 votes. To simply say that we must stop counting some time and therefore the next recount shall determine the election . . . seems like a rather unjust way of solving the problem. Yet this is precisely what was done. If the Elections Committee had been able to explain satisfactorily the differences in election returns, how and why the vote fluctuated . . . only then could I accept one final count as binding. Unfortunately, this is not the case."

"CROOKED"

In this connection, it is interesting to note that last term Gideonse immediately suspended the election results when Sandler was the victor; but he is presently ignoring SGC's and Sandler's request for a runoff election.

Bill Arron, another of the three chairmen of the Elections Committee, may be on the right track in expressing "concern" over the fact that in the two-week interval between the next-to-last and last recount the ballots were kept in an open safe. This interesting revelation may also be one of the factors that led the aforementioned election committeeman Irwin Lainoff, who was in charge of the final count, to declare publicly that the final election results were crooked.

All of which should make many LIP members and supporters grateful that they are not considered "good campus citizens" by the administration. It should give them such a clean feeling.

Ban on YPA Attacks Democracy, Not Stalin

In yet another blow at academic freedom, the Gideonse administration at Brooklyn College, not content with merely meddling with the student elections, has recently banned the campus chapter of the Stalinist front group, Young Progressives of America (YPA).

Gideonse's anti-democratic attacks do not become more fragrant because he justifies them as necessary against the totalitarians of the detestable Stalinist movement.

Brooklyn's Faculty-Student Committee on Student Activities, serving as executioner, was given authority by a ruling of the Faculty Council to suspend or revoke the charter of any campus group which it deems "communist, communist-related, or otherwise subversive of the college or the national welfare." This is as broad a formula as any under which the Stalinist totalitarians operate themselves.

THE REAL VICTIM

Unlike its own sycophants on the Kingsman's editorial board, the administration has presented no maze of rationalizations. The wording of its authoritarian edict makes perfectly clear that it is interested in eliminating opposition, democratic prerogatives notwithstanding. In this it is in complete accord with the policies and methods of Washington in the current imperialist cold war.

After all, could we expect anything different from Gideonse when, on a national and global scale, the Truman administration cynically and ruthlessly utilizes the ideas and methods of reaction in its self-styled war for freedom and against Stalinist Russia's police state—loyalty purges, subversive lists, economic and political sup-

port to such defenders of democracy as Franco, Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee, ad nauseam?

It is not for the sake of this Stalinist youth group that we oppose Gideonse's extension of the "anti-red" witchhunt on the campus. Socialist youth are the stoutest in consistently fighting the supporters of Moscow's totalitarianism and breaking their influence over students. But as in the nation as a whole, such attacks on academic freedom and the right to political opinion are far more serious with regard to the democratic rights of all the students than they are with respect to the fate of the YPA. Stalinism can be beaten democratically, politically, among the students; it is democracy which is the victim of the witchhunt method.

N. Y. Socialist Youth League Class—Sunday Evenings at 8 p.m.

The Politics of Independent Socialism

November 18
THE SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION
OF HISTORY
Jack Maxwell

November 25
THE WORLD WE DIDN'T MAKE
Anne Russell

December 2
LEVIATHAN IN CRISIS
Jack Maxwell

December 9
STALINISM: THE ROAD TO 1984
Gertrude Blackwell

December 16
THE WAY TO FREEDOM
Phyllis Hoffman

December 23
DEMOCRACY AND THE NEW SOCIETY
Hal Draper

December 30
THE WAR WE NEEDN'T HAVE
Julie Falk

January 6
WHERE TO BEGIN
Jack Maxwell

STUDENT SOCIALIST

Student-Youth Section of
LABOR ACTION

No. 2 November 19, 1951

Section Editor:
Gertrude Blackwell

Appears as a 4-page section bi-monthly; one page on months in-between. Next 4-pager in December.

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LABOR ACTION

At Labor Action Hall, 114 West 14 Street, New York City