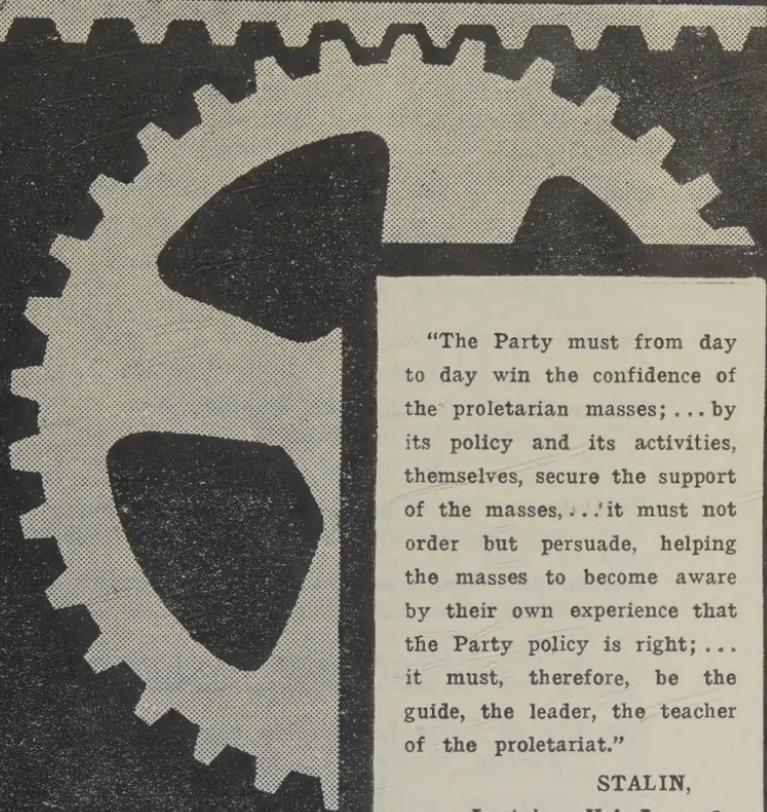


Party Organizer



"The Party must from day to day win the confidence of the proletarian masses; ... by its policy and its activities, themselves, secure the support of the masses, ... it must not order but persuade, helping the masses to become aware by their own experience that the Party policy is right; ... it must, therefore, be the guide, the leader, the teacher of the proletariat."

STALIN,

Leninism, Vol. I, p. 38.

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PARTY ORGANIZER

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Intensify the Recruiting Drive!

THE RECRUITING drive, on which the Central Committee addressed a special letter to each Party member, is now in the third week. While it is too early to give a critical estimate of the results, especially since many units received the C.C. letter only the second week in October, yet it is possible to draw certain conclusions from the figures available in reports received by the Central Organization Department for the first two weeks in October.

These figures show that during this period, the total number recruited was 862, of which 214 were employed, and 616 unemployed. The total number recruited from basic industries (not including the report of the New York District) was 123.

Clearly the total number recruited is not in accordance with the tremendous possibilities for building our Party, with the increasing influence of the Party among broad sections of the working class. Furthermore, the relatively small number coming from basic industries shows the weaknesses still existing in our factory and trade union work, and in the activities of the shop nuclei. The recruiting drive has not yet taken on the necessary momentum, nor have its line and methods fully penetrated the ranks of our membership. Yet especially now, with the developing election campaign activities in every district, through which the program of our Party is being brought to large masses, stirring up political discussion widely, recruiting should be greatly increased.

The reports from the field show that the leadership in the districts, in the main, is giving serious consideration to the recruiting drive. But splendid programs and plans will not produce the desired results if they remain **on top**. Their correct execution requires that they be brought **down below**, that the entire Party membership be made thoroughly aware of the significance and character of the recruiting drive, that the enthusiasm and initiative of the comrades be aroused. This makes it necessary to carry through a real discussion in the units, accompanied by practical organizational measures, based on the Central Committee letter and the direc-

tives sent to the Districts. At the same time, the functionaries in the sections and units, as well as in the Districts, should thoroughly understand the purpose and methods of the present drive, so as to be equipped to guide the membership, and through their own activity set examples for the rest of the members.

The letter of the Central Committee has placed in the foreground the question of personal recruiting through the personal contact of the individual Party members with workers in their shops, and mass organizations, with their fellow trade unionists. Become a leader among workers, and through your own activity among them bring the best, most militant, into our ranks!—This is the appeal of the Central Committee to every Communist. A correct discussion of this appeal will throw the searchlight on the work of every Party member, will enable the units to analyze more basically the character of their activities in the shops and factories of concentration, among the unemployed, in the neighborhood generally, and will help them better to understand the problems and methods of leadership over the masses in their struggles. Regular check-up and control of the decisions must follow the discussion if it is not to remain fruitless of results. To the extent that our Party members are involved in the campaign through discussion and assignments in the units and fractions, we will be able to increase many times the percentage of comrades who bring new members into our ranks.

We stress particularly the recruiting of active, militant workers from the trade unions, as well as the unorganized. To strengthen the Party core especially in the reformist trade unions is fundamental, as the recent textile strike has demonstrated, in building a powerful rank-and-file movement for a class struggle program of action. Yet the number of A. F. of L. members recruited, although it is increasing, is still very low. To change this demands intensive mobilization of our trade union fractions for the drive. It is not enough for these fractions to discuss their specific trade union problems in line with our policies. The fractions have the task of raising the political level of the workers in these organizations, drawing the political lessons from their day-to-day struggles, and promoting their understanding of the class issues involved; the fractions must see how to bring our Party program before them, to counteract the "Red scare," etc. The resistance expressed by many locals of the A. F. of L. to Green's anti-Communist expulsion policy; the development of a rank-and-file movement among the miners, especially in western Pennsylvania, in some textile centers, among the longshoremen on the West Coast, and elsewhere,

show the increasingly favorable possibilities for building our Party among these elements. No set formula need be adopted for indiscriminate application everywhere, but it is advisable rather to apply the best methods suited to each situation, remembering at all times the necessity of developing personal, persevering, and patient contact with fellow workers in the trade unions. This applies to the revolutionary and independent unions, as well as the A. F. of L.

In addition, therefore, to unit discussions, special fraction sessions should be held to take up the recruiting drive, through which meetings of active non-Party members of the trade unions can be organized for a political discussion of the Party program. Classes can be organized in some sections involving non-Party workers from important shops and trade unions, as has already been undertaken in the Pittsburgh district. These steps apply not alone to trade unions, but to all other mass organizations in which we have Party members and sympathizers.

Active recruiting through the fractions in trade unions will help to bring shop workers into the Party. But it is essential to give special attention to the activities of the shop nuclei, to call shop conferences wherever feasible, to tie up the recruiting drive with every phase of our factory work. This means popularizing the program of our Party among these workers, in respect to the daily struggles of the masses and our revolutionary goal, thus helping to create the political basis for the work of our Party members in the shops, and winning new recruits.

All these activities will be especially effective if linked together with the election campaign in the remaining days up to November 6. Every meeting, every house-to-house canvassing, should stress appeals to join our Party. This should be organized in advance, so that the necessary application cards and literature may be on hand and our comrades prepared to make the best approach. The celebrations of the 17th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, which in many cities are combined with final election rallies, should be organized as a demonstration for the Party, and serve as a departing point to further extend and develop the recruiting campaigns, particularly as a tribute to the October revolution. Workers who have signed the Communist nominating petitions, who have expressed their determination to vote Communist on November 6, are potential members of our Party. It is up to us to convince them to come into our ranks, to help build a mass Party that will effectively lead the sharpening struggles ahead, and win the masses for the final struggle for power.

An Analysis of Recruiting in a Chicago Section

By E. B., Section 8, Chicago

IN THE MONTH of August Section 8 recruited only two members into the Party. In September 22 were recruited. How can we explain this jump in a Section where mass activity was at a standstill, where units were functioning badly, where there was no collective leadership, etc.?

Beginning with September we were faced with the problem of carrying through the 15th Anniversary campaign. The Section Bureau discussed this seriously and adopted a one-month plan of work.

We first reorganized the units. The forces of each unit, where the comrades lived, the peculiarities and territories of each unit, were carefully examined. We shifted comrades around, putting them in units where they could function. The forces were distributed more evenly. Some units were merged. After this each unit elected a new unit bureau with the careful assistance of comrades from the Section Committee. Side by side we formed the captain groups in each unit. Each comrade from the Section Committee was made responsible to meet with the unit bureaus and to give guidance to the captains in their work.

After this we called a functionaries' meeting where we proposed the tasks for the coming month. We did not propose everything under the sun but only the most important tasks facing us in connection with the Anniversary campaign. We knew that the units had begun to lose confidence in their abilities to do work so we put these tasks in such a light as to show the comrades that they could easily be carried out. The plan of work as adopted was mimeographed and sent to the units for discussion. We also called upon each unit to use its own initiative and set one special control task for itself, such as building one mass organization or strengthening the fraction in existing organizations. Where, in the plan of work, we set quotas on recruiting, the **Daily Worker**, financial drive, etc., for the Section as a whole, we asked the units to set their own quotas, which in most cases became counter quotas. It took about two weeks before the units reacted sufficiently to the plan of work. The Section Committee during this time met regularly and carefully analyzed our progress and shortcomings. The unit bureaus were given careful guidance. We sent out a check-up sheet each week to the units, showing the standing of the units on the different quotas. We fought against every manifesta-

tion of pessimism. When one unit did good work one week we let the rest of the units know about this. A real spirit of friendly competition was developed. In the final week before the completion of our plan of work the units were working against time. The entire outlook of the membership had been changed. The comrades were enthusiastic, but, most important, they saw that things could be done. They appreciated the value of planned activity. The result was that we more than carried through the tasks which we had set.

Recruiting Placed As Most Important Task

In the campaign we raised recruiting as the most important task. But we raised it in such a way that it fitted in with every activity of the comrades. Each week we talked about recruiting in this way: "You comrades are going out Sunday to sell literature; how many workers are you going to reach with the program of the Party? How many will you bring in? If you know a worker in your organization who is good material, recruit. If your wife is sympathetic, bring her into the Party." We raised the question of recruiting so persistently in connection with every phase of our activity that the comrades felt that even though they did good work in selling literature, **Daily Workers**, etc., that this was not enough. They felt that the best barometer of the quality of their work was how many did they bring into the Party. Last, but not least, socialist competition was a real factor in recruiting.

We raise this question of recruiting to other Sections especially in connection with the 17th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution campaign and the recruiting drive of the Central Committee. The slogan that every Party member recruit another Party member will not bear fruit unless this is concretely connected with every phase of activity, especially with the campaigns of the Party. We must energetically go down into the units and examine the entire situation. We must see the problems of the units and give them the most careful assistance in solving these problems.

Our unit membership is a good membership and willing to do work but over a long period of time they get lost in the countless number of campaigns and activities. Our recruiting will be improved only to the extent that we give more attention to the units, when we begin to understand that they are not just general agencies for the distribution of work assigned by the Section leadership but independent political bodies in the territories.

In solving the problems facing the units, bringing a healthier atmosphere in their activities, we will also solve another

important problem connected with recruiting and that is keeping our Party members and reducing the fluctuation. Our experiences show that we can carry out the campaigns of the Party if they are carefully organized, if they are politically brought down to the membership. The campaigns of the Party, instead of being added burdens, as is felt by many comrades, will become the best means of politically rallying our Party membership and masses of workers, will result in increased activities, will improve the political content of our work, and, as a result, with proper guidance and check-up, will tremendously aid in solving our problems of recruiting and fluctuation.

Failure to Prepare for Struggles Prevents Carrying Out of Party Line

By PAT TOOHEY

IT IS CUSTOMARY that after we engage in a strike and other mass struggles we follow a necessary and correct tradition by drawing the conclusions and examining the nature and character of our work. It is necessary and correct that we bring to light and isolate those weaknesses and shortcomings which we encountered in this particular struggle, so that our future activities will be enriched by the organizational and political experiences of these former struggles, and so that we shall avoid committing again those errors which tended to hamper our previous work.

What is not necessary and not correct is our recording these lessons and experiences and then going out and committing them all over again. It seems to become a tradition that we again and again fall into errors which we went through before, and which, theoretically at least, we had examined and cauterized with fire and sword. It is customary for us to say, in examining our work in a particular struggle, "this was a shortcoming—that was a weakness" and that "had we done this and that—then the other would surely have happened, etc." But these "shortcomings" are precisely of a kind which we have encountered over and over again in the course of various struggles and still persist in committing them all over again.

We Must Learn From Past Struggles

Only one conclusion can be drawn from such a situation: that because of a mechanical understanding of the bad methods of work there arises an inability to absorb the

lessons of past struggles in our present work. Just some experiences from our work in the South prove this.

The work of the Party organizations as well as the National Textile Workers Union in the South, during the recent national textile workers' strike, brought to light a whole series of organizational and political weaknesses—the majority of which had previously cropped up in Southern struggles in past periods. These weaknesses, which dog our path, hindered the attempt to carry into life the militant slogans and policies of the Party, which were designed to strengthen and spread the strike and to prevent a betrayal of the workers by the U.T.W. bureaucracy.

It is the same old story: The failure to prepare adequately for the struggle before it happens. The many weaknesses which cropped up, and which tended to hinder our ability to carry out the Party slogans and policies, are entirely connected with the failure to undertake many of the measures before the strike—measures which we attempted to carry through just prior to, during and after the strike. It is ridiculous to expect that in a strike the workers will follow the policies of the Party when we make little, if any, practical preparations before the struggle.

Isolation from the masses and lack of knowledge of the mood of the masses of workers and knowledge of in which direction the workers are rapidly traveling, create in themselves an under-estimation of the determination of the workers to engage in struggle, even if necessary over the heads of the bureaucracy. This isolation created in the South, (of which the Southern districts are not alone guilty) a theory that the workers would not respond to a U.T.W. strike call, that the masses would not follow Gorman & Company, that the bureaucracy and government would succeed in heading off the strike before it really started—as happened already in June. Flowing from this theory was the logic that, therefore, practical preparations for the struggle will be time and energy lost—what is the use of preparing when there will be no strike?

Such an estimate, however, failed to take into account the determination of the workers to fight and that the masses would force the bureaucracy into a strike or isolate the bureaucracy; and that the best guarantee that the strike would not be headed off would be the presence and energetic activity of the Communist and Left-wing workers *within*, giving daily and practical leadership to the workers.

No Preparation for Strike

The District Bureau held a session a month before the strike started and just two weeks before the U.T.W. Convention. Despite the rapidly changing situation in textile, the

Bureau, in considering textile, took no recognition of the coming strike and made no preparations for it. But the same thing must be said of nearly all other districts. The Bureau declared that they were awaiting a meeting of the National Executive Board of the N.T.W.U. scheduled for August 24th, and on the basis of the decisions of the Board would make preparations (which left then but six days to do it). But the Board meeting was called hurriedly before the 24th and the Southern comrades could not attend. Still no practical preparations were undertaken, and up to September 1, when 200,000 textile workers responded in the South, our forces had moved but little.

What was the result? Only 10 days after the strike started was there a meeting of the leading district forces organized, work assigned, tasks outlined and assignments made. During these 10 days scores of thousands of textile workers were engaged in flying squadron activities, mass picketing and waging a bitter struggle. But our comrades were on the outside largely. All of the preparatory organizational work, assignment of forces, dividing the territory and placing a responsible comrade in each section in charge, of outlining a Party-building and mass **Daily Worker** drive, etc., was undertaken only after the strike had been on 10 days.

During the struggle itself there were many examples of "what would have happened" had such preparations been undertaken, had the mood of the masses been correctly estimated. Take in the City of C—— which has some 3,000 textile workers. Our forces were compelled to work largely as an outside force, despite the fact that it was generally accepted that had Comrade X—— entered the U.T.W. that he would have been elected President of the Local, and that other comrades would have been elected by the workers to leading positions. Likewise in D—— where our several active, energetic comrades remained outside the movement: Here the strike movement and union were in the hands of a woman, a company stool pigeon, who successfully prevented this town from striking. It was also shown in both these places after our comrades had—so late—amended their error—and had entered the U.T.W. and taken leading parts in the strike, what a powerful force our comrades exercised in these towns. But the error was already committed and weighed the Party down. This same situation prevailed in scores of places: of rank-and-file, newly organized workers, engaged in mass picketing, holding mass demonstrations, etc., and our capable forces on the outside as spectators, or going in very late so that their work did not bear the fruits it should.

After the change had been made the Party commenced to

register numerous victories. Party members in B—— took the initiative in organizing and leading flying squads to nearby towns and closing the mills. In other places the Party forces went into the U.T.W. locals and carried on a vigorous struggle for the slogans of the Party: for mass picketing, flying squads, succeeded in raising the relief issue and organizing delegations of workers to demand relief from the County, State and U.T.W. leadership; the Party took the initiative in extending the struggle to masses indirectly involved by organizing mass meetings with strikers as speakers in various towns, by organizing adoption of resolutions and wires of protest against the troops and terror, etc. On a broad front, in North and South Carolina and in Virginia our comrades became the workers' shock troops on the picket lines and flying squads in the locals.

The activities of the Party were met with a vicious "Red scare" on the part of the U.T.W. leadership, the bosses and employers. The Party was brought openly into the strike at every opportunity. Open mass meetings to support the strike and protest the terror were organized despite the terror and semi-illegal conditions prevailing. The Party fought bitterly in Charlotte, in South Carolina and in Virginia, and despite arrests, breaking up of meetings, terrorism by Klansmen and gangsters, proved to be a steadfast fighter for the workers. On the basis of the fighting activity of the Party, a great number of workers were enrolled into the Party. Some shop units were established. The **Daily Worker** received a mass circulation on picket lines and in scores of textile towns in the South. Thousands of leaflets and circulars were effectively distributed, urging the workers to mass picket, to fight on, etc. As a result of this thousands of workers for the first time came into contact with the Party and had occasion to learn what the Party stands for.

The **Daily Worker** was particularly effective. It was taken boldly on mass picket lines, to mass demonstrations, distributed in union halls and strike headquarters. The friendly favorable response the workers gave the **Daily** destroyed a certain timidity among some comrades about distributing it. An example of the value of the **D.W.** as organizer and agitator was shown when it was taken to the Belmont (near Gastonia) picket lines. These workers had previously been in contact with the movement through the Gastonia strike, but had not been looked up or organized for this strike. As soon as they saw the **D.W.** they exclaimed "Hurrah, here's the **Daily Worker**." It is no accident that the Belmont picket lines were among the most militant in the South, for the **D.W.** exercised a powerful influence over the strikers.

Experiences in the Textile Strike in Philadelphia

By I. K., Section Organizer, Section 3

WE WERE able to get some good results from the last textile strike because we reacted in time to the situation with leaflets, meetings and personal contact, exposing the leadership and convincing the workers that the strike could be won if they elected their own rank-and-file strike committees and carried out our proposals.

The Section Committee, calling the leading comrades together with some workers in the mass organizations, discussed the strike. We set up a leading committee which met every day, making a constant check-up on all developments, analyzing the changes, in order to react quickly to all developments. All the units and organizations sent greetings to the strikers and pledged their support. Some of these telegrams were later found hanging on the walls of the strike headquarters. The Unemployment Council issued a leaflet calling upon all workers in the neighborhood to support the strike and offered to take the strikers to the relief board. Committees were sent from the Unemployment Council, Communist Party, L.S.N.R. and Women's League to the strike headquarters, offering their support. The leaders refused, saying that "they would have nothing to do with Communists." At one of the meetings a big argument started when a worker made a motion that if the organization is good enough to offer support, they should accept it.

Fifty extra **Daily Workers** were sold every day and two hundred pamphlets, **Communists in the Textile Strike**, were sold or given away on the picket line, in spite of the fact that we were pointed out to the police by the picket captains and driven off the picket line.

After striking a week and a half the workers were only getting one sandwich and one car token a day. Many of the workers refused to come on the picket line since they lived many miles away. Then the Committee decided to open up a kitchen and feed the workers sandwiches and coffee. A committee was again sent to strike headquarters asking for a committee of the strikers to work together with our committee to get and prepare food. Again we were refused. Our units and all our organizations immediately were organized to get food and a kitchen was set up two blocks from the factory. A leaflet was issued denouncing the leaders for not accepting our help while the workers were hungry, and

invited the workers to our kitchen. We fed an average of 200 workers a day. The most developed comrades were assigned to speak to them. **Daily Workers** and literature were always in the hall. Songs were taught to the workers and later were sung on the picket line. As a result five members were recruited into the Party and at least 25 more connections were made for an opposition group. Two more workers were recruited at open air meetings that were held in front of the strike headquarters, where we succeeded in exposing the trouble-makers and proving to the workers that we really were sincere. However, all those recruited into the Party were from a different section, from which they had been sent to picket at this mill. Our task will now be to follow up the connections we have, and the workers that are locked out from this mill, and establish a shop nucleus, which we have undertaken to do in the next two months.

Right Opportunist Mistakes in Cleveland Anti-Fascist Action

AT A RECENT anti-fascist action in Cleveland, serious opportunist mistakes were made by the steering committee, consisting of leading comrades from the District. This action was thoroughly discussed at a meeting of the District functionaries, and on the basis of the discussion a resolution was adopted by the District Bureau, in which the mistakes are discussed and characterized. Following the adoption of the resolution, Comrade Landy issued a statement of self-criticism, which we are also printing. The entire question is closed, but these documents are being published in the **Party Organizer** as a means of clarification for the entire Party, in order that from these mistakes our comrades in all districts will learn how to act in such circumstances.

Excerpt from Resolution of District Bureau

Upon learning that Hans Gissibl, Hitler's agent in the United States was coming to Cleveland to organize the "League of Friends of New Germany," the District Bureau, although having only three days to prepare, advised the fraction in the American League Against War and Fascism, to initiate a mass demonstration against this fascist agent. Through such activities, we had in mind to give the American League the opportunity to become a fighting organization, with mass support for its objectives, and to further popularize the Chicago Congress. While advising the party fraction

to convince the American League to sponsor this, the Party mobilized its own forces to be the active driving force.

Workers Showed Readiness to Fight Fascism

The District Bureau set the objective of calling upon the masses to come to the location of the meeting, and especially to mobilize the neighborhood under the slogan "Drive the Fascist Agents out of the Neighborhoods." Also to make every effort to take over the meeting with anti-Nazi masses and to transform it into an anti-fascist demonstration and elect a delegate to the Anti-War Congress. The strategy of the District Bureau further called upon everyone to enter the hall to accomplish this objective. If circumstances and police forces prevented this, then to organize a mass militant anti-Nazi demonstration in front of the hall. There to have speakers and resolutions adopted against Hitler, demanding the release of Thaelmann and other anti-fascist fighters, supporting the U. S. Congress Against War and Fascism and condemning the defense of the Nazi agent by Mayor Davis' police. Following the defeat of the fascists, it was proposed to march through the neighborhood to Market Square. Telegrams and resolutions were to be sent to the City Hall, protesting the city administration's support and protection of this Hitler agent. While mobilizing workers from all parts of the city, special concentration was to be in the West Side neighborhoods and also among the German and Hungarian population.

The response of the workers to the call, despite shortage of time, and inadequate preparations and united front effort, shows the deep hatred of the masses and their desire to fight fascism. Between 2,000 and 2,500 workers responded, including many from the neighborhood. The workers demonstrated militantly, shouting revolutionary slogans. Police acted uneasily. At the expected opening time, the hall remained empty and the militant masses blocked the streets. Gissibl was taken to the hall in a police car.

Party Fraction Led Workers Away From Struggle

As the crowd grew and the militancy increased, and the moment occurred when the speaking should have begun, the Party Steering Committee (Landy, Larkin, Herman) gave the instruction and slogan "On to Market Square." This met with disgust and resentment by all assembled, but under Party influence the majority marched, with several hundred refusing to leave. Immediately, the police aided about 200 to enter and hear Gissibl.

The District Bureau brands this action of the steering

committee as a serious mistake of Right Opportunist character and openly criticizes Comrades Landy, Herman and Larkin. Comrade Larkin agreed reluctantly to the decision, but at such a moment, vacillation led him finally to agreement with the other comrades. The sources of the mistake were:

1. Underestimation of the willingness of the masses to struggle.
2. Failure to understand or analyze the moods of the workers gathered there.
3. Inability to understand that **marching away at that moment, was capitulation** and precisely destroyed the main strategical objectives of the District Bureau in which Comrade Landy had participated when adopted.

Party Makes Open Criticism

The Party makes this sharp political and open criticism of the comrades involved, because it has nothing to hide. Only in this way can the Party solidify its ranks, the comrades themselves correct their mistake, and the entire Party march forward under the leadership of the District Committee.

This is in line with the resolution of the last District Plenum which states:

"The plenum conducted its work on the basis of sharpest self-criticism, placing responsibility upon the shoulders of individual comrades, with the determination to overcome the shifting of responsibility or utilizing the correct line of collective leadership for excusing of the specific responsibility of individual leading comrades. The work of the entire Party must be conducted accordingly."

While greeting the open and frank recognition by Comrades Larkin and Herman in their efforts to analyze the sources of their mistake at the functionaries meeting, we equally rejected the speech of Comrade Landy, which, while stating agreement that what occurred was a mistake, surrounded this statement with so many qualifications and a complete failure to recognize the sources of the mistakes and insisting upon it being "an example of thoughtlessness," and finding of excuses, elsewhere but in the steering committee, that it raised seriously the question of whether the criticism of the Party Bureau and the functionaries meetings was even understood by him.

We further warn against all reactions towards individual actions in the handling of the fascists and emphasize that the growing terror must be met by organizing mass defense,

involving especially the workers of the neighborhood. The Party must be able to fight all tendencies of "Leftist" adventurism and opportunist capitulation, in all such struggles and boldly carry through the correct mass line of our Party resolutions and leadership.

Must Intensify the Struggle Against War and Fascism

Armed with our correct analysis and policy, our sharp self-criticism and determination to intensify the mass struggles against war and fascism—and supported by the growing sensitiveness of the Party units and the decision at the functionaries meeting, the Party has no fear of the consequences of this mistake, quickly and sharply corrected, disarming our Party or lessening its influence among the masses. The Party has shown by its deeds and fighting ability that it is part of the working class and is recognized and supported by ever growing numbers of workers as their fighting political leader. The squeaks of such anti-Party renegade opportunist degenerate elements as Foley, Elliot and E. Wagenknecht fall on barren ground and are lost in the sharpening class struggle.

The Party must intensify its struggle against war and fascism, utilizing the united front tactic to involve the broadest possible masses. Increased support must be given to the League Against War and Fascism, as the class struggle sharpens, and the relationship of class forces becomes clearer, and the masses continue to answer the growing attacks of the bourgeoisie and their government, despite the betrayals of the A. F. of L. leadership.

Comrades! Forward to new mass struggles under the banner of Marxism-Leninism, which is a guide to activity, widening the Party influence and building the Party organization, under the leadership of our District Committee.

Statement of Comrade Landy

In line with the resolution of the functionaries meeting of September 24 which rejected my speech and called on me to re-examine my position, I wish to submit the following statement which, for reasons of time, I was unable to make at the end of the functionaries meeting.

I fully agree with the sharp political criticism of the action of the steering committee by the functionaries meeting and the District Bureau. The failure of the steering committee, and first of all myself, to carry out the policy of the anti-fascist demonstration which I also helped to formulate, was a serious political error whose political essence is definitely

of a right opportunist character. The district Bureau is perfectly correct in characterizing the sources of this mistake as:

1. Underestimation of the willingness of the masses to struggle.
2. Failure to understand or analyze the moods of the assembled workers.
3. Failure to realize that the slogan to march away at that moment meant capitulation and forfeiting the strategical objectives we had set ourselves.

My speech at the functionaries meeting failed to establish the nature of this mistake, thereby making it difficult properly to correct it. The speech was of such a character, that, despite my intention, it had the effect of destroying the critical recognition of my mistake. Such a procedure does not help the Party to go forward in its struggle against war and fascism. I am therefore writing this statement to correct and clarify my error and analysis. As a member of the District Committee, I shall make every effort, not only to avoid similar mistakes in the future, but to fulfill the responsibilities and exercise greater political care in fulfilling these responsibilities which the working class struggle places upon us.

Leaflet Distribution in a Period of Terror

By A SAN FRANCISCO COMRADE

THE PERIOD of terror during, and subsequent to, the maritime and general strikes in San Francisco and the Bay Region, showed our Party comrades more clearly than anything else could have done, the danger of depending wholly upon a central printing apparatus. In the first place, a central printing apparatus for a whole city or even a section, necessarily involves a great deal of activity of one sort or another. Comrades are continually going in and out of the building where the apparatus is placed; huge batches of finished leaflets or mimeograph paper must be taken in and out, and all this is bound to attract attention and leaves too much margin for discovery.

To eliminate a great deal of this clumsiness, we found that the most efficient way to do printing is for each unit

to have its own printing apparatus. Fortunately, before the actual terror began, a good percentage of the San Francisco and Bay Area units already had small mimeographs of one kind or another, ranging in price from \$2.50 to \$25.00. So, when the raids began, these units immediately got their mimeographs into action, and began leaflet printing and distribution. These mimeographs were kept in places known to only one or two comrades. The leaflet paper, ink, and stencils for each mimeograph were kept in two or three different places, so that if one place were discovered, there would still be a reserve supply. The day the first raids took place, there was a very good leaflet distribution, which increased in volume daily as other units got their apparatus going. Incidentally, although our central printing apparatus was completely destroyed, not one single unit mimeograph was discovered.

Because the central printing plant had been put out of commission, there was a period of one week when the regular **Western Worker** did not appear. The units, however, showed great initiative, and several "miniature" **Western Workers** were put out on unit mimeographs. These were very well received, and helped fill the gap created by the absence of the regular **Western Worker**. It was our experience that in those units where there were mimeographs, there was good leaflet distribution and generally good functioning, but in the units where there was no means of printing, there were no leaflets, and a measure of demoralization because comrades were paralyzed by the lack of equipment for printing.

As regards distribution, we found that the most efficient way is for each squad to have a certain permanent territory, with the squad captain responsible to see that the leaflets are obtained from the unit and distributed to each member of his squad. Great ingenuity was shown by the comrades in distributing these leaflets. In some section, the following method was used: The squad members take a block (preferably at night), cover it with leaflets, then skip a block and go to a second one and cover it. In perhaps an hour or two, the squad comes back and covers the block that was omitted. This can go on until the entire territory is covered, and reduces the possibility of interference.

Where Shall We Place Responsibility for Our Weaknesses?

By CENTRAL ORG. COMMISSION

THE ORG. Commission of the Central Committee has received a letter from an Oregon Section, dealing with the weaknesses of the Section and the difficulties of carrying on Party work. The Section included with its letter copies of its correspondence with the District and the District's replies. Since the problem dealt with is one which concerns and is of interest to the entire Party, we are publishing in the reply of the Org. CoCommission to the Section:

"We have read carefully the various communications you have sent us relative to the problems of your Section, your activities, and what you consider to be an incorrect attitude on the part of the District Committee towards your Section. From your communications, we gather that you hold the following viewpoint:

1. That the weaknesses of the Section are due not to weaknesses in the leadership or methods of work, but in the objective conditions.

2. That you are now in a period of "calm" within which it is not possible for your Section to carry on much activity.

3. That the lumber workers in your region are fully satisfied with their conditions, and therefore it is not possible to organize them.

4. That the Party members are not good, and hence the District cannot expect the Section to carry on effective work.

5. That the District gives you too much to do, and does not give you sufficient attention.

In this communication we want to take up these points, which should be thoroughly discussed at your Section Committee meeting.

You are readers of our press. You are aware of the tremendous surge of militancy that has been developing among the toiling masses in many parts of the country. Your District, itself, has been the scene of one of the outstanding struggles in the American labor movement,—the Pacific Coast Marine Strike. These struggles are reaching new high levels of class action, and have not only economic significance, but tremendous political importance. The worsening of the conditions of the masses under the N.R.A. has had a tremendous effect in developing a militant spirit of resistance among

great sections of the working class. In short, the objective situation is extremely favorable throughout the country for the work of our Party.

Weaknesses Lie in Ourselves

The Open Letter addressed to our Party, and the Resolutions of the Eighth Convention of our Party, pointed out these facts, and made it clear that the main difficulties with which we are confronted today, the weaknesses that still exist in our leadership of the struggles of the masses, in the growth of the Party, etc., lie not in the objective conditions, but in ourselves, in our methods of work, in our failure to establish roots among the masses, in the lack of political understanding by the Party members of the issues confronting us, in the lack of attention to the lower units of the Party, etc. To consider Section 20 in a unique position, outside of the analysis of the C.C. of our Party, is to develop ideas of exceptionalism, which, far from helping the revolutionary movement, can only seriously hinder it. In those instances which have been brought to our attention, where the comrades raise the excuse of objective conditions for the weaknesses of their work, we find that these are excuses for inaction on the part of these very comrades, who seek to justify such inaction by placing it on the shoulders of the working class, rather than carefully examining the part that we, Communists, are playing. The very fact that a year ago, you had better functioning units and were carrying on mass work, shows the possibilities that exist in your Section. You must seek the reasons why this activity has collapsed, not in the objective conditions, but in the methods you used to maintain and strengthen the union, the unemployed organization and your contact with these workers.

It may well be that you have great difficulties and obstacles. But these exist everywhere. In many places, they are even more serious than in your territory. But who are the Communists, comrades? They are the ones who overcome difficulties, who find ways of removing obstacles and breaking through barriers in order to reach and organize the masses. Therefore, the problem with which your Section is faced is not to search for reasons for your weaknesses among the workers outside of our ranks, but to examine your activities, your own methods of work, on the basis of a thorough discussion of the Open Letter and the Resolution of the Eighth Convention of our Party.

Period of "Calm" is Not Period of Inaction

You state that although a year ago, considerable activity developed among the lumber workers, particularly among the unemployed, and that victories were won in the fight

for relief, etc., you are now in a period of "calm" within which little can be expected. And in order to bolster up your arguments, you try to quote from Lenin's **What Is To Be Done?** You declare that Lenin pointed out that periods of activity give way to intense calm, and therefore draw the conclusion that there is nothing further to be said or done about the activities in Section 20. In order to answer this, let us take the entire quotation from Lenin, to which you refer. On pages 162 and 163 of **What Is To Be Done?**, Lenin declares:

"It would be a grievous error indeed to build up the Party organization in the expectation only of outbreaks and street fighting, or only upon the 'forward march of the drab, every-day struggle.' We must **always** carry on our every-day work and always be prepared for everything, because, very frequently, it is almost impossible to foresee beforehand when periods of outbreaks will give way to periods of calm. . . . And the revolution itself must not by any means be regarded as a single act . . . but as a series of more or less powerful outbreaks rapidly alternating with more or less intense calm. For that reason, the principal content of the activity of our party organization, the 'trick' of this activity should be, to carry on work that is possible and necessary both in the period of the most powerful outbreaks as well as in periods of complete calm."

You will see that Lenin has emphasized the necessity of not permitting ourselves to let down in our revolutionary work, but to learn so to carry on our tasks that, in any period of calm, we may be prepared for even the most powerful outbreaks, and after great battles, prepare ourselves for greater activity, for new battles on a higher level.

Let us take the present situation here in the United States. Recall the General Strike in San Francisco, the Toledo and Minneapolis struggles, and the most recent great textile strike. These struggles are now over. In San Francisco, Seattle, Toledo, Minneapolis, even in most textile centers, we are now witnessing a period of relative "calm" in contrast to the militant actions that took place during the strike. But does this "calm" mean inaction, a period of sitting with folded hands and waiting for the next outbreak? Does it mean apathy and pessimism because complete victory had not been achieved? No, comrades,—decidedly no! The tasks in San Francisco and Seattle, for example, following the strike, are to intensify greatly our activities, to build the rank-and-file opposition movement in the A. F. of L. unions, to undermine the influence of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, to

prepare for further struggles on the basis of the lessons learned in this one, to build the Party and establish nuclei, to develop a broad drive against fascist terror, against the criminal syndicalist laws, develop the Election Campaign among these workers, etc. To carry out these tasks meant not calmness, but tremendous activity, activity which may not be spectacular or dramatic, but which requires patient, day-to-day systematic and planned work, with the participation of all forces and all comrades.

A similar situation exists now in the textile areas. The "outbreak" has for the most part, subsided. The workers have been betrayed. But it would be most dangerous to look upon the present relative calm as a period of inaction. Particularly now, our tasks are to intensify our work in the textile mills, to root our Party therein, to develop an understanding of the Party program and policies so as to overcome the "Red scare," to intensify the work of building rank-and-file oppositions in the A.F. of L.; in short, to prepare for new impending battles in textile, for the pressing demands of the workers.

Our Basic Work to Root the Party Among the Masses

As stated in the editorial by Comrade Browder in the last issue of the **Party Organizer**, it was possible for the A.F. of L. betrayers to betray the textile strike precisely because the Party was not rooted among these masses. And this task of rooting ourselves among the basic sections of the workers is one of the most important tasks we have in all periods of "calm" as a means of preparing these workers, as well as ourselves, for great battles and struggles. Calmness, for us, is a very relative term. Under no circumstances must it be interpreted to mean inaction and indifference to the tasks of the Communists. It is in this light that you must understand Lenin's writings. Then you will find that even in the present situation in your Section, you have much basic work before you, which it is necessary for your Section to tackle energetically.

The Election Campaign Is Also a Struggle

Take the election campaign. In one of your communications you state the District overburdens you with too many demands for activity in this campaign. Yet, to win support for our activities and program in the elections, to expose the capitalist State through our election activity, to show the relationship of the struggle for immediate demands to our revolutionary goal, to win new recruits to our Party on the basis of clarifying the Party position,—this is pre-

cisely the kind of activity which must be carried on daily in connection with every phase of our work, and which provides us with an excellent opportunity now, not only to prepare the workers to fight militantly for their interests, but actually to engage them today in struggle for their immediate needs. It is not only strikes that are struggles, comrades. The entire work of the Party is a struggle to win the majority of the working class. Every demand, no matter how small, suited to your local situation, to the needs of the workers, involves a fight. To convince the workers of the correctness of our program involves a struggle for the Party line among them—a struggle against prejudice, against the "Red scare," against the further demagoguery and propaganda of the social-fascists, against all the poisonous influences brought into the ranks of the workers by the capitalist class through the press, schools, etc. It involves, also, a struggle in our own ranks against opportunism and resistance to carrying out the line of the Party.

Are the Workers Satisfied With Their Conditions?

You say that struggles among the lumber workers cannot be developed because the workers are satisfied with existing conditions. There is no entire section of workers who are completely satisfied. Among them undoubtedly there are those who fear, those who do not understand, but among them also, there are those who are fearless, militant, and prepared to fight for their rights. These we must try to reach through personal contact, meetings, leaflets and literature, discussion circles, if possible, through the raising of demands for their grievances,—perhaps small grievances to begin with, to satisfy the needs of the workers in the lumber camps in your area. Through reaching and influencing these workers we may hope to reach the main body of the workers.

The deep discontent sweeping the masses cannot fail to have affected the lumber workers. The tendency for the capitalist class, particularly today, is to lower real wages and speed up the workers in order to maintain their profits, in spite of the crisis. Lumber barons are not exempt from this. Therefore, comrades, let us not blame the workers, but examine closely our own activities. We will not win the working class by folding our hands and waiting for the proletarian revolution. In your present situation, you must not expect that the lumber workers, by themselves, spontaneously, will get to understand our policy and program. This is our job, and to the extent that we fulfill this job, we are not calm or inactive no matter how much of a period of relative calm we are witnessing.

Directives of C.C. on Exchange of Membership Books and Registration of Membership

THE MEMBERSHIP books now in the hands of the Party members expire at the end of 1934. The exchange of the expired books should be utilized to:

1. Bring back many hundreds of members who have dropped out of the Party;
2. Place the members in good standing;
3. Take stock of the membership through registration of every member;
4. Tighten up the Party apparatus in the lower organizations.

The period of registration should be utilized to conduct a most thorough-going propaganda in the units for increasing the recruiting, and checking fluctuation. The registration will enable the Party organizations, especially the Sections, to ascertain which members are working in important factories, and which are members of the A. F. of L. locals or other important mass organizations. If the Sections properly and promptly use and exchange this valuable information, many new shop nuclei and many more fractions will be organized. Information gathered from the registration will also help us better to divide the work among the membership, and to strengthen weak fractions in important mass organizations.

We call the attention of the District Committees to the importance of this registration. If the problem is approached in a political way, many weaknesses and shortcomings can be corrected in the process of exchange of membership books. The registration will help us to bring forward new forces in leadership in the units, Sections and Districts.

The experiences gained in visiting former members who have dropped out of the Party will give us valuable material in the reasons given by these members who dropped out, which will help us to a great extent to improve the work of the units. Special efforts should be made to collect this material from the units, and, in the form of articles, be made available for the whole Party.

The decisions of the P.B. in connection with the exchange of membership books are the following:

1. Every member of the Party is to be registered on a uniform blank supplied by the Center. The registration is

to take place **between November 15 and December 7**. Members who, for one reason or another, do not attend the unit meetings during the registration period, are to be visited and registered in their homes. New members joining the Party after the registration period has ended, are to fill out the same form as well, before membership books are given to them.

2. Every member is to pay up his dues at the time of registration. No one is to receive a new book who has failed to pay up his dues. The months of October and November are to be utilized to collect the arrears from those members who are behind in dues, in order to make it easier for them to become members in good standing. If we neglect to carry out this suggestion, the rigid application to the decision that no members can get their books if they are behind in dues, would result in the dropping of a large number of members.

3. The units must submit all registration cards to the Section Committee **not later than December 8**. The Section Committees, after checking up as to whether the units have done their best not only to register every member on their list, but also whether they have systematically visited every member who dropped out, should immediately transmit the registration blanks to the District Committee, where the new membership books will be made out on the basis of the registration blanks. No copies of the individual registration blanks must remain in the Units and Sections. The District after issuing the books, and compiling the reports must destroy the registration blanks. No registration blank should remain in the District after February 15th.

4. Until the end of December, the members are to pay their dues and have stamps pasted in their old books. The new books must be in the units the last week of December. When the new books come down to the unit, the members must give their old books to the Unit Bureau, as well as a receipt for the new book. (A receipt on a perforated page will be available for this purpose in the new membership book). In the first week of January (1935) the Section Committees must check up in every unit whether all the books were distributed to the members, and make a report on the situation to the District.

5. The District, on the basis of the registration, is to compile a report and send it to the Center **not later than January 8**. Report blanks for the units, sections and districts, will be prepared by the Center.

6. Special arrangements must be made for the registration of the members of shop nuclei, (party name; old book

to be taken away; special place provided for registration, etc.).

7. The period before registration begins should be utilized for working out the best possible method for the mobilization of the membership, and the establishment of an efficient apparatus for the registration.

We suggest that a special meeting of the Section Organizers or Org. Secretaries be held, where the details of the registration should be thoroughly discussed, with special emphasis on the problem of bringing back those members who have dropped out of the Party.

The Section Committees should organize similar meetings with the unit organizers and secretaries. Also special meetings of functionaries should be held and a group of comrades drawn from the district and section in order to help the lower organizations during the registration period.

Increasing "The Communist International" Circulation in District 6

DISTRICT 6, Cleveland, has worked out a very good plan for increasing the circulation of **The Communist International** there. Their aim is to build up a reading body of 400 throughout the District.

To do this they have adopted the following simple steps: Together with each section organizer, a list has been drawn up of Party comrades in each section that **should be** readers of **The Communist International**. Each comrade on the list was individually contacted on the basis that each one working pay his own six-month sub for a dollar. Those not working are to have their subs paid for by the leading committee, fraction or organization of which they are a member, counting this as organizational expense.

The comrades approached were enthusiastic about the idea, being eager to get **The Communist International** regularly. But while some success has been achieved in increasing the circulation in District 6, on the whole the results have been small, mainly because of inconsistent pushing on the part of the District.

If energetically carried out, this plan will be fruitful all over the country. All Districts, Sections, and units should work out a similar plan for **The Communist International** in their own territory.

AGIT-PROP SECTION

The Use of Party Leaflets in the National Textile Strike

By ALEX BITTELMAN

FROM THE Allentown Section of the Party (District 3) we have already received a nearly complete set of leaflets issued during the strike, together with a report of the dates of issue and distribution. This enables us to review the leaflets and to see what use our Party organization has made of this important agitational weapon. We urge the other Party organizations to follow the example of Allentown and to send in their sets of leaflets accompanied by a report of dates of issue and methods of distribution.

The total number of leaflets, stickers and bulletins issued by Allentown Section between September 3rd and October 3rd is 26. This is an imposing number of pieces—a leaflet daily, or nearly so. Unfortunately, the report does not indicate the number of copies of each leaflet. It is obvious, however, that the Party organization in Allentown displayed a correct appreciation of the value of leaflets and was sufficiently alert and energetic to make use of this agitational weapon.

No Leaflets Prior to the Strike

The first leaflet was issued on September 3rd, two days after the proclamation of the strike. But why were there no leaflets, or other agitational literature, before the strike began, for the purpose of strike preparation? Allentown, Lehigh County, is an important silk center. Yet there is no evidence that the Allentown Section of the Party carried on any agitational campaign for the strike during the period between the U.T.W. Convention and the outbreak of the strike. This is explained by the fact that the work of strike preparation was generally weak.

With the outbreak of the strike, the picture changes radically. A leaflet appears nearly every day. The Allentown Section moves rapidly into action to rally the workers of the other industries, and especially the unemployed, in support of the striking silk workers. The first leaflet (September 3) is addressed specifically to the members of

the Unemployed Leagues (led by the Musteites) and the Citizen's Welfare League (influenced by the S.P.), calling for a united front on the picket lines, under the slogan: "Support Our Striking Brothers." It connects up the textile strike with the unemployed struggles well, seeking to make one help the other. It raises the question of strike until all demands are won, urges unity between Negro and white and popularizes H.R. 7598: It indicates slightly the role of the **Daily Worker** and urges the workers to buy it. It is a good leaflet.

The first leaflet addressed directly to the strikers was issued on September 5, a bit late. It warns against arbitration, calls for the organization of rank-and-file strike committees, and urges generally rank-and-file unionism. But it has some weaknesses. The strike demands are not stated, something that had to be in it, especially in the first leaflet to the strikers. It counterposes correctly the "top officials" of the U.T.W. to the rank and file but does not explain what is wrong with these top officials, their reformism and class collaboration. None of these officials is mentioned by name, or their past records examined. Especially glaring is the omission of reference to the local reformist bureaucrats, something we should not be guilty of after a similar error in San Francisco. Our comrades have not apparently sufficiently grasped the lessons of the Central Committee analysis of the San Francisco strike. Neither the role of the Party nor that of the **Daily Worker** is mentioned. Nor is there any reference to the election campaign.

Some of these weaknesses are corrected in a subsequent leaflet issued on September 6, but not all. It centers on fighting the arbitration proposals, exposing Gorman skillfully. It calls for a 100 percent strike. The role of the Party is discussed prominently and recruiting brought forward. The **Daily Worker** is mentioned but not more. It correctly raises the question of the Communists' aim in the strike but the answer given is not sufficient. It is true, as the leaflet says, that the Communists fight to win the strike and to defeat arbitration. But is that all? Surely, to say that we wage a "bitter struggle against the bosses and their agents to smash hunger and misery" is not an adequate statement of the Communists' aim in the strike. Here, if anywhere, was the occasion for stating the revolutionary way out and the slogan of Soviet Power, if only in a brief paragraph, linked up with the **partial aims** of this strike. The exposure of the local reformist bureaucrats is still not in our agitation.

Only in the leaflet issued on September 8 do we find reference to Macri, local head of the U.T.W. But all it does

is to urge the workers to ask Macri "how he stands on these questions" (arbitration, mass picketing, rank-and-file control, etc.). Such method of exposing Macri would have been insufficient even on the eve of the strike, but on its **eighth day** it was more than insufficient. It was wrong. The situation was crying out for telling the workers plainly that Macri & Co. fought actively **against these proposals** of the Party on how to win the strike, and not merely asking him questions. This leaflet, which summarizes very well our program for winning the strike, is totally out of date on the question of exposing the reformist bureaucrats.

On September 12, the Party leaflet correctly issues the slogan for a labor conference in Bethlehem to "organize for a general sympathy strike" in order to "smash the police terror in Bethlehem." It was in answer to arrests and to a police order prohibiting picketing. It is a good leaflet because timely, effective in agitation and organization. One wonders, however, why no reference to the role of the government as **an organ of class rule** in a leaflet devoted to mobilize the workers to smash government terror? It would appear from the leaflet as though all the trouble lies with "Chief of Police, Trafford." But, surely, the comrades of Allentown know better. The Traffords should be singled out to concentrate upon them the hatred of the workers. Certainly. But the Traffords should also be shown up for what they are: **agents of the capitalist government**. This the leaflet does not do. No wonder the Party's role as a political party, its election struggles, are not in the leaflet. The idea of "now or never" in the slogan: "**A General Sympathy Strike in Bethlehem,**" is not good. Of course, we had to urge the workers to have the sympathy strike **now** because it would have helped to win the strike. But why tell the workers that if it does not happen now, it will be **never**? That is not true.

A very important piece of agitation was the strike bulletin, the **Strikers News**, made up of five pages. It was issued on September 15, containing the following: Page One—"Communist Party Proposes Sympathy Strike in Allentown." Good agitation against the terror in the textile centers. Displays the Hazelton sympathy strike as the example to be followed. Page Two—Demands of the Strikers and position of the Party in support of them. Page Three—Devoted to Bethlehem. Pages Four and Five—Reprints of **Daily Worker** editorials on arbitration and on what the Communists fight for. The Allentown Section deserves all praise for this effort. But it has one serious weakness: practically no **strike news** on the course of the struggle in various shops and centers.

The **Strikers' News**, of which only one issue appeared, does

not reflect the "smaller" but vital activities of the masses in the strike. What is happening on the picket lines of the various mills, what progress is being made in the fight for rank-and-file strike committees, how is the matter of relief handled, etc? This brings us to the most important weakness of all these leaflets: the **organizational** activities find little reflection or guidance in them. We know that little progress was made in the organization of rank and file strike committees, due primarily to the fact that the Party organization was not sufficiently entrenched in the silk mills before the strike. But during the strike **new opportunities** appeared for our mass work, especially on the picket lines and in the flying squadrons. How were these opportunities utilized? For developing out of them rank-and-file strike committees? For building the Party among the striking workers? We know that efforts have been made. But these are not found in the leaflets.

In other words, the leaflets of the Allentown Section have on the whole correctly spread among the masses the various strike slogans issued by the Central Committee of the Party through the **Daily Worker** and otherwise. Considering that these leaflets were issued almost daily, this is an important achievement. At the same time, the Allentown Section did not utilize the leaflets properly to **organize** the Party members and the masses in its own locality for the carrying out of these slogans in practice. This could not but make the agitation itself somewhat abstract, not sufficiently integrated with the local activities and problems of the strike.

On the other hand, the failure to show up the police chief as the representative of the capitalist government is an error of being "concrete" in a bad sense; an error of failing to raise partial struggles to the level of general political struggle. Hence, we must guard against two errors: (1) being too general in our agitation, and (2) failure to bring forth local events in their general class struggle significance.

(In the next issue we will review some textile strike leaflets of the other sections of the Party—Editor.)

Lessons from the Unit Discussions on the Party Anniversary

(Excerpts from the Minutes of the Central Agit-Prop
Commission Meeting, October 10, 1934)

Bittleman

COMRADE JEROME and I discussed the question of putting the Central Agit-Prop in direct contact with the agit-prop work of some of our units and sections. We feel that we don't know enough of how agit-prop work is being carried on in the units. Our information is mainly of a general character, which prevents us from giving concrete guidance. For this reason, we addressed ourselves to a number of concentration sections in the country; the stockyards section of Chicago, Hill section in Pittsburgh, Ford section in Detroit, Section 7, District 2, etc. As a beginning in carrying out this plan, it is proposed to have Comrade Carroll of Section 7, District 2 take part in our meetings and give now a brief report on the discussions in the units on the Party Anniversary.

Carroll—Section 7, District 2

I would like to say that the discussions on the Party Anniversary in the units in our section were carried out very poorly. Those units that had discussions had very superficial ones and in most cases it did not result in any concrete and definite proposals and concrete plans of action that the units should have adopted. Another very important point is that the most important units, such as the Navy yard, the longshore unit, up to today had no discussion at all. Even when the unit bureau planned to have a discussion, the comrades did not succeed in holding it and linking it up with the immediate problems facing the units on the waterfront. The appropriate thing should be that the Party Anniversary celebration discussions should be very closely linked up with the struggles on the waterfront and the preparations for the strike. Our comrades did not succeed in doing this. They did not succeed because the comrades were overburdened with daily tasks. They are primarily new comrades and don't get sufficient guidance from the leading comrades in the section.

In the street units, out of 12 units, 9 had discussions. In most instances the discussions were almost divorced from the tasks facing the units, and if the tasks were discussed, no plan was worked out.

Unit 1—which operates in Scandinavian territory and a

number of comrades work on the paper—had a discussion in a narrative form by an editor of the paper and the comrades didn't link it up with the practical tasks. The older Party comrades led the discussion and made a nice story of it.

Unit 2—operating in mass organizations, I.W.O., etc. They had a very good discussion conducted by a comrade whom I sent down. This unit has a number of old Party members and they came clamoring to the Section that they wouldn't have a discussion unless we sent someone. Seven comrades participated in the discussion, which was interesting. No plan of recruiting from the territory was worked out.

Unit 3 had a good discussion. 17 comrades participated, led by a comrade seven months in the Party. As a result of his proposals, the comrades sold 90 **Daily Workers** and got contacts in the neighborhood. As a result, they have now the possibility of organizing an Unemployment Council.

Unit 5 concentrates around the Navy yard; it is the outside unit that I have in mind. They had a good discussion; invited three outsiders. It was conducted by a comrade 5 or 6 months in the Party. The discussion was interesting, but it wasn't linked up close enough with the activities in the Navy yard, with the question of putting out the shop paper (they do a good deal of work on the paper). Despite the discussion, the Party Anniversary found no reflection in the paper. The comrade who led the discussion is a member of the Section Committee. In this unit the discussion was on history. It wasn't sufficiently followed up. They didn't have another open unit meeting to invite workers. They sold Bittelman's pamphlet at the gate of the navy yard and they sold 7 pamphlets.

Unit 6—street unit, members of longshoremen's local 808 which went out on strike. The unit, despite having a few leading comrades—the section organizer is in that unit—did not have a discussion yet. The comrades are too busy with the daily assignments to have a discussion. They never had any serious political discussion. In general, I think, it is a reflection that our units function very poorly organizationally and the function of paying dues, assignments, speakers, takes up all the time. The bureau doesn't function properly. They don't function in between units. The comrades have assignments, but all the other problems which are taken up at every unit meeting, hinder every discussion and they are not being held. If they are held, it is to satisfy the agit-prop. Although the Section Organizer is in this unit, they have other problems, issuing the local paper, calling together the rank and file committee, etc.

This Party Anniversary campaign discussion in our Section was not very good. We had no agit-prop meeting in the

District. Although the outline prepared by the Central Agit-Prop was important, it was stuck away with other minor documents. Not every agit-prop director got it personally. We are suffering very much from over-centralization in our agitation and propaganda work. We wait to hear from the District. When I read the editorial in the **D.W.**, I first found out that the outline was issued.

The question of pushing and preparing the discussion, of making it a question to be discussed in the Section Committee, with the Unit agit-prop directors, this we didn't have, which is a very important element in organizing the discussion. Another important element which made this a spontaneous affair rather than organized agit-prop work was because I was very busy in the Section; two members of the bureau were away and we have 24 units. This hindered my making personal contact with every unit. The best that was done was the sending of the outline to the comrades.

When the discussion is prepared, we can see good results, as in Unit 7. Here we have a few more-or-less old comrades and some new comrades. An old comrade led the discussion. He gave a 20-minute introduction and then we had questions, among them questions on Trotskyism and Lovestoneism. As a result, the unit worked out a plan of reviving the work in the Philippine Anti-Imperialist League. This was begun immediately by the holding of mass meetings of the Anti-Imperialist League, holding a party for the 15th Anniversary, canvassing with the **D.W.** and selling 70 copies. The discussion was interesting and carried over to three meetings. This I found to be true in all the units.

Unit 8—operating in Negro territory. They linked up the discussion with L.S.N.R. work and also carried it over to three meetings.

Unit 9—The comrades told me we didn't have any discussion though we assigned three comrades to prepare the discussion, but they were too busy. They work on the Scandinavian paper, and they are too tired to conduct any discussion in the unit.

Unit 11—the same thing; also in Scandinavian territory. They had a discussion led by an agit-prop director from another unit. They had an interesting discussion. A lot of questions, including questions on Lovestoneism and Trotskyism, were asked.

Unit 12—A newly organized unit of Greeks and Italians operating amongst food workers. They succeeded in inviting 7 non-Party workers to this discussion to whom they had to translate into Greek. The comrades linked it up very closely to the question of strikes.

The Edison unit is a newly organized unit, but very much

aware and conscious. When they read the editorial in the D.W. and saw the outline, they assigned three comrades to lead the discussion. They had an interesting discussion. They invited three non-Party workers. Despite all this discussion, the Party anniversary was not mentioned in the shop paper.

As far as the shop units are concerned, I will limit myself to this. The most important shop unit had no discussion as yet. They will have a discussion. The Robins Drydock unit had a discussion led by an old experienced comrade, active in the metal union, but it didn't result in inviting outside workers and elevating the plane of the Party members.

Excerpts from a Letter to the Agit-Prop Commission of the C. C.

DEAR COMRADES:

"... The question of unit libraries was taken up very well by our agitprop directors and in some places has already gone into effect. We have arranged with the literature department to give 50% discount to units on 13th Plenum and 8th Convention material.

"The comrades added a few suggestions to your proposals which I think would be very valuable for other districts. They are instituting these libraries as circulation libraries and are fining the price of a pamphlet to the comrade who fails to return the pamphlet or book on time. In several units these fines have been considerable and helped them to build up a fine library.

"I just want to say a few words on the outlines. The outline sent by the Center could have been used for our speakers. Our units are not as yet ready to utilize such general outlines. We have therefore taken the main material in the outline and worked out a series of 8 outlines in which we go into detail explaining some of the fundamental questions, draw our organizational conclusions based on our tasks. These outlines are very well received in the units and are very close to home."

"Comradely yours,

"Beatrice Shields,

"District Agitprop Dept.

"District 8."

(The Agit-Prop Department of District 8 has done well to concretize our outline to the needs of the district. That is in accord with our suggestions to all districts. We would like to hear from the other districts on how this has been done.—Central Agit-Prop.)