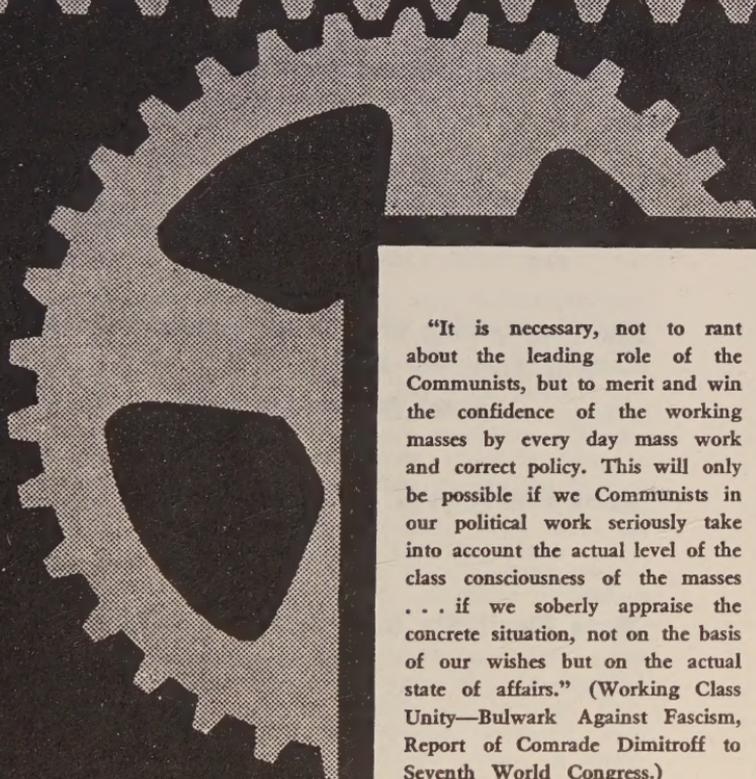


# Party Organizer



"It is necessary, not to rant about the leading role of the Communists, but to merit and win the confidence of the working masses by every day mass work and correct policy. This will only be possible if we Communists in our political work seriously take into account the actual level of the class consciousness of the masses . . . if we soberly appraise the concrete situation, not on the basis of our wishes but on the actual state of affairs." (Working Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism, Report of Comrade Dimitroff to Seventh World Congress.)

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Vol. VIII

NOVEMBER, 1935

No. 11

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*Issued by*

**CENTRAL COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY U.S.A.**

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# PARTY ORGANIZER

Vol. VIII

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## Not Another Moment Must Be Lost!

By F. Brown

**A**PPEALING to all workers and their organizations, to all opponents of war and friends of peace, to all people who do not want a repetition of the horrors of the World War, to muster their forces to stop the robber war begun by Italian fascism, the Communist International on October 7 called for the building of the broadest united front for a mass struggle against war. The appeal further says:

"Get together in mighty meetings and demonstrations! Apply other effective forms of mass action, as well, to correspond to the situation. Show Italian fascism that you will not tolerate its provocative acts of war! Show the ruling class your power in the fight for peace!

"Strive by the united action of all workers' organizations, and primarily of the transport workers', railwaymen's, seamen's and harbor workers' organizations, to make certain that not a single ship moves in support of the Italian war in Ethiopia. The carrying of this militant measure into life means encircling Italy with an iron ring of isolation and smashing the war begun by it; it means a blow restraining all the fascist instigators of war who are preparing to follow the examples of Italian fascism."

Today, while the delegates of imperialist countries in the League of Nations are putting up a pretense of enforcing effective sanctions against Italy, behind the screens, they are already discussing how to divide Ethiopia. Germany, with her eyes on Memel, Austria and the Soviet Union, is feverishly arming. Japanese imperialism is preparing a new invasion in China, and is again threatening the Soviet border.

In this hour of threatening danger of a new world imperialist war, it is the task of the Communists to carry into life the directives contained in the appeal of the Communist International. While the League of Nations talks of sanctions and the United States decides upon an embargo on ammunition and other war materials to both Italy and Ethiopia, the pictures on the front pages of the capitalist newspapers give proof that despite the decisions of sanctions and embargoes, the munition factories and chemical plants in all

the capitalist countries, including the United States, are working at full speed.

Boat after boat during the last few weeks has been leaving the ports of Connecticut and New Jersey loaded with munitions for the Italian armies, with scrap iron and other material to be transformed into deadly weapons and ammunition by Italian industries. The barons of the munition and chemical companies know their business. They know how to smuggle munitions and other war materials under various guises.

It is our Party that must take the lead in mobilizing the masses to picket the Italian consulates in all the main centers. It is our task to initiate demonstrations in front of the Italian Consulates, and on the waterfront, and to make of these demonstrations a rallying point for the mobilization of the widest masses, striving to build united action of all workers' organizations. Party members, sympathizers and contacts among the transport workers, railroad workers, seamen and harbor workers, must be mobilized as never before to the fullest extent for the purpose of drawing these organizations into a powerful movement that will prevent the movement of a single ship, a single cargo in support of the Italian war in Ethiopia.

With Bolshevik determination and persistence, we must multiply our efforts a hundredfold, to build the united front of Communist and Socialist workers, of the Communist Party and Socialist Party which will give impetus to the broad united front of the toiling masses in the struggle against fascism and war.

In carrying on all these proposed actions we must continuously keep in mind the building of the American League Against War and Fascism into a mighty united front organization of the broadest character, embracing all opponents of war and friends of peace. Everywhere our forces must take the initiative in building committees for the Defense of Ethiopia, which will be able to rally the Negro masses into the broadest united front. These committees must be of the broadest nature, embracing all kinds of organizations of the Negro people, with special attention to trade unions, youth organizations, churches, etc.

The sentiment of the American toiling masses against war is so deep today that no barrier can prevent us, Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists, from reaching the widest organizations of the trade unions, fraternal organizations, church organizations, etc. Special attention must be paid to the Italian neighborhoods where the fascist agents are today very busy with their subtle agitation and propaganda, stimulating the national pride of the Italian masses in order

to win their support for the robber war of imperialist Italy. We must be active especially in developing the struggle against war and against Italian fascism inside the Italian organizations. This period should be considered by us as a period of war mobilization of all our forces, in which every means at our disposal must be utilized for the widest agitation. Print shops, mimeographs, hand mimeographs, hectographs, etc., must turn out hundreds of thousands, millions of leaflets, that must reach the masses in the shops, the Negro population, the Italian population, the longshoremen, railroad workers, etc.

Day by day we must unmask the treachery of the imperialist powers and the "civilization moves" of the invading armies of Italy who are bombing the huts of the Ethiopian people, bringing death to women and children. At the same time that we unmask these moves we must call upon all workers to be on the alert, to participate in the various anti-war actions. We must transform the broad anti-war sentiment into powerful anti-war actions that will bring real stoppages in industry, that will stop the sailing of boats carrying ammunition. We must bring the war-hating, peace-loving masses of the U. S. A. into a mighty united front with the toilers of other countries that will "encircle Italy with an iron ring of isolation and smash the war begun by it". Such powerful actions will at the same time be a warning to the war-makers all over the world, as well as in the United States, who, while talking peace, are turning ever faster the wheels of the munition and chemical factories in preparation for the next world slaughter, in which the United States will participate.

To make the proposed actions most effective, there cannot be any unit, fraction, functionaries meeting, meeting of any mass organization in which there are Party members or sympathizers, where not only the anti-war struggle will be discussed, but concrete decisions made on **how best to mobilize the membership for every-day struggle against war.**

Forces must be assigned to the waterfront; everywhere where we want to develop actions that will stop the shipment of ammunition, where we want to bring stoppage in the war industries. In New York, for example, all forces are being mobilized for continuous actions, taking the form of picket lines on the waterfront, in front of the Italian Consulates, etc., which will culminate in the tremendous demonstrations being prepared by the American League Against War and Fascism, on November 11, to which we must give our full support. Such examples must be emulated everywhere, by all Districts and Sections, by units in the

small towns, by sympathizers and by Left-wing workers everywhere.

The examples of Norfolk, where the Norwegian crew refused to man the Italian ship, and of Seattle, where the workers refused to permit the docking of the Italian ship Cellini, and where such an anti-war sentiment was built among the masses that the State Federation of Labor passed resolutions instructing the unions actively to support the longshoremen in their fight against loading shipments of munitions to Italy, should be followed by all people interested in the fight for peace. The victory of the progressive forces of the Atlantic City Convention of the American Federation of Labor which resulted in the passing of the resolution declaring "Italy an outlaw nation which all civilized countries should refuse to assist commercially, financially or in any other manner," is a further step in the broadening of our anti-war campaign in the United States.

Communists! Here is your task!

Translate the Appeal of the Comintern into immediate action.

Weld the United Front of Socialists, Communists and all Anti-War Forces!

Every trade unionist, every anti-war and anti-fascist fighter—a fighter for peace!

**Not a moment shall be lost!**

Forward in bringing to an end Mussolini's adventure, and thus preventing a new world slaughter!

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## Building the Party Under Terror

District Organizational Dept. District 13

**U**P until the time of the 1934 Pacific Coast Maritime Strike our comrades in District 13 had had little experience in doing Party work under conditions of extreme terror. There had, of course, been raids on private homes previous to this, and headquarters' windows had been broken occasionally, but there had been no mass arrests or vigilante raids on a large scale.

The Organizational Department of District 13, for a year before the strike, had been hammering at the Sections, Sub-Sections and units about establishing the squad system, in order to be prepared for illegal work when the

time came. In most of the Sections there were squad systems established, but they were not functioning as well as they should have been. Dues stamps, literature and leaflets were still brought to unit meetings and distributed. Most units had no mimeographs of their own, and had most of their work done on a Section scale.

After the slogan for a General Strike had been raised in San Francisco, it became necessary for the units to meet every day as there was such a tremendous amount of work to be done. It was then that most Sections began to hold unit meetings on a squad basis; that is, the unit bureau would meet with the squad captains, and in turn, the squad captains would meet with their squads to check up on the day's work and make plans for the following day.

Then the General Strike broke. All headquarters were demolished, many homes were raided, and comrades arrested. The **Western Worker** printing plant was burned down. Many mimeographs and typewriters previously used by units were found in comrades' homes and either destroyed outright or confiscated.

Until that time, most Sections had had headquarters, and comrades had been in the habit of dropping into headquarters to contact the Unit or Section Organizer, and receive instructions. With the breaking up of headquarters, a certain amount of panic naturally set in. Some comrades left town, and also some of the weaker element in the Party went into hiding and refused to carry out any activity. However, a great majority of the membership rallied very well. Unit meetings were held daily, still on a squad basis, and sometimes even twice a day. Leaflets were put out by units, both by hand mimeograph and hectograph, and distributed throughout the neighborhoods. A few "baby" **Western Workers** appeared in mimeographed form in the neighborhoods, also put out by the units. All these things naturally had to be distributed at night, and very carefully, so as to avoid discovery.

There were about 100 workers in jail, and a good percentage of them were Party members. The International Labor Defense headquarters had been broken up, and it seemed impossible, in the face of all the anti-Red propaganda, to rent another. Therefore, a Committee for Labor's Civil Rights was set up, and a headquarters rented in that name. Prominent liberals, trade unionists and some church people participated in this Committee, raising funds to bail workers out of jail and carry on successful defense work. This Committee functioned for some time after the raids as the chief defense body.

After the general strike, the District Organizational De-

partment held a complete Party clean-up and a checkup of forces in the District, some of which had remained inactive. We must remember that not only in San Francisco was there extreme terror, but also in Sacramento, Stockton, East Bay, San Jose and Contra Costa Sections. The comrades in San Francisco, being in closer contact with the District leadership, naturally carried on better work and lost fewer Party members during the terror. In Sacramento, the workers were also persecuted. Around 35 were arrested, and eight later convicted under the infamous Criminal Syndicalism Law.

Instructions went out to all these Sections to have a complete checkup on all forces in the Party, and also on those that had seemingly dropped out from activity. There were a few instances of comrades, who, due to faulty squad systems, had been unable to contact their unit and carry out any Party activity, but there were also other instances of comrades who had become terrorized and refused to work with the Party under any circumstances. These latter comrades were called to Bureau meetings of either the unit or Section, and charges placed against them when it was found they had no excuse for non-activity. Several stool-pigeons turned up, especially in the waterfront Section. These were of course, expelled and exposed in both the **Daily Worker** and **Western Worker**.

It must be brought out that during this period very little recruiting was done with the exception of the waterfront Section where the struggle was being conducted. Our comrades had been used to recruiting at mass meetings, street meetings, and among personal friends. Now, the entire basis for recruiting had to be changed to a neighborhood, shop, trade union and mass organization basis. However, it took some little time for the comrades to re-orientate themselves, so for a short period, very few new members came into the Party, and those who did come in were checked on very carefully before being admitted. It might be emphasized here that since that time, a much better element is coming into the Party. In Sacramento, Stockton and San Jose Sections, the larger part of the Party in those localities was an unemployed transient element, who, when the terror came on, simply left the Section. These Sections are now taking care to see that the Party is built on a permanent local basis so that when illegal work is again necessary, there will be a steady, really class-conscious group of workers who will not run away at the first sign of struggle.

Our comrades in District 13 by this time know under what conditions they will have to work. Many new appli-

cants, in the light of the terror of last year, know when they join just what is expected of them. Naturally therefore, the proletarian basis of the Party has been greatly improved. About one-third of the present membership is either employed in shops, or members of American Federation of Labor unions.

Our technical apparatus has also improved greatly. Squad systems are nearing perfection. About 70 percent of the units in our District have regular mimeographs for daily use as well as reserve mimeographs for use during illegality.

We also, in the last two or three months, have had two more experiences with vigilante terror. The first took place three months ago in Eureka. Eureka was the only Section of District 13 affected by the great Northwest General Lumber Strike. The Party in Eureka is very small, consisting of only about 35 members. Our leading comrades in Eureka are inexperienced in struggle, though some of them have been in the Party several years. The strike there was very badly led. No squad systems had been established in the units, and there was but little preparation made for illegal work of any kind. The Section mimeograph was smashed, and for a short period the comrades had no way of issuing even a single leaflet. About one-half of the membership refused to cooperate in any way in Party activity. The District Organizational Department, realizing the bad situation, and knowing that if it were allowed to continue, it might dissolve the entire Eureka Party, sent a representative from the District to Eureka to get the forces together and re-activate them. A mimeograph was obtained, and several leaflets were put out at this time. Since then, the best element in the Party there became encouraged and carried out effective work towards rebuilding the Party and entrenching themselves more firmly in the trade unions.

Also, about six weeks ago, the disgraceful tar and feather scandal in the Sonoma Section was perpetrated. This was a result of the recent apple strike. Our comrades in Sonoma, also have a Party membership of about 35. The Section territorially is a large Section, and the membership is very scattered. In Santa Rosa, the seat of the trouble, there had been a fairly large unemployed organization. Very few members were lost through this terror, and our comrades rallied very well. Three days after the warning had been given for all Communists to leave the County, a well-written leaflet came out headed "We Will Stay," and signed by the Sonoma Section of the Communist Party. A few days later, another leaflet came out addressed to the trade union to which one of the victims belonged, calling upon that body to protest the disgraceful treatment to which their

brother had been subjected. Protest meetings were held in several towns in other Sections. Protest wires, letters and telegrams were sent to the officials of Sonoma County. This had a very great effect on our enemies, and also encouraged the comrades in the Section to remain active. Committees of prominent liberals, trade unionists and church people were immediately sent to Santa Rosa to protest the police and vigilante brutality and terror. All these things helped the comrades in that area to have more confidence in themselves, and take the offensive to fight back.

Wherever workers were brought to trial, in Sacramento, San Francisco, Eureka, Stockton, and Santa Rosa, leaflets were issued urging people to pack the court-house. In Sacramento, leaflets were issued several times a week to keep the public informed of the conduct of the trials.

The re-opening of headquarters was accomplished as soon as possible in all Sections affected by terror. This was very encouraging not only for the Party members but for the workers and their allies as a whole. It showed a form of offensive against the bosses.

Many things have been learned from our experiences working under terror. One of the most important things learned is that during legal times, we must continually be preparing for illegality. We must have daily contact with our comrades through the squad system. We must have printing apparatus for each unit. We must become more firmly entrenched in the trade unions, shops and other organizations. Our street units must be functioning on a neighborhood basis, with many contacts in each neighborhood. We are not perfect on any of these points yet, but should terror come now, we would be much better prepared than ever before to meet it.

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## The Functioning of a Shop Nucleus in a War Industry Plant

Report to Shop Conference, New York District

**T**HIS is a report of a nucleus in a war industry plant which employs over 5,000 workers in over 19 trades. Since it is a war industry plant every attempt is made to keep the workers in this plant 100 percent patriotic to the government. This is done through the medium of American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War posts, company union, retirement association, credit unions, and through various other means.

Over three years ago, three Young Communist Leaguers were colonized in this place and set up a League unit. At first this unit's activity consisted mainly in agitation through leaflets, work on some apprentice contacts, and attempting to form a local of the S.M.W.I.U.

The unit made very little headway in its day-to-day work, mainly because we were working on the wrong trade union line. Here we were in a plant where the American Federation of Labor had locals in the most important shops in the plant, and through its metal trades council, supplied the leadership to all the workers. Yet, because at that time, the party was building independent unions, this unit mechanically applied this line, and attempted to also build the local of the S.M.W.I.U. Naturally, the workers could not see the S.M.W.I.U. alongside of the American Federation of Labor—and looked upon it as a dual union.

After several months of pursuing this confused line, we began, with the help of the Section Organizer and the Section representative to the unit, to hold discussions, which finally led us to turn from this line, towards work within the American Federation of Labor. The action which settled this question in our minds once and for all was the campaign which we waged around a 15 per cent wage cut which was instituted at that time.

Before this cut was given to the workers in our plant, the unit was right there with agitational material, pointing out what was going to take place, and how to fight against it. We had many contacts in the shops, contacts who were "key" men in that they commanded the respect and following of many workers in the shop. This made it possible for the unit to give correct leadership and guidance to the workers in this campaign. We were able to gauge the mood of the workers through our contacts. By issuing leaflets to the extent of two or three per week, the face of the Party was kept prominently before the workers. When these leaflets were given out—which gave guidance to the workers—our comrades on the inside, who had contact with these key men, saw to it that the directives contained in the leaflets were actually carried out by the workers in the shop. The morning a leaflet was issued, our comrades would immediately get together with the workers, discuss the plan outlined in the leaflets, come to a conclusion, by hammering away at the correctness of the leaflet, and then we would see that the plan was carried out by the men themselves.

The main slogan that we had been raising throughout our entire agitation was the calling of a general mass meet-

ing where the workers would get a chance to express their opinions, and to formulate definite actions to be taken against the cut. This meeting to be organized by the metal trades council of the American Federation of Labor in the plant—a body composed of the delegates of the various American Federation of Labor locals in the plant.

Although the meeting was never actually held, due to the metal trades council maneuvering on the night of the meeting, the extent of the Party's agitation can be judged by the fact that several hundred workers answered the Party's call and appeared in front of the meeting place of the metal trades council and demanded that the mass meeting be held.

The reaction of the unit to a lively, burning issue, definitely established the Party as a force in the plant. This also definitely decided our policy as to our main orientation and where we should concentrate our energies. It was clear that the center of our work lay within the American Federation of Labor unions.

Let us examine the progress made since the adoption of this line. We have increased our membership six times in both Party and Young Communist League. Work is carried on in thirteen shops, five locals of the American Federation of Labor and the apprentice associations.

The main shortcoming in the composition of the Party and the League is that we only have two mechanics from important shops. The average age of the Party unit membership is under thirty. There are also two women in the Party unit. The average time in the Party of the members is about one year.

### **The Unit Bureau is the Guiding Force**

The guiding force in the working of the unit is the unit bureau. This is composed of the most experienced and politically developed comrades in the unit. It represents a cross section of the composition of the unit.

The bureau holds regular weekly meetings, planning the unit meetings, educational program, and checks on the activity of the unit both in the unions and in the shops. Through the functioning of the bureau, the unit is organizationally stable, with close attention paid to dues payments and attendance at meetings. For the past two months the unit has had a political discussion at every unit meeting, and starting next week, will run a three months class on leaflet writing, shop papers, and methods of study.

The bureau pays strict attention to the development of cadres in the unit. It sees that every member attends courses

at the Workers' School, and watches the development of these comrades. It picks out the most promising members and guides them towards assuming leadership in the unit and in the Section. We have recently sent one of our members to the District Training School, and others to the Section training school.

The best means through which this unit has given leadership to the workers and established the Party in the plant is the shop paper. For the past 20 months, the paper has been appearing regularly each month, in an attractive printed form. This paper brings all the political campaigns of our Party in the shop, linking them up with the everyday life of the workers and their grievances and conditions. It brings these campaigns up in a popular style, in workers' language, and at the correct time. At the time Roosevelt made his speech in which he asked the people of the country whether they were better off than last year, etc., we featured this prominently and answered these questions with letters from the workers comparing our conditions with those of the previous year. These letters took up the basic grievances of the workers at the time, and these issues were very lively ones, and gained much prestige and following for our paper. There is not an issue that comes out, but that it deals with the main issues of the men in the shops—dealing with them concretely, logically, and in simple language, drawing the correct conclusions from these issues, and linking them up with the struggles of the working class in general. Teaching the workers, on the basis of the conditions they themselves expose, the final way out. In this way we have built up around this paper a real following. Whereas when we first launched this paper, many workers would throw the paper away immediately upon receiving it, now when the issue is distributed, you can comb the streets, and not find one paper. They accept it eagerly, fold it up, put it in their pockets, and take it into the shops, where they read and discuss it. We have also built up through persistent work, a financial following for this paper. This paper, through its more than 40 contributors is able to finance itself. This entails about \$10.00 a month average cost of the paper. Although correspondence is received from these sympathizers the proportion of correspondence to financial support is very small.

#### Shop Paper Combats Red Scare

The paper was the means through which we were able to effectively combat the Red scare raised in the Hearst Press.

The paper came out and dealt with the Red scare in the following manner. The main article dealt with the program

of the Communists in the plant—was it beneficial to the workers, or not? Did we call for 100 per cent unionization or not? Did we raise the questions that were agitating the workers, and did we give correct solutions to these problems? Then we pointed out that precisely because we were leading the workers in the struggle to improve their conditions—that was why the officialdom decided to call a halt by scaring those workers who were showing any signs of discontent with the existing conditions. We pointed out that anybody who raised his voice in protest against something that was wrong was called a Red.

The entire issue was popularly written, both in a serious vein, and in a light tone. This was for the purpose of firstly bringing out the main political lessons of the Red scare, and secondly, to put in the correct light, the exact amount of information the officials claimed they had, for the purpose of our close sympathizers.

The second major Red scare and provocation was the infamous article written by Admiral Stirling in the Hearst press calling for war against the Soviet Union.

The article appeared in the Hearst Sunday papers. The **Daily Worker** of the day previous carried advance notices of this article. Immediately the Unit Organizer received telephone calls from unit members, letting him know where they were, for mobilization to meet this provocation. The Unit Organizer called a special meeting of the Bureau for Sunday. **The Bureau for the first time spent money on the Hearst press.** We read the article, decided on the method we were going to use in answering it, and immediately sat down to get out a special issue of our paper on this point.

When the special issue appeared in the two days after Stirling's article, it created a sensation, both among the workers, and among the officialdom. This issue dealt with why workers in our plant should defend the Soviet Union, and why men like Stirling and Hearst took the stand that they took. At the same time it contrasted conditions of the workers here with those in the Soviet Union.

It is of great importance to consider how our unit, working in a war industry, carries on a struggle against war. This is done through various means. Firstly, the shop paper, secondly, leaflets, and last but not least, through individual agitation.

There are two main points that must be proved to the workers in our plant. First, that war is of no benefit to the working class in general and, therefore, of no benefit to us. Second, that working conditions during wartime do not and will not improve over peacetime conditions.

Our agitation on this point is based on the experiences of the last war, showing that the conditions of the workers did not improve during the war. That whereas we are against the preparations for war, we don't call upon the workers to quit their jobs in this war industry, because quitting their jobs will not eliminate the system that breeds wars. We point out, however, that the fight to improve their everyday conditions, to get wage increases, is a fight against the war budget, because more money for wages means less money for munitions. In conclusion, we point to the Marxist-Leninist solution to the problem of imperialist war. We point to the Soviet Union as an example of a system that does not breed war nor does it need it. At present we must state that we have not as yet won over the workers in our plant to this program, although we have gone a long way towards it.

We have previously mentioned our change in the trade union line in the plant. Let us see what the application of a correct line has led to. At the present time our members are in five American Federation of Labor locals. In three of these, we have functioning rank and file groups. How was it possible to establish these groups?

In the first place a program of action, based on the grievances of the workers is drawn up. This program was presented on the union floor where our Party members took a prominent part in fighting for them. Because of this, the members of the local gained much confidence in our Party members, and thereafter came to us with their problems. From these more advanced workers who supported our program, we were able to form the basis for a rank and file group. In one particular local practically all the proposals made by our rank and file group dealing with the immediate improvement of the conditions of the workers, were accepted. In this local, our comrades serve on the leading committees, and are the most active builders of the union. It is important to note that being on the organizational committee of this and other unions, in recruiting new members to the union, we recruit them on the basis of our rank and file program, and on the basis of coming in for militant action.

The rank and file group in this union holds regular meetings, where they discuss the policies of the local. During the course of these union discussions, inevitably, political discussions develop from the basis of the economic demands themselves, and under the leadership of our comrades. Also during the course of these discussions, our comrades are able to pick out the most advanced workers in this group. From these more advanced workers, we were able to organize a study circle, where we discuss the political

events of the day. This discussion circle will eventually be the basis for the establishment of a branch of the American League Against War and Fascism.

What can we learn from these developments? We must come to the conclusion that through our work in the local unions in the shops, we are enabled to lead broad masses of workers in the struggle for their everyday demands. That during the course of our leading the fight for these everyday demands, of building the unions, we are able to show by our actions firstly that we are not an "opposition group," merely criticizing, but that we have a positive program based on our everyday needs. Secondly, that simultaneous with our economic action, we must also engage in political action, in order to improve our conditions. And, having gained the confidence of the workers through leading their struggle, we can more boldly bring forth the campaigns and slogans of the Party such as the formation of a Labor Party, etc.

With the guidance of the Party unit, the Young Communist League units have been able to establish and guide an apprentice association which has led successful economic struggles against wage cuts and layoffs. Because of the functioning of the Young Communist League nucleus, our comrades are holding leading positions on the executive board and are supported wholeheartedly by the entire membership. At the present time the key question of the Young Communist League is to get this association to affiliate with the American Youth Congress.

In line with our task towards the youth, the Party unit gives real leadership and guidance to the Young Communist units. Our best forces are assigned to work with the League. Periodically, the Party Bureau meets with the joint bureau of the League units, and discusses the problems with them. The Young Communist League units are also involved in the issuing of the shop paper, two League members working as members of the editorial board of the paper.

Certain League members are chosen to be developed as leading Party members, and are trained for this.

One of our basic shortcomings is the way our unit has dealt with the Negro problem. While from time to time we do pay attention to this vital question, and when we do, we can see concrete results, generally, this question is almost forgotten, and we have suffered by it. We had about four Negroes who were members of the Party, and many more who were close sympathizers, and in close touch with the unit. Through our gross negligence in this respect, the Negroes dropped out of the Party, and most of the Negro sympathizers have since lost touch with the unit.

When Negroes did attend our unit meetings, instead of dealing with this problem as a special problem, we treated it as just another phase of activity, and the Negroes no doubt felt that this was just another Party looking for their support.

On one instance, when we published an article in the shop paper, pointing out the discrimination practised against Negroes, a Negro worker came to us, and told us that previously he was always laid off among the first group of workers to go, but this article, appearing a few days before the layoff in his shop, was instrumental in safeguarding his job. Had we consistently carried on a campaign for the right of the Negroes to any job for equal pay, against discrimination, and for Negro rights generally, we would not have lost the Negro comrades and would have recruited many more.

Although this report records progress in the work of our nucleus, the small growth in membership, the great increase of the prestige of the Party among the workers and the successful leadership of important struggles, still we do not wish to give the impression that we are satisfied. What we have been able to accomplish, we achieved without the best and most systematic guidance and political direction from the leading Party bodies. Had we had the proper kind of political leadership and guidance we undoubtedly would be able to boast of a much larger membership, of much greater progress and victories for the Party. What have been our relations with the Section Committee and the District? It is very evident that in a unit such as ours, situated in a shop with the many problems that we face, close guidance from the Section is very essential.

When the Section sends out their organizational letter to the units, and expects this to act as the section leader to the units, they fall very short of the mark. When we have a specific problem to solve in our unit, a problem which probably arose that very same day or week, the mere reading of the organizational notes, which pertain to everything but that specific problem, we are not getting any leadership and guidance. What we want right then and there is a representative from the Section to help us solve that problem; we want him to listen to it and discuss it with us and help us come to correct conclusions.

What were the relations of the Section Committee with our nucleus? The Section Committee had one of its bureau members working with our unit and from time to time had the unit bureau meet with the Section Bureau. At the same time a comrade from the unit was elected to the Section

Committee. Through this method very close relations were maintained between the section and our unit with the result that we were assisted politically and organizationally with our work inside of the shop.

However, these normal relations were interrupted from time to time. For some reason or other the comrade of the Section working with our unit was withdrawn. We must realize that in a unit like ours with all the problems it is not sufficient to have a Section representative come down to meetings. It is necessary that the comrade stay with the unit and learn the problems in order to be able to assist us in our work.

As far as recruiting in our unit goes: In shops where we had Party members working, we recruited workers. In the face of the continued worsening of the conditions of the workers, in the face of the consistent agitation carried on by our unit, in the face of our work in the trade unions, it is appalling to think that we have not recruited more workers to our Party than we have. And when we go into the reasons for this, we can only come to one conclusion. Namely, that enough attention is not paid to recruiting. We take a worker, recruit him into the union, take him along slowly along the path of struggle for his immediate needs. In the fight for these demands, he comes across many barriers, political barriers. These things we point out to him, and we point out to him ways and means of combatting these barriers. We lead in this struggle, we get the fullest confidence of this worker. We discuss political problems of the day with him. He agrees with our policy and our program. But it is very evident that we do not ask him to join our Party. And if we do, we do not persist in this. Otherwise there is no doubt but that we would have a much larger unit than we have. We can see evidence of greater and greater masses following our slogans. We cannot, physically, speak to all of these workers but to those that we do, we must continuously raise the question of joining our Party. And this does not spring from itself. It must be taken up at each unit meeting. Ways and means of recruiting must be discussed, each comrade reporting on a contact must examine the methods used. We must analyze and see whether these methods are adequate, and if not we must correct them.

Recruiting must always be on the order of business of the day, every day, and then we will build our Party to the proportions necessary to combat the forces of fascism and reaction.

# Some Problems of Party Organization

A Discussion Article

By Harry Yaris

**T**HE May Plenum of the Central Committee of our Party stressed the question of organization in order to overcome the chief political shortcomings of the Party. The purpose of this article is to investigate several problems of organization with which we are faced in most Districts. While the solution of these problems will not solve all difficulties, it will help considerably in making our apparatus more flexible, and make it easier to involve the Party and sympathetic organizations in mass work.

It is not incorrect to state that the **actives** of our Party are overwhelmed with a great deal of work and are continually chasing from meeting to meeting. In trying to mobilize for any work we are continually faced with the "excuse" that our comrades cannot do this or that because they have a meeting on that night. While a small percentage of comrades are trying to find some way out of an assignment, the majority are telling the truth. Our comrades have so many meetings that very little time is left to go out among the masses, or to carry on work in broad non-Party organizations.

There are several reasons for this:

I. The work of our units, Sections and District is so clumsily organized that too many internal meetings are held before we get down to the real work of carrying out adopted decisions. The orientation of our work is directed internally to such an extent that some comrades seldom see a non-Party person.

There is an excess of organizational apparatus between our comrades and the masses. Our experiences in several recent campaigns in Chicago have shown that we spend so much time and energy at meetings trying to mobilize our own comrades that very little time is left for our comrades to carry out our plans and directives among the masses. This set-up which is supposed to help organize the Party and the masses actually becomes a hindrance to this task.

II. We have a multiplicity of organizations, many of which consist of the same people. Thus, instead of involving broad masses of workers into these organizations, we often substitute the repeated organization of ourselves into new organizations. One is almost overwhelmed in thinking about the large number of organizations around our move-

ment. Were all these to consist of different people it would not be necessary to write about this as a problem. This is especially true of the language organizations.

The situation becomes worse when we consider what the effect of this is upon our Party membership. Some comrades belong to as many as a dozen organizations and even if they only attended the regular meetings, all their time would be taken up, leaving them no time for either leisure, self-education, or work among the mass of people not yet in the circle of sympathetic organizations.

This situation must be remedied, and our comrades should spend less time in meetings and more in discussing with and educating individuals and groups of workers, more time in the broad reformist and enemy organizations.

How can this be done? We want to offer only a few suggestions. The Section Committees and Unit Bureaus must make a careful check-up on the activity of its membership and re-assign tasks. Comrades who belong to too many organizations must be asked to drop some of their affiliations. If this is done under the careful guidance of the Section Committee there will be no harmful results to the mass organizations. We must decide which comrades are to form the fraction of these organizations, and the other comrades can be sent into organizations in which we have no influence or contacts at the present time. In this way we will give each comrade some more time to spend with workers outside of our immediate circle.

III. Instead of spending so much of our time in internal mobilization meetings, we could develop more individual initiative as well as greater responsibility of the Section Committee, Unit Bureau, and the unit captains. We must reduce these internal meetings to a minimum, if necessary even to hold unit meetings every other week rather than weekly. If the captains and Unit Bureaus are made responsible for mobilization in between the bi-weekly meetings, then there will be no slacking down but rather an increase in our activity.

IV. Next we should tackle some of the organizations and investigate whether there is a basis for their existence in the specific situation. This does not mean the indiscriminate liquidation of some of these organizations. However, in some instances this could easily be done and our work improved.

We have examples where in some language clubs the membership consists overwhelmingly of Party members—sometimes as high as 75 to 90 percent, with the rest of the membership consisting of former Party members. Certainly

this is not a healthy situation, nor is it a solution to merely state "let the Party members go out and recruit new workers for the club." The facts are that for years some organizations have existed with such a composition.

One of two things can be done in such a situation: we can remove some of our comrades from work in that organization; or we may even have to liquidate some such organizations, transferring the non-Party members to similar groups in nearby neighborhoods. I know that some comrades will state that such policy will lead to liquidation of our mass organizations. There is no danger of that, however, if it is carried on under supervision of the proper Party committee and with consultation of comrades involved.

These organizations must become a transmission belt to the masses. At the present time they often serve as a hindrance to reaching broader masses.

V. The work of our language bureaus must also be reorganized to eliminate the sectarianism which is so widespread among them. There are still too many remnants of federationalism, and a narrow outlook. The result is that we are continually faced with difficulties in trying to mobilize these bureaus and the organizations under their influence for participation in the general political campaigns of the Party. These difficulties often take the form of hidden resistance to the Party. The experiences in Chicago during the August 1 and August 31 campaigns showed this.

The same shortcoming also appeared in our stockyards work. A complete campaign was mapped out which included provisions for mobilizing the foreign-born workers and the language organizations. Despite the fact that all language bureaus were present at a two day conference at which this was discussed, today, two months have already passed without a single concrete step being taken by any bureau for the fulfillment of this most important task.

Our language organizations are entirely too much taken up with the petty problems of their organizations, arranging affairs, raising money for rent, etc., and not enough with the broader issues facing the workers of their nationality. The result is that many of these organizations have been stagnating for years, dying for a breath of that fresh air which comes with participation in mass struggles. I do not mean that the specific phase of work around which these organizations were formed should be neglected, i.e., singing, cultural activities, dramatics, etc., but rather to link these up with broader forms of activity.

The attitude of some leading comrades in language work towards the Party when it tries to involve them in the

general campaigns of the Party, is one of covered hostility. They resent the Party trying to disturb the smooth waters of their private lagoon. They fail to understand that only by participating in these mass campaigns will they help to build their organizations, creating a broader base for them among the foreign born masses, and justify their existence.

This problem would not be very important were it not for the composition of the Party in many Districts, the fact that a large portion, even a majority in many instances, of the Party membership are foreign-born workers, most of whom are also active in the language organizations. These organizations and workers can be used as a medium with which we can reach the native workers. However, this will only be possible if there is a radical change in the attitude and approach to mass work on the part of numerous language organizations and the leading comrades at present involved in this work.

We could give many facts to illustrate the above conditions, and I am sure that other comrades can supply even more material. However, such details would not help to remedy the general situation. The specific facts can be handled one at a time by the Districts; however, the remedy can only be achieved by solving the general aspects of this problem.

VI. Finally, I want to touch upon one of the key organizational problems facing us, that is the question of relationship between the District, Sections, and units. In the larger Districts it is practically impossible for the leading committee to pay the necessary attention to individual units. The best that can be done is to pick out a number of the most important units and by assigning leading comrades to work with them, give some concrete help. Therefore the functioning of the Section Committee assumes greater importance. Yet this is precisely one of our weak spots. From our own experiences we find that most of the recommendations and decisions of the District get lost in the process of transmission to the units. The effect of this on the life and activity of the units has often been discussed, and this is one of the chief causes for the failure of many campaigns.

The chief responsibility for eliminating this shortcoming lies upon the District Committees, who must assign the proper forces to work with the present Section Committees. The Section functionaries neglect their tasks not because of any incorrect attitude, but simply because of not knowing what to do, what steps to take in order to further the activity of a certain campaign. This can only be overcome

by comradely advice and help. Where the proper concrete help is given and a strict check-up kept on the carrying out of these suggestions, as was done during the August 31st campaign in Chicago, there the above shortcoming is eliminated to a great extent.

Our District Conference held in July, recognizing this as one of our chief organizational problems, took steps to solve this by assigning leading comrades to each Section and to the chief concentration shop units. Had all these comrades properly fulfilled this assignment, we could have made serious progress in eliminating this problem and raising the political and organizational life of the units and sections. However, to date, this has only been partially carried out. Unless we solve this question we will not be able to fulfil the tasks placed before us by the Conference.

The above are merely some of the organizational problems facing our districts. Although some may seem to be only of minor importance, yet unless we learn to solve them we will continue to lag behind in various undertakings, and the Party will not play its destined role in the struggles of the workers. Greater attention must therefore be paid by the Party and leading committees to these problems of organization in the coming period.

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## More Flexibility in Organizational Forms

By F. Brown

**T**HE problem that we want to discuss now is not a new one. It is the problem of improving the life and activities of the Party units and fractions. Plenum after Plenum of the Central Committee as well as of the District Committee have already indicated the measures through which such fundamental problems should be solved. However, while in some respects we can register an improvement (in having begun to transfer the center of gravity of our organizational work from the neighborhoods to the inside of the shops by building new shop nuclei, etc.) in other respects the problem has not yet been tackled fundamentally. That is to say, we have not solved the question of the proper functioning of the street units, fractions, etc.

In the last period, especially because of the many new developments in trade union work, in the field of unemployed work, in the task of broadening the united front, etc., the

comrades in some districts are raising the problem of how best to improve the activities of the units and at the same time find better and proper organizational forms that would enable the Party to get the best political and organizational results in accordance with the new developments and tasks confronting the Party today.

All kinds of ideas are developed around this question. There are comrades who think that the actual organizational structure should remain intact, that it fits all purposes, that no changes can be made and are not even necessary. There are other comrades who are alarmed by the actual status and in their eagerness to get quick results are ready to build "industrial units," and to completely negate the importance of the street units, believing that industrial units are the correct new organizational form that will solve all problems. Both of these points of view are wrong. We will be enabled to find the correct solution if we examine the facts briefly.

The change brought about by the situation in regard to trade union work, in the field of unemployed work, of broadening the united front, of giving real help in the building of union organization, etc., has brought us at the last few plenums, to emphasize the importance of the solution of such organizational problems as the one we are discussing. All the decisions made in regard to the transferring of the center of gravity of our organizational structure from the neighborhoods to the inside of the factories, to the strengthening and building of the shop nuclei, to the building of fractions, etc., followed by the decisions of organizing the proper forces to speed this process, are absolutely correct, and must remain in force, **since the building of shop nuclei, and the strengthening of the Party in the industries and unions remains the basic organizational task of the Party.** Yet the latest developments in our trade union work, and the perspective of broadening the united front in bringing about a workers' and farmers' party, etc., shows that we must solve the problem of a more flexible distribution of forces and concentration of activities which here and there, on the basis of concrete cases and situation, will call for more flexible transitional organizational forms.

What are the facts? Investigation of the life of the street units in the latest period has shown that street units are not connected with the neighborhood organizations of the workers, are not correctly orientated towards deeper penetration of the masses in the neighborhoods with the purpose of influencing and organizing them, but are mostly confined to inner activities around hundreds of problems;

activities that are referred to committee meetings, subcommittee meetings, etc., which take all our members' time.

A thorough analysis of this peculiar situation has shown clearly that the poor life, (especially of the street units) is not only due to the composition of the units, but mainly because our Party in some instances, in practice, takes on the character of an auxiliary of the mass organization. In many cases it has also been shown that most of the points on the agenda of the units have nothing to do with the main tasks of the street units, which include winning over and guiding the struggles in the territory where the units are located. Besides this, we found that most of the points on the agenda are followed by collections for various purposes and campaigns, so much so that the units not only do not concentrate on the territory where they are located, but are unable to raise the necessary means for the furthering of their own propaganda, in view of the fact that most of the energies (as stated above) go in other directions.

The solution primarily in solving the problem of the activities, and in this relation the inner life and composition of the street units, which still embrace the large majority of the membership. Let us look again at the street unit for a moment.

We have street units composed mainly of unemployed workers, housewives and other elements, and only a few employed workers, very often concentrating in territories where very often as for example in New York, the Party members do not live. We see immediately that such units cannot really rally the masses effectively in a particular territory around immediate issues, that they cannot penetrate the various mass organizations in the territory, clubs of all kinds and other fraternal organizations existing in the various neighborhoods in practically all American cities.

As it is now, the street units are supposed to take up all kinds of problems aiming at influencing the masses in the territory, concentrating on some factory in the neighborhood, conducting unemployed work, labor defense work, etc. Besides this, the units are supposed to give guidance and check on the activities of all their members, many of whom are members of unions and other organizations, which to make things more complicated are located in other parts of the city. Clearly, these units have a herculean task, duties and tasks in all directions which bring the units to a standstill, to an inner-circle life. We find especially that new elements who join the units feel that the Party demands too much of them. The Party not only overburdens

them with activities, but becomes too expensive. Besides, because many of the activities of the unit members participating in trade union and mass organization work are not seen by the rest of the comrades, the assignment of neighborhood work is thrown upon the shoulders of only a few other comrades, as a result of which misunderstanding and friction arise that do not contribute to the improvement of the work of the unit and of its social life. Evidently, such a situation leaves no room for educational activity, which in spite of the good intentions of the unit bureaus, is very poor, which is also the reason for the discouragement, especially of the new members, in many units.

Is there a way to solve this burning question? Yes, the solution has been worked out long ago: the problem before us is to stop discovering what has been discovered, and search for new solutions; but boldly put old decisions into life and improve the organizational form and method of work according to the demands of the situation.

The main organizational task stands as follows: transfer the center of our activities to the factories and trade unions by simultaneously strengthening our work in the neighborhoods. Translated into organizational forms, this means building, strengthening and improving the political life of the shop nuclei, building fractions, and orientating them correctly to their objectives, and improving the activities of the neighborhood units by better orientation to their tasks, which calls for an improvement in their organization.

Examples in New York and other districts have shown that groups of comrades under the continuous guidance of the District Committee were able to build in a short time real mass organizations without the mobilization of the sections and units. On the other hand, the facts show that where the units of the Party are busy in building everything, are just "active" with inner discussion only, they neglect their main tasks, and get very poor results in the various phases of work. This indicates immediately that one of the solutions of the problem of the units is to stop considering the Party an auxiliary for weak mass organizations around the Party, weak because of their basic sectarianism, because of the old inner organizational orientation of our Party, and because of the conception that the Party carries on the main work of these organizations anyway.

In districts like New York, Chicago, and Cleveland, for example, it should not be difficult to select strong groups of comrades whose main Party task will be to help build the International Labor Defense and the American League Against War and Fascism into real mass organizations, a group that

must be trained to understand that such organizations must be built on the basis of their own program, that they will be guided by the higher committees of the Party without being entangled with directives from all sources that usually paralyze the activities of these organizations. This does not mean that we want to build these organizations through Party forces only. On the contrary, the task of these groups will be to involve all kinds of elements that agree with the program of the mass organizations that we want to build. Only in this way will we break also with the old sectarianism of the mass organizations that organizationally are copies of our Party structure. The small branches of 10 and 15 members of the I.L.D., for example, will disappear, and in a very short time we will have a strong I.L.D. of the Bronx, or of Brooklyn, in New York, or of the Southside of Chicago, or the Westside of Cleveland, or East Liberty in Pittsburgh, etc.

### **Mechanical Reorganization Is No Solution**

This is only part of the solution to the problem. There still remains to be solved the problem of composition. This is the heart of the problem and the most difficult to solve. Hence, we must be on guard against tackling it too mechanically, a situation which we see in some of the Districts.

It would be a very simple solution to take out of the street units all of the employed workers and place them into the so-called "industrial" units based on the trade union locals, which would correspond, practically, at the best, to what the fractions should be. To take out the unemployed comrades and build around them units in the unemployed field, or units on W. P. A. projects would be a mechanical approach that would bring us to the point of reducing the composition of the street units to housewives, professionals and a few unorganized workers. It would take out of the street units all employed workers and the trade union members—the best elements.

Such mechanical reorganization would not only lower the political life and activities of the street units, but would separate the most active members from the political life of the Party: more, it would lower at once the agitation and propaganda through which we reach masses that not always can be reached in factories and trade unions through our Party organization there. It is known that at this stage the political life of the fractions is still low. It can be argued that our immediate task should be to bring more political life into the proposed "industrial" units. This is precisely what the Party is determined to do, but it is a process that cannot be accomplished over night. It would take time to make these "industrial" units instruments of the Party not only in their

particular union, but also for the broader agitation and propaganda in the neighborhoods, a task that would be complicated by the location where the Party members live, the locals meet, etc. It is not the "industrial" unit, embracing all the Party members of a union that would identify itself with a particular factory, that can solve all our problems. It is the fraction that must be built: and it is here that we must be on guard against a mechanical approach, that we must be flexible by organizing into fractions the active members in the union and cutting down the duplication of the same assignment in units and fractions.

In regard to Party members working in shops where there are already other Party members, the problem is simple and there should be no discussion. These comrades are to be attached to shop nuclei. In regard to other Party members who are **key men** in their unions, as already stated, we must see to it that their main Party task shall be transferred into the unions. These Party members, however, shall remain on the rolls of the units and pay their dues there. At the same time their units must understand that these comrades cannot be involved to the same extent as the other members of the unit, in territorial work. In specific cases, where by bringing together comrades working in a given industry, we are able not only to improve the activities of the Party members in the unions, but at the same time also have the possibility of building shop nuclei, by concentrating with all these forces in 2 or 3 shops these Party members shall be brought together in a unit, as for example the case of the building industrial units in New York (where in one building there are few shops and thousands of workers).

On a borough scale, or some other territorial division of the city, selected unemployed comrades of various units can be brought together into a section for the purpose of building the unemployed movement, so that their main Party task (as in the case of active members in trade unions) will become unemployed work. The same in regard to comrades on W. P. A. projects, etc.

With such an orientation we will be able to strengthen all the phases of our Party work, and prevent placing the entire burden of the territorial work of the street units on the shoulders of comrades not involved in any other work.

At the same time we must take the necessary steps to overcome the weakness that will result in the street units by taking out of active participation those members active in other phases of work. How can this be done? (This is mainly the problem of the larger cities. In another article we will take up the problem of the smaller cities and towns.) By

breaking down the old idea of small street units of 8 or 10 or 12 members who because of this have weak leadership, and by bringing about units that shall grow to 30 or 40. These units need not meet in private places, but can meet in any of the many halls that can be found in practically every neighborhood in the larger cities. In this way it will be much easier to select the best elements for leading positions. It will improve the educational activities and the political life of the units, and in turn strengthen the activities of the units as a whole, and also help retain the new members in the Party. Furthermore, the new Party members by entering into a bigger family will have an improved social life, which will increase the activities and initiative of individual members.

This orientation brings us now to another point. That is, on what basis shall the territorial units be built—on a street basis or on a larger scale. As it is now, in some cities not only are the units very small, but in many instances they cover, as for example in New York, the territory of one or two Assembly Districts, or two half wards of an Assembly District, so that these territorial units cannot properly approach the political problems of a certain territory. A larger unit, however, of 30-40 Party members which will correspond to the Party, for example, in Assembly District X will be much more able to better orientate itself to the political problems of the territory.

In the last few years the Party orientation has been to build the districts on a state basis and have the districts identify themselves with the state organization of the Party. If this is correct for the district, it must also be applied to the sections and territorial units. Today, for example, the Party in New York has over 10,000 members and is facing hundreds of problems on a city wide scale, on a borough scale, etc. Guidance for the activity of the Party organization must be given every day from the District. This not only complicates the work of the district leadership, but also complicates the work of the various sections, especially where they cover the territory of two or three Assembly Districts, or split Assembly Districts, etc. The problems of Brooklyn as a whole are frequently common to all the sections in Brooklyn, but they now have to be solved by the District Committee. Why not have a leading body that will guide the activities of the borough of Brooklyn as a whole, and similar Party committees for the other boroughs?

At this point the question will be raised, what is the difference between this organizational structure, and the electoral structure of the Socialist Party? The fundamental difference remains; namely, that the main weight of our Party

organization must lie in the factories, in the unions and in the mass organizations. This does not conflict with the idea that all Party organizations of a certain territory that identify themselves with the existing political divisions shall be led by the leading committees as stated above. It does mean, for example, that in the case of a specific campaign that the Party has to conduct in Brooklyn or the Bronx, every unit, every section, every shop nucleus, every fraction will have to be mobilized in this campaign by the proper leading committee of the Party in this borough, and of course the Section Committees, or Sub-Section Committees, there.

By bringing about such changes, by being more flexible in our organizational forms from the District down to the units, not only will we connect ourselves much more strongly with the masses on a territorial basis, but we will be better prepared to improve our work in the trade unions, we will be more mobile in building the united front, and prepare ourselves to be a real driving force in the building of a Workers and Farmers Party. It is understood that these changes, no matter how slight they are, cannot be brought about overnight. They must be well planned, taking into consideration the concrete conditions and cases. We can notice in the last period, that where the districts tried to bring about changes too quickly, and to some extent mechanically, we already see a lowering in the dues payments, a lowering in our agitation and propaganda, for the reasons already stated.

While adapting ourselves better to the new situation, for the purpose of getting the best results, we must keep in mind that one of our main tasks is to improve especially the educational activities of the Party. It is by improving the educational activities that we will also improve the initiative and the social life in the lower organizations. By improving the organizational structure of the Party along the above lines we will be able not only to intensify our activity, connect the Party more strongly with the masses, but will bring about a better relationship among Party members, and give time to the Party members for their private life.

**Note:** This article is based not only on investigation of the life of our street units, on the basis of our tasks in the trade union movement, etc., but also on discussions that are taking place among leading comrades in charge of organizational work in various districts. It is written primarily for the purpose of getting the reaction of leading bodies (on the basis of their experiences) to this burning problem. On the basis of a thorough discussion, the Central Committee will formulate its organizational decisions through which we will be able to improve the activities of the entire Party.

# AGITPROP SECTION

## Party Recruiting Campaign in the Shop Papers

By P. D.

"If we Communists exert every effort to establish a united front, we do this not for the narrow purpose of recruiting new members for the Communist Parties. But we must strengthen the Communist Parties in every way and increase their membership **for the very reason** that we seriously want to strengthen the united front. The strengthening of the Communist Parties is not a narrow Party concern but the concern of the entire working class." (Dimitroff, "Report to the Seventh Congress.")

**A** careful checkup of District Six papers shows that the majority of the papers are alive to the economic issues before the workers. On the other hand, almost without exception, the Party issue is being very inadequately handled. Some papers neglect it entirely (**Red Roller, Davey Steel, May**); others mention the Party in passing in a lengthy general article and leave it go at that; (The article on the NRA in practically all of the Ohio papers was the same, mentioning the fact that "only the Communist Party exposed the true character of the NRA".); while others treat the question in such a broad way that it has no meaning for the workers in a particular shop (**Red Roller** in June has a general appeal to join the Party without explaining what the Party is nor giving its program.)

One of the most successful and popular papers in the Cleveland District is **Spark Plug**. The manner in which **Spark Plug** has responded to the economic and trade union issues in the Fisher Body shop where it is published deserves the highest praise. The quickness of the response as well as the correctness of the slogans brought forward are to be commended. Let us analyze **Spark Plug** from March to June from the point of view of recruiting workers into the Party.

The only mention of the Party in the March-April issue is as follows: page one, in the masthead page two, advertisement of a meeting at which Comrade Browder spoke

against Long and Coughlin. And that's all. In an article on May Day in this issue, the Party is not once mentioned, not even as one of the participants in the United Front May Day Arrangements Committee. (This may be said of the May Day articles in all the Ohio papers examined by the Shop Paper Committee.)

In the four special strike issues published in the period under examination, one does not mention the Party even in the masthead. The other three mention the Party as follows:

"The union has asked all workers to boycott the Auto Board Election. The Communist Party supports this decision and calls upon all workers to smash the company union and defeat the Auto Board by refusing to vote."

"The Communist Party declares as we have done repeatedly that we will do our utmost to beat back the attacks of the company on the workers and the union. We declare our support of every move of the Fisher Body local of the American Federation of Labor in fighting for its demands."

"We Communists of Cleveland pledge ourselves to make every effort to rouse the industrial workers of Cleveland in support of the strike."

Now these were all one page bulletins, more in the form of a leaflet, and it may well be that there was insufficient space to treat the Party angle more widely than it was done. How close to the ground, however, did **Spark Plug** have its ears? Since the paper was so active in the strike, it is reasonable to suppose that a considerable barrage of slander was directed against the Party by the company union in Fisher Body and by the General Motors chiefs. Certainly the special editions of **Spark Plug** must have elicited some response from the workers in the plant—they must have been discussing the Communists, they must have had questions to ask. Why didn't **Spark Plug** capitalize upon this quickened interest to clarify the Party issues before the Fisher Body masses?

The June **Spark Plug** on page four carries a very inadequate appeal to join the Party on the basis of a general fight for a united front against war and fascism. The appeal is made in the memory of Comrade Schultze. The Shop Paper Committee does not for a moment want to minimize the importance of appealing for membership in the name of some Communist hero, nor the importance of the anti-fascist appeal. But time as well as particular conditions must be kept in mind.

The June **Spark Plug** might well have utilized its pages to answer the drive against the Party and to review the role of the Party during the strike. On this basis an appeal for

membership would have been closer to the workers in the shop. By specific quotation from leaflets and speeches, **Spark Plug** could have pointed out the cooperation of the Party, the correctness of the slogans brought forward by the shop unit, **Spark Plug's** own immediate response to the strike situation.

The latter method was used very effectively by the **Red Billet** (Canton, Republic Steel). The July issue of that paper carries a vigorously written article analyzing the recent strike, showing how both the Republican and Democratic parties had failed the steel workers and declaring the time ripe for building a Labor Party in Canton. The article concludes with an appeal for membership in the Communist Party.

"Thousands of workers in Canton now know that the Communist Party is the most militant fighter for better conditions and for the unions. The Communist Party threw its full strength into the strike and fought hard to help win. Many members of the Communist Party are members of the striking unions and steel workers. Everyone took his place on the picket lines, many were injured, and many were blacklisted along with other strikers. The Communist Party fights for better conditions, for strong militant unions, because the Communist Party is composed of workers and knows the needs of the workers. The Communist Party did not organize nor call the strike. It does not try to take the place of the unions. The Communist Party fights shoulder to shoulder with the workers because it's part of the working class. . . ."

In the two previous issues, **Red Billet** also had articles leading to membership appeals. None of these articles is beyond criticism yet **Red Billet** must be praised for taking a step in the right direction.

The **Youngstown Republic Steel Worker** may also be used as a good example in its treatment of the recruiting question. In the May issue an article from the Electric Welding department ties Soviet working conditions to those of the Republic workers by telling what the introduction of new machinery means in both places.

"But the Russian workers didn't get these things on a silver platter," the article concludes. "They had to do plenty of fighting. . . . Today they lead the whole world in real wages, working conditions, social insurance and most workers' needs. We American workers, with a revolutionary history of our own . . . can well afford to take a tip from our Russian brothers, build our union and help build our revolutionary party—the Communist Party—so that some day we can use the new machinery here for the

good of the workers. History proves it can be done. So let's do it. And in the meantime everyone in the Electric Weld get together and fight for a six hour day so no one will be laid off."

This review of District Six shop papers indicates insufficient concentration upon Party recruiting. The National Shop Paper Committee cannot make a blueprint by which every shop paper can build its recruiting campaign. There is more than one way of recruiting members into the Party.

Recruiting must be based on the conditions in the shop, on the composition of the workers and the background of the individuals. Each shop should be studied and analyzed. Some workers are more developed than others. All workers cannot be approached in the same way. No matter what their development, it is our job as Communists in the shop, and through the shop paper, to help them find their way to the Party.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to lack of space in this issue, the article reviewing District publications will appear in the December "Party Organizer".