

---

# National Election in YPSL: Wanted — A New National Secretary.

by William F. Kruse

Published in *The Young Socialists' Magazine* [Chicago], v. 12, no. 12 (Dec. 1918), pp. 3, 17.

The National Constitution of the YPSL provides that in January of odd numbered years there shall be set in motion the machinery for the election of a National Secretary. And as the Yipsel Constitution, unlike some of its contemporaries, works just as well in war as in peace, next month a call for nominations will go forth to all leagues. Following the nominations will come a referendum ballot, and the new man will take office in July.

The present incumbent has occupied this position since July 1915, and as he is not a candidate for re-election he feels justified in discussing the qualifications a candidate for this office should possess. Understand, comrades, there is no "quitting under fire" involved, for by July of next year it is very likely that peace will once more reign, most of the restrictions under which we labor at present will be removed, and the YPSL and the SSS, as well as the Party movement in all its branches, will be on an enthusiastic upgrade. The past two years have been hard sledding for our organization, but happily we have weathered the storm and there are very bright skies ahead.

While in this position in such times may win for its holder a jail sentence — the coming National Secretary can probably look forward to no greater distinction than the greatest in the world — the love and esteem of the finest, bravest, and jolliest bunch of young comrades that can be found anywhere in the whole wide universe. The present incumbent feels that his every exertion and

effort for the cause has been amply repaid by the loving and loyal cooperation of practically every member, and commends his successor to those same Yipsel hearts and hand that have made his occupancy of this post of honor so pleasant and inspiring.

In July 1915 we had about a thousand dues paying members in a hundred nominal leagues, most of which existed only in our address file. We had no report system, no magazine, no SSS, no Juniors, no International connection, only two Yipsel state organizations, practically no systematized aid for bewildered Yipsel officials, and all our correspondence was contained easily in one file drawer in an office room shared with another department. This is not said in any criticism of the first National Secretary [J.A. Rogers, Jr.], for he worked manfully to bring about the very beginnings of our national league, and in movements such as ours it is always the beginning that is the hardest and most beset with obstacles. But today we have over 5,000 dues stamps sold each month even in spite of the draft, though the past few months we have slumped somewhat, due largely to the change of officers and its attendant confusion in practically all our state federations. Instead of 2 state organizations, we now have 8. Our magazine has been taken over from private management with a circulation of less than 2,000 and put into the hands of the league with a circulation of about 5,000. The SSS is being changed from its former individualistic plan of organiza-

tion into a strong, well-knit national federation with uniform lessons, song, and organization material. Our office occupies an entire room in itself, and a whole filing case of 12 drawers cannot keep all our records shipshape.

When the present incumbent [Kruse] was elected the qualifications were few — and far between. That is how he got the job. You had to be able to use a typewriter, and show 2 years membership in the party and 1 year in the YPSL. Very simple, and for that he was paid \$18 a week. The wages now are \$5 more, but the plans and specifications have also changed considerably.

Those who know the editor of this paper realize that he is not to be taken too seriously all the time. But if he were to draw up the qualifications of an almost ideal National Secretary, he would far, far surpass those of the present incumbent. We might list them somewhat as follows:

FIRST: He must be a Yipsel and a Socialist through and through. The constitution requires 2 years in the party and 1 in the league — but by Socialist we mean more than constitutional requirements. He should know what socialism is, and how to practice its ethical basis in his own dealings with his comrades, and he should be a disciple of Liebknecht and Debs rather than Scheidemann and Spargo.

SECOND: He must be a worker through and through, with hands and head, so that he can understand the conditions under which the workers exist. He must be able to write a good comradely letter with his own fingers and his own heart on a typewriter, for our department cannot afford to hire stenographers, much as we need them. He should not only be a typist and correspondent, but should understand filing systems, mimeograph and multigraph machines, printing, ad copy writing, proofreading, moving picture operating, book-keeping, janitor work, shipping and wrapping, and a thousand and one other jobs that have to be done at times by the best of 'em.

THIRD: He must be a writer and an editor

and get out a magazine each month that will not draw too much ire of either radical or reactionary. If he's an artist and cartoonist and press photographer in addition, so much the better, for about the only way to get good pictures into the paper is to make them yourself. Same thing with articles.

FOURTH: He must be an orator who can go out and fill the shoes of every socialist speaker from Jimmy Higgins to Gene Debs, and some of them did have big feet. He must be able to go down the pikes and crossroads peddling silver-toned oratory for the heathen and the glad hand for the comrades. If he can ride around the country without paying any fare, so much the better, his organization and lecture trips are sure to be a success. If he happens to be a Hindu magician who can have his body in two or three places at once it will be ideal, for then he will be able to fill three Sunday speaking dates at one and the same time. Also he must know everything that's in the encyclopedia and most of what is to be added to the next edition.

FIFTH: He must be an organizer who can make two leagues grow where one grew before, and occasionally run a league by mail at a distance of 3,000 miles. He must be ready to have his shins kicked by the scrappiest, kickiest bunch of Yipsels in the USA, those of the city wherever the National Office happens to be located. He must run a correspondence class in organization and take the blame for everything that goes wrong in every league. He must have a skin like a rhinoceros and a grin that won't come off, must be able to put that grin on paper, and be willing, when fired down the back stairs to come smilingly up the front.

SIXTH: He must be a diplomat. He must reconcile the old fogey who insists the Yipsels are "young pups" with the impetuous young dear who is convinced that everyone over 30 is an "old mutt." He must be able to read reams of amateur poetry and convince the fellow whose Yipsel epic he turns down that he beats Edwin Markham and Berton Braley put together.

SEVENTH: He must be a rival of Francis K. Bushwah for looks, Doug Fixfacts for athletic activity, Chollie Chappie for buffoonery, and — well, whatever your favorite virtue happens to be. He must be single, this for the benefit of the Yipsellettes, or if he has a past and a wife he should keep it dark.

These are just a few of the qualifications an ideal National Secretary would have. We could extend the list indefinitely. We do not insist on electing an ideal, however, and some of the demands can be much more easily waived than others. See how closely you can come to the ideal. Each league can make as many nominations as it sees fit, giving as full and complete information as possible on the nominating blanks that will be sent out.

No, Bill Kruse is not going to run for reelection, he says 4 years is enough so someone else should get a chance, and anyhow — he don't come up to the ideal, you know, he's married, for one thing, and there may be a few other points he's shy on, though he don't talk about it. Look around your diggin's for some National Secretarial timber and when you find it, report same to headquarters at once.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

*Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.*