

# Party Organizer



**SPECIAL  
ISSUE**

•  
**CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE  
PLENUM**

**(Org and  
Agit-Prop  
Problems)**

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**Vol. VIII**

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# PARTY ORGANIZER

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## Preparations For Coming Struggles

**T**HERE is no doubt that especially among the workers in mining, steel, auto, textile, among the teamsters and long-shoremen, the strike sentiment is growing. The miserable wages, the tremendous speed-up, the growing and open fight against unions of the workers and for the company unions, openly supported by the government, the hundreds of broken promises, are bringing the workers in these industries more and more quickly into the movement. But this increasing sentiment does not yet mean automatically, first, the organization of this movement for strike, and, second, if it comes to a strike, the victory of such strikes.

The trade-union bureaucrats try, as far as possible, to prevent the breaking out of this strike movement, and do nothing to prepare the workers for it. If they are forced to submit to the pressure of the masses, then they will march at the head of these strikes, as in the textile workers' strike. In such a case the guarantee for the victory of the strike movement depends upon the organization of the rank-and-file groups in the trade unions and especially upon the work of the Communists in the factories and the trade unions.

It is clear that in each of these industries concrete steps and preparations are absolutely necessary. The Central Committee of the Party has given out concrete directives on the basis of thorough discussion with the comrades and sympathetic workers in the industries concerned. It is not possible in this article to repeat in detail all of these directives. But it is necessary to emphasize that the orientation for this strike movement, the organizational preparations, are of decisive importance to all Districts, sections, and units.

What steps must be undertaken in order to secure the carrying through of the decisions of the Central Committee in regard to the strike movement?

1. It is necessary that the whole membership know and thoroughly discuss the directives. For instance, it is a fact that the directives of the Central Committee on the situation in the steel industry and the tasks were not yet thoroughly discussed in many nuclei in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago, or that despite all the discussion about the tremendous historical importance of the teamsters, after the San Fran-

cisco strike, the taking hold of the work among the teamsters as a concentration task is absolutely neglected. Is it not a fact that in New York, and also in other Districts, very little systematic work has been done in this regard? If the change is not made quickly, we will pay heavily for this.

2. Investigation of the concentration work in the different Districts. The concentration factories have been selected because they are the most important strategic factories in the different industries. For instance, Republic Steel in Youngstown and Jones-Laughlin in Pittsburgh, if in motion, would move the whole steel industry. This investigation demands the transformation of the work of the nucleus with the help of the whole section, and developing of real mass work in these factories, publishing of regular shop papers, systematic recruiting into the Party of the best workers, active recruiting of workers in the A. F. of L. (but especially from the decisive important unions in steel and auto).

3. Carrying through the unionization of our membership and sympathizers to prepare themselves for strike struggles, to be orientated on this perspective. This is impossible without every member of these industries being active in the respective A. F. of L. union.

4. The organization and activization of the fractions in these industries, and the systematic quicker development of the rank-and-file movement, especially in mining, steel, rubber, textile.

5. Intensified recruiting of the best active workers that the Party comes in contact with in the factories and the unions, into the Party.

6. Intensified circulation of the **Daily Worker**, of the language papers, and Party literature.

7. Intensive cooperation with these papers to organize workers' correspondence in these industries and factories about the situation in the factories and the best ways and means to fight against them.

8. The broadest mass agitation of the Party by meetings, leaflets, pamphlets.

9. Mobilization and organization of the Unemployed, through the Unemployment Councils, Relief Workers Association, or where possible in the unions.

During the next few months, in every District, section, and nucleus meeting, the first point on the agenda must be concretely preparing for the strike struggles. The weaknesses and successes of this work must be thoroughly checked up. Ways and means must be found to overcome the difficulties, to help the comrades in the lower organizations, factories and trade unions, in finding ways and means of carrying out the concrete tasks.

One point especially important in regard to steel and auto is the question of how far the Party will be able to support



and activate the campaign for the unionization of the workers into the auto workers' union and the A.A. The question of a strike in these industries depends to a great extent upon whether it will be possible to unionize tens of thousands of the most active workers in these industries. The Central Committee of the Party has, in the Open Letter to the A. F. of L. Council, declared that all its forces will support the unionization drive by the auto workers' union and the steel workers' union. What the Party must do in Detroit, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago and especially such sections like South Chicago, Gary, Youngstown, Canton, is to undertake this campaign with the utmost energy.

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## Check-Up On Organization

(Excerpts from Report to Plenum)

By F. BROWN

**C**OMRADES: The checking up on decisions of the previous plenums and the Eighth Party Convention to see to what extent we have fulfilled our decisions and organizational tasks is of the utmost importance. We must find out why not all of the decisions were carried out; we must see what is wrong with our methods of work, and, by analyzing the experiences in the various districts, learn from these experiences, draw concrete lessons from them, see where our major weaknesses lie, work out the methods for overcoming them, and determine the next organizational tasks, flowing out of the line and decisions of the present plenum.

There is no doubt that in the last period we can register general organizational improvement shown by the more quantitative and qualitative strength of our Party. The Party as a whole shows a better understanding of how to connect itself with the masses in the factories, in the trade unions. We can see this in the broadening out of the united front movement, in the break with the past sectarianism. The Chicago Congress Against War, the Washington Congress, the strikes, especially the gains in the textile field in connection with the great strike, the progress of work in the A. F. of L., are the best examples of this.

Yet, we have to ask ourselves: to what extent has the Party as a whole connected all of its activities with the building of the Party? Can we be satisfied with the results of the last period? It is clear for all of us that the tasks confronting the Party today are becoming more and more difficult to carry out because of the greater pressure of the continuous attacks by the enemy. We can say that our

Party is working under different conditions in different parts of the country. In the West and in the South, the Party acts more or less as an illegal Party under the pressure of the enemies' attacks. In Pittsburgh and Detroit, the attacks of the enemy, the development of the spy system in industry, make our task more difficult. It is only in the East where the Party more or less is working openly, but also here we have to face discrimination, victimization in the factories, and other attacks on the Party that must be answered day by day.

This situation, in general, makes more difficult the recruitment of the best elements into the Party, makes more difficult the increasing of the circulation of our press, etc. Yet the situation, on the other hand, is more favorable to convince the workers of the correctness of our program. The attitude of the workers is not hostile to us. Their disappointment with the N.R.A. makes them look for a way out, makes them listen to our arguments, makes them receptive to our press and literature. If so, why is the recruitment of the best elements into our ranks, the increasing of the **Daily Worker** circulation so slow? How can we explain this? What are the reasons for this? Are our methods of work correct? Can these methods be improved, and how? Are the directives from the Center not good enough?—in which case, how can we improve them? How can we bring about a more collective effort for improving our organizational work from the Center down? These, comrades, are the most fundamental questions we must discuss today in checking up on our previous decisions, and in working out, on the basis of past experiences, the best methods of work.

### Control Tasks of Eighth Party Convention

What are the main decisions in connection with our organizational tasks, made by the Eighth Party Convention, and emphasized by the last plenum?

1. On recruiting: to bring the Party up to a membership of 40,000 (in good standing) by January 21, the anniversary of Lenin's death.
2. To strengthen the existing shop nuclei and to double their number.
3. To improve the life of the units by developing the unit bureaus, and by introducing the group system.
4. To train new cadres systematically and intensively through the National and District training schools—more educational activities in the lower units, etc.
5. To issue systematically more and more Communist literature and improve the distributing apparatus.
6. To bring the circulation of the **Daily Worker** up to 60,000 by increasing the number of subscribers and the daily



sales in front of factories, on the streets, neighborhoods, trade unions, etc.

7. To make every eligible Party member a member of a trade union; at the same time to build up our fractions and make them the driving force inside of the unions in the struggle of these organizations against their exploiters, and making our fractions the driving force in building the opposition in the A. F. of L.

8. To make our Party more conscious of its task in giving guidance to and building the Young Communist League, by establishing a League nucleus alongside of every Party shop nucleus; by assigning forces of the League and mobilizing the Party for mass recruiting into the League.

Let us examine now how these tasks were fulfilled.

### **The Recruiting Drive**

On recruiting: At the beginning of October we had an average dues payment of 23,760. If we add the 6,148 recruited during the last three months, we reach the figure for December of 30,000. In reality, dues payment for the month of December is over 31,000. Where does this extra thousand come from? Here we have to take into consideration the payment of back dues, which accounts for more than 1,000, and a certain number of members who have been reactivated in the last couple of months.... Briefly, the figures show the following:

1. That we are far from having fulfilled the task of bringing the Party membership to 40,000. The month of January will bring a slight improvement, but not much in changing this situation.

2. That the comparison between the figures in the recruiting of the last three months, the period of the recruiting drive, and the figures of the previous month, and after the Eighth Convention, do not show a real improvement, which means that the drive was a very weak one....

If we compare the number of new recruits with the size of the Party membership in the Districts, we find that the recruiting capacity of New York, for example, is 30 percent; that of Pittsburgh only 22 percent; that of Cleveland 30 percent; that of Detroit 32 percent; that of Philadelphia 28 percent; that of California 20 percent; and that of Chicago only 18 percent.

These figures, besides showing a difference in recruiting and retaining capacity of the various Districts, also show a discrepancy in the ability of keeping the recruits, which is to be explained by the efforts of a few Districts: (a) in improving the quality of recruits; (b) in improving the educational activities in the units; (c) by the improvement of the system of how to get and retain new members, how to get them assigned quickly, etc. In New York, for exam-

ple, the Party is able today not only to recruit more but to retain the new recruits, not only because of a better system of quick assignment to units, etc., but for another reason, which is of the greatest importance. That is that in New York we have more educational activities outside of the units in the form of lectures, in the form of forums, mass meetings, etc., which, to a certain extent, compensate for the lack of educational activities in the units; also there is more activity. In Philadelphia, we have an improvement in the last six or seven months because of the development of these activities. I am very sure that the moment Chicago develops such educational activities, it will improve the recruiting campaign and help retain members. This does not mean that we have to conduct only outside educational activities and forget the educational activities in the units.

With the exception of New York and, to some extent, Ohio and Detroit, the rate of progress in recruiting is very low. Chicago, with a higher membership, is below Cleveland. Pittsburgh, with practically the same membership, is far below Detroit and Philadelphia. We understand very well the difficulties facing the Party in Pittsburgh and Chicago, (victimization, growing reaction). But can we explain the poor results in building the Party only on this basis? What are the reasons? We must get at the root of them, and the discussion must put its finger on the sore spot....

From a qualitative point of view the figures show a slight improvement in the recruiting of native and Negro workers, working women, practically a tripling of the recruiting in auto, in textile and in shoe. There is also an improvement in transport and needle; a slight improvement in steel, and the same proportion in other industries. An alarming figure is the high percentage of unemployed for these industries.

In general, we can say that the Party has tried to improve the quality of the new recruits by concentration in the basic industries. Yet we are moving too slowly. We did not get the expected results.

This recruiting drive stresses especially the importance of personal contact—the concentration upon individuals. And certainly you remember the letter of the Central Committee that reached each individual Party member, in which it not only stressed the importance of personal contact in getting new recruits, but at the same time gave directives on how this was to be done.

The weak results show how detached our Party members are from fellow workers. The qualitative feature of the drive is the fact that we orientated the Party, emphasizing the necessity, for the individual Party members, of making these personal contacts. Certainly, continuing the drive on a District scale, we will get much better results.



Why? Because the figures of December, practically three months after the start of the drive, show that only now we are speeding up the tempo, that the Party members are better orientated on how to recruit.

The drive will be closed officially on the 21st of January. It must however, be continued. Each district will have to conduct its own drive, will have to work out its own plan to strengthen the drive with the aim of strengthening the Party as a whole and especially strengthening our position in the industries, by building new shop nuclei, strengthening our position mainly in the A. F. of L. unions. The tempo that we reached in the month of December has to be kept up precisely by developing the recruiting drive on a District scale.

### **Results in Building Shop Nuclei**

How do we stand now with the shop nuclei? To what extent have we strengthened the old ones and built new ones? How do they function; how many of them issue shop papers? To what extent have they been mobilized in the drive? To what extent are the leading comrades involved in giving guidance to the shop nuclei, and how have the shop nuclei established themselves as the Party in the particular shop, mill or mine? These are the questions to be discussed. We have not complete figures on hand. The reports in this respect are incomplete. We know we made progress, but to what extent we have made this progress has to be determined more concretely by the discussion, in which the comrades will bring forward figures, facts and experiences.

We know that New York is registering real progress, having at present some 185 shop nuclei, which shows a real turn in the line of building the shop nuclei as the main, the basic, organization of the Party. New York more than doubled the number of shop nuclei. At the time of the Eighth Convention, New York registered only 83 shop nuclei. Chicago brought the shop nuclei from 45 to 57. Detroit not only is reviving and strengthening the old ones, but has built new ones in Detroit, Flint and other industrial centers in very important industrial plants. Since the last Plenum, Philadelphia has shown real progress in factory and trade union work. Cleveland had some 22 shop nuclei and has grown to 32.

I visited some shop nuclei in New York and other districts, and I saw some real initiative on the part of these shop nuclei in getting out their papers without any outside help, and in becoming real leaders of the masses in their shops. But it is also true that there are many, many shop nuclei that still do not understand their role, because of lack of guidance. The experiences of all the Districts will contribute to the improvement of this phase of the activity.

At this point, however, we must state that with few exceptions the Org. bulletins are not used to the full extent to analyze and study the experiences of the shop nuclei. The **Party Organizer**, the "Party Life" column in the **Daily Worker**, etc., are not utilized as they should be. At this point I must remind the comrades that some six months ago a questionnaire of monthly reports on the activity of the shop nuclei was sent out, on the basis of which the Districts and the C.C. would have had a complete analysis. Only a few Districts, however, took the pains to utilize them. This is the main reason why we lack complete figures. We will get them only through the registration blanks. Maybe the questionnaire that was sent out was too elaborate. Certainly it takes time to fill it out. I am sure of one thing, however, that such a questionnaire would have helped the Districts and the C.C. in following more closely this vital part of our Party organization. Furthermore, the questionnaire itself gives us very good material for the "Party Life" column of the **Daily Worker** and the **Party Organizer** in studying the experiences of the shop nuclei in the various Districts, in making comparisons, in developing competition, etc. It would become vital material for the District Org. bulletins, and would become a means of bringing this vital problem before the eyes of the entire membership by following the life of the shop nuclei day by day. Can we be satisfied with the results in building shop nuclei? Certainly not.

The figures on recruiting, for example, show immediately that we did not build very many shop nuclei. If in some places we have some results, we should not forget that some of the old Party members went back into the industry, which means that the recruiting drive did not go hand in hand with the building of the shop nuclei and vice-versa.

### Life of the Units

Another problem: have we improved the life of the units as a whole? How do the unit bureaus function today? Are they developing into a real leader of the unit? To what extent did we develop the group system? How does this group system function? On the basis of the experiences, how can the group system be improved, etc.? Do the units check up on the activities of the individual Party members? To what extent are the shop nuclei involved in the recruiting drive? How have the shop papers been utilized in this drive, etc.? To what extent is the educational and agitprop work connected from the leading District bodies down to the units? This is another problem we must discuss. We must state that as a whole, the life of the units is on the road to improvement. There is more educational activity, more



initiative. This can be noticed especially where the group system has been introduced. Through the group system, for example, in New York, the Party is securing a better attendance, more regular dues-payments and, furthermore, the quicker distribution of propaganda material and a quicker mobilization of the Party. For example, Section 1 was able to mobilize 400 Party members for the demonstration against the meeting of the White-Guardists in Cooper Union in twenty-four hours by mobilizing the captains who in turn mobilized the members of their respective groups. There is still misunderstanding and confusion on what the group system should be. There are comrades who see in the group system the possibility of a mechanical multiplication of the units. Others that would like to overburden the group system with all sorts of tasks. Other comrades that see in the group system merely a preparation for illegality, and what not.

On the basis of the experiences we must insist that the main and fundamental task of the group system is and shall remain precisely the insuring of a better attendance, a more regular dues-payment, a quicker mobilization of the Party in the case of mass distribution of propaganda material, and a quick mobilization of the membership. These are the reasons that brought us to the system and not the building of a new form of organization in case of illegality. It is obvious, however, that this system is splendid training in case the Party should be suppressed. In this respect, the discussion shall be enriched not only by the concrete experiences in New York, Chicago, and other Districts where the system has been introduced, but also by the experiences especially of the South, California, Seattle. How do the units function in these Districts under the continuous pressure of reaction? Which of these American experiences, enriched by the international experiences, is of great value for the Party as a whole?

On the problem of training new cadres, the problem of literature, the check-up will be made at the Agitprop Conference.

### **"Daily Worker" Circulation and New Tasks**

Now to the **Daily Worker**. The comrades will remember the decision that we made concerning the building of the circulation of the **Daily** and also the plans that were made. ...

The figures show (1) that we had the highest circulation in July, August, September and October, at the time of the wave of strikes and at the time that a great effort was made to increase the circulation; (2) that in the month following the Eighth Party Convention the increase was very slow; (3) that from August to September we registered a slow, steady decline.... This is also true of the

circulation in the concentration Districts. The figures for the Saturday edition look a little better, but it is the daily edition on which we base our central organ.

How can we explain the lack of growth, and more, the steady decline from September which continued also in the first week of January as is shown by the report of the New York **Daily Worker** circulation? First and foremost this is due to lack of organization—lack of organization of the apparatus of distribution, of a real mobilization of the Party in the circulation drive, and of no utilization of the organizations around the Party.

In New York, where we have practically 50 percent of the circulation, through Metro News, more **Dailies** are sold than through the apparatus of the Party organizations, units, fractions and sympathetic organizations. While the sale of the Metro News is on the increase, in the sale through the Party apparatus, including also the Red Builders, there is a sharp decline.

The figures on subscriptions show clearly that the Party as a whole, the individual Party members, are not made conscious of the importance of getting subscriptions, that this task is relegated to the District Agents of the **Daily Worker**. Do we know where the weakness lies? Do we know what should be done? Of course, we know. How many times have we decided to make the Party, **Daily Worker**-conscious? How many times have we decided to have all the Districts emulate New York in the building of Red Builders? How many times have we decided that the **Daily** shall be sold near the factories, if not at the factory gates, in streets where the workers pass going and coming from work, in the various union halls, at the subway entrances, at busy street-car stops, in busy neighborhood streets? Why repeat this? Is it not possible for Connecticut, Newark, Philadelphia, to build a group of Red Builders that will steadily sell the **Daily Worker** in regular places and get, after a while, a steady income on these sales? Why not build the Red Builders in all concentration Districts? Is it not possible to get the units, the fractions, involved in the campaign for subs, in the increase of the bundle orders? The daily circulation of the **Daily Worker** corresponds practically to the number of Party members.

Now if we take into consideration that the units consider themselves very busy in distributing a few thousand copies of the **Daily Worker**, it means: (1) that only a part of the membership reads the **Daily**; (2) that we reach a very small number of workers organized in the organizations under the influence of the Party; (3) that the **Daily** does not reach the masses organized in the oppositions of the A. F. of L., not speaking of the large masses we want to penetrate. Here, comrades, we must ask ourselves very sharply what do we intend to do! If we believe that the central organ of the



Party is the instrument through which we must guide the Party in its activities day by day, that through the **Daily** we must influence and reach the largest masses, then we must get active and build the **Daily Worker**, which is one of the prerequisites for the building of the Party. The key to the solution of this vital problem is organization.

A sub-committee of the Polburo, as Comrade Browder reported, composed of Comrades Browder, Krumbein and Wishnack, has worked out the proposals for the building of the circulation of the **Daily** nationally to 100,000 by July 1st. Along with this proposal, the N. Y. district is already taking the necessary steps for the mobilization of the Party. . . .

The decisions made for New York are good for all the districts. We must get active in all the districts to build up the professional Red Builders, to mobilize the units and organize Red Builder brigades, the task of which will be the selling of the **Daily Worker** on a neighborhood scale, in front of the factories, at trade union halls, etc. A **Daily Worker** committee should be organized in all trade unions and mass organizations. Where it is impossible to build such a committee, then the fraction should organize such a committee or the oppositions. We must find the way to penetrate the unions. This is fundamental. The **Daily Worker** committee and the sections will have to see that the **Daily** is sold in front of the factories, in front of the halls where meetings are taking place, etc.

Along with these proposals on the basis of the previous experiences, the Districts will have to work out immediately their own plans for the campaign. The most important task for the leading bodies will be to guide the activities day by day, to check on the results in this campaign. We must be guided by the determination of reaching the goal that we set.

At this point let me say that from now on we must use the columns of the **Daily Worker** more for the purpose of organizing the campaign, in bringing forward the results and experiences through which the campaign will be stimulated. This is true not only in regard to **Daily Worker** campaign, but in all other organizational activities. We have the "Party Life" column. We must ask ourselves: are we utilizing this column or additional columns, which we could have at our disposal to raise the organizational problems, to make this column the guide of the daily organizational activities, to bring forward the experiences on recruiting, on the life of the shop nuclei, fractions, etc.? Here we have, besides the **Party Organizer**, a powerful instrument at our disposal which we do not utilize. How many of the section organizers, organizational secretaries, unit organizers, are writing for this column, are organizing other comrades to write for it? Very, very few. Most of the material has to be prepared in the

Center on the basis of reports and letters of individual Party members. This situation must be changed.

### **Fulfilling the Trade Union Tasks**

I pass now to briefly review to what extent we are fulfilling the control tasks in regard to the trade unions. Not all the eligible Party members are yet active in the trade unions. Since the Eighth Party Convention, the Party as a whole worked persistently in this direction. The results of the opposition work in the A. F. of L., the elections in the U.M.W.A. in Western Pennsylvania, in textile, etc., the increase of the Party members in the various trade union organizations, in the City Trade Union Councils, are the best proof. In a whole series of locals our comrades are active. Everywhere we see this. In Chicago, Cleveland, New York,—in all concentration districts—we notice a higher percentage of Party members active in the trade unions. . . .

In regard to the A. F. of L. we are registering a real improvement. I don't know the exact figures of the Philadelphia District, but it is known that this District, for example, has to register very good results in building the opposition in the A. F. of L., of having a good number of Party members in strategic positions in A. F. of L. and independent unions. The discussion certainly will show more positive results. Yet we are only at the beginning of this work. Not all eligible Party members are yet in the trade unions. The fractions are still functioning very poorly, and in many instances are not clear on their role. Because of this we find that many fractions instead of being the driving force in the union are lagging at the tail-end of the organized masses. While building the fractions, simultaneously, they must be enlightened on their role and tasks. The building of fractions must go hand in hand with continuous education. Our task in regard to trade union work, rooting ourselves among the masses in the A. F. of L. by building a strong opposition, demands not only the carrying on of a real drive to get the Party members into the unions and build up the fractions, but also the guarantee of the fulfillment of this task. This will help us tremendously in carrying out our line in regard to the Labor Party.

We have reached a point today where it is absolutely necessary to build trade union commissions not only in the Districts, but also on a section scale. More than that, even in the units, where they correspond to the Party in small towns or in industrial territories of the larger cities, we must have trade union directors. The commission must be the instrument of the District Committee in leading the trade union work, in building, educating the fractions, developing cadres, etc. New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland and other Districts have already established such commissions and the



comrades report good results. This Commission must become a regular department in all Districts and sections. To make real progress in this sphere of activity, to connect the Party more closely with the organized masses and take leadership of the daily struggles, we must learn from the experiences of the last period, improve our method of work, make the Party more and more conscious of trade union work by continuous discussion, enlighten them on this vital problem, and give continuous guidance to the fractions. The discussions will certainly give us rich experiences, on the basis of which we will be able to improve considerably our organizational activities in this sphere of work.

### **Duty of the Party in Regard to Y.C.L.**

Checking on the control task of the Party Convention regarding the Y.C.L., we must state from the outset that very little progress has been made in aiding the Y.C.L. in carrying out the task that the Party has set itself. It was decided to make the Party more conscious of youth work, to give the Y.C.L. more attention and guidance, to assign young Party forces to the Y.C.L. for the purpose of strengthening its cadres, to aid the Y.C.L. in becoming a mass organization, by carrying on an increasing and systematic recruiting of young workers for the Y.C.L., and mainly to build the Y.C.L. shop nuclei where Party nuclei exist.

Only New York is an example to all the Districts. Immediately following the Convention, New York took this decision seriously. A good number of young Party members were assigned to strengthen the Y.C.L. It threw all its forces into making the National Youth Day demonstration of last year the largest ever held in New York. The young workers could see, in the thousands of Party members and workers participating in that demonstration, the solidarity of the adult workers. As a result of this Party aid and the impetus that was given by the demonstration to youth work, there has been a steady growth of the Y.C.L. The Y.C.L. in New York grew from an organization of 1,100 members at the beginning of last year to over 3,000 today. It almost tripled its membership. Today in New York City, adult and youth, we have a membership of over 11,000. But this is not the case in the other Districts. In the concentration Districts the Y.C.L. lags behind the Party as much as or even more than before the Convention. In Cleveland, for example, while the Party is improving steadily and today registers 2,000 members, the Y.C.L. has a membership of only 225, which means one-seventh the amount of the Party. It has only three shop nuclei; there is no conscious recruiting for the Y.C.L. No Party forces are assigned to strengthen the Y.C.L. cadres. The Chicago District, which set itself a series of tasks for building the Y.C.L. only partly fulfilled them. The plan was

to bring the League to 1,000 members by September 1st. But at present there are only 600 members. The Party has 57 shop nuclei while the Y.C.L. has only 7. It is true that forces were assigned there, yet the results show the lack of follow-up. I am sure that if the Chicago District had assisted the Y.C.L. in all its work in the same proportion as they assisted the Y.C.L. in the concentration on the stock-yards, where the Y.C.L. plays an important role, today we would have a different picture.

In Pittsburgh there is a very sharp disproportion between the Y.C.L. and the Party, not only numerically but in the number of shop nuclei. While the Party has a number of mine and steel nuclei, the Y.C.L. has none. The fact that the Party is weak is no excuse for not giving any aid to the Y.C.L., especially when struggles are approaching in two basic industries of the District, and the role that the youth will play in these struggles is known. Strengthening the Y.C.L. means strengthening the Party. That is one of the handicaps that the Party faces today, for example, in Detroit, and in other Districts, especially in the East; its foreign-born composition and its weak contact with the large number of American-born workers. Especially in Detroit, recently, the Y.C.L. supplied a number of young cadres to the Party which are of real help.

Where will we get the cadres if not from the American-born, from the American young workers? The Party will receive forces from the Y.C.L., yes! But that means strengthening the cadres of the Y.C.L. to build it up to a mass organization if we want to get results later. The capitalists know that if they want to get dividends they must invest first. We must invest forces in the Y.C.L. now to get results later.

The Y.C.L. has only 75 shop nuclei and many of these are not in basic industries. This shows immediately that the connection of the Y.C.L. with the youth in the industry is very weak. Even in New York, where we register such good results in building the Y.C.L., only three nuclei have been built alongside the Party. The fact that in more than eight months the whole Party helped the Y.C.L. in building only three shop nuclei shows that the most important decisions on youth work have not been carried out.

What are the tasks confronting the Party at the present time in overcoming this weakness? First: the League at present has a membership of 8,000. It has set before itself the task of reaching a membership of 12,000 by July 1, in connection with the Seventh World Congress of the Y.C.I. Can this figure be reached? It can. It will be reached if the Party will give full assistance in the concentration Districts, and in all those Districts where the gaps in size between the Party and the Y.C.L. are large. This means that in



some Districts we must be determined to put over the task of building the League into a real mass organization.

Second: In the period from today until July the Party must undertake to build at least 50 shop nuclei of the Y.C.L. Every District must select factories to concentrate upon. This means the assignment of forces, continuous follow-up, etc.

Third: As part of the **Daily Worker** circulation drive, the Party units must spread the **Young Worker** among youth in the shops, unions, mass organizations. The **Young Worker** will become the best means of reaching young workers, the best means of recruiting for the Y.C.L.

Fourth: The leading cadres must be strengthened in all Districts. This means assigning of young Party members for youth work. The New York District in this respect has already decided to assign 100 young Party members for League work. This example should be followed by all other Districts. We should not be stingy with the youth.

Fifth: In the next period there must be more attention and guidance to the Y.C.L. The Y.C.L. is making the first beginnings of breaking away from its sectarianism, in connection with the broad movement around the American Youth Congress. The Y.C.L. is learning to connect itself with broad masses of youth, and, as Comrade Edwards stated, we must help on a District scale to penetrate into the C.C.C. camps.

Leadership and guidance to the Y.C.L. must take the form of assistance in developing youth activities in connection with all the mass campaigns of the Party (unemployment insurance, work in the A. F. of L., etc). No Party plan can be considered complete unless it indicates how the youth are to be mobilized for the specific campaigns, and how the Party will aid the work among the youth in the campaigns. The youth is the future, yes! But the future where the young generation of the American toiling masses will accomplish miracles is not far away, and our task is to speed up the tempo in winning over this part of the working class.

Why did we neglect the Y.C.L.? Why did we not fulfil the Eighth Party Convention decisions with regard to the youth? What do the Districts intend to do in carrying out these proposals?

Here comes the example of the New York District, of the Harlem Section. They have something that no one other section of the Party has: The **Harlem Organizer**. What is the main headline in its last issue? "The Party must intensify youth work." I think that the examples, the experiences of Harlem, of the New York District, must be followed by the Party in all Districts.

### Into the Negro Organizations

Comrades Browder, Edwards and Ford have spoken about the necessity of making a turn in our Negro work, of learning from our experiences in the trade union work on how to connect ourselves with the organized masses. While the influence of the Party is increasing among the Negro masses, yet, organizationally, they are still detached from us. In the United States there are five million of the Negro population organized in fraternal organizations, ten million in churches. The problem of how to penetrate these organizations is of the utmost political importance for us. We must systematically study how to penetrate among the millions of organized Negro workers. It is not only a political, but also an organizational, problem.

We must not be content with the united front established at the top. These united front conferences are not giving results, and cannot give results if their decisions are not brought down into the branches of these organizations. But in order for decisions to go down, there must be somebody down below to fight for these decisions, and mobilize the masses around these decisions. Therefore, if we want to mobilize the organized Negro masses, we must have forces inside these organizations.

The street units, those that are composed of Negro workers (because of the territory) the units where the percentage of Negro members is high, must see to it that these comrades join, or rejoin, the Negro organizations. At the Y.C.L. Bureau meeting one of the young comrades (one of the young Negro comrades) reported that he left one of these organizations when he came into the Y.C.L., thinking it was correct and that his other friends are inclined to leave in order to be able to join the Y.C.L.

We must stop this. On the contrary, we must see that Party members are sent into these organizations. It means that the units, while working in the neighborhood, at the same time shall act as Party fractions inside these organizations, which have headquarters in the same neighborhood. Along these lines we will connect ourselves organizationally with large Negro masses, we will succeed in building the L.S.N.R. into a real mass organization on the basis of affiliation. The problem will be solved by going into these organizations, working among these masses from within.

### Tightening the Party Apparatus

My last point: A few words on the apparatus. The growing attack against the Party by the Chamber of Commerce, the Hearst press, the Dickstein Committee, requires a speedy tightening up of the apparatus. We must learn from the experiences in the South, in the West, from the German Party, from the international experiences....

To the extent that the Party connects itself more firmly with the masses, depends our resistance to the attack of the enemy. This means improvement of the life of the shop nuclei, fractions, group system, functioning of the leading forces, building up of the shop papers, neighborhood papers, in one word—improvement of the whole Party organization. At this point I want to stress two organizational measures that will improve our activities: (1) more connection between the Org. and Agitprop work. Each Org. Commission in the Districts and sections must include the Agitprop Director and vice-versa. In each Agitprop Commission, the Org. Commission must have its own member. We must connect the Agitprop work better with the Org. work, the two phases of the task of winning and organizing the workers, of improving the life of the Party politically and organizationally. (2) We must do away with the District Secretariats. We must build up the authority of the District Bureau. The District Organizer, Section Organizer, are responsible for solving the daily tasks of reacting to the daily problems. Of course, the organizers will consult with the Org. secretaries and Agitprops, direct and assign the specific task to the various departments. Of course, in case of emergency, the organizer will call an emergency meeting of the District Bureau or at least try to get the nearest bureau members for consultation.

In conclusion, comrades, we must be practical. We must take all these measures that can better adjust our apparatus to the daily needs of the Party. We must learn how to act among the masses, how to utilize all our activities, the various campaigns to build the Party. Building the Party to a mass Party means reaching larger masses, means strengthening the Party position in the A. F. of L. unions and other mass organizations; means the systematic participation and leadership in the daily struggles of the masses on the broadest united front basis; means better preparation to withstand all kinds of attacks; means developing, strengthening of our struggle against war and fascism and in defense of the Soviet Union. To achieve this we must learn, as Comrade Browder stated, to fulfill the tasks by a continuous check-up. This is the reason why in this report I asked so many questions that must be answered. It is from the collective experiences that we draw the lessons to march forward.

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March 35

## A Good Example of Concentration In Steel

(Excerpts from Plenum Discussions)

"... We have no trouble in convincing the comrades about the correctness of our policy. The comrades enthusiastically accepted the idea of work inside the union and are carrying on the work at the present time without hesitation....

"I think the way in which Comrade Browder pointed out the question of opposition is correct. When we saw the forces we had to work with, we realized that everyone was a mill worker; that there was no paid functionary. We couldn't come in and organize an opposition against them. What we did was organize our work, and show them how to carry on work. I think this is the situation in most of the lodges. All of the national organizers have been withdrawn. The rank and file is in complete control of the lodges. What we must do is show them how to organize and follow a militant program.

"Some of the experiences we had in our lodge are as follows: First of all we set up an Organization Committee. We divided it into a number of sub-committees to carry on the work. For example, in our lodge we organized a library under the leadership of an educational committee. It is very important to have a library. We have about 150 books. At every union meeting the library is opened, and the workers come in and take books, and read these books. We have mainly books published by the International Publishers. They read these books and talk about them, and they are not afraid of them at all. We also have a couple of books by Bill Green. The workers understand very well the purpose of putting them into the library.

"... In the elections we could have carried our slate 100 per cent but we thought it wouldn't be advisable. We put in our people, and some of their people, and didn't try to grab everything for ourselves. The workers are convinced that we are not trying to dominate things. The question came up of delegates to the Central Labor Union. The old-timers insisted that our people should be elected, because they said we would fight more. The result was that three Party members were elected as the delegates to the ——— Federation of Labor for the first time in its existence.

"The district conference was held last week. We took about a month to prepare it. The International Office sent out a special letter to the lodges, telling them not to send

delegates to the meeting. The letter was confidential, but we managed to get hold of a copy. It says the following:

"District meetings that are being held by some Districts have not been of any benefit to our organization at all, and those lodges have been spending money on District meetings, and other purposes, instead of paying per capita tax to the International offices."

"This letter was sent out to the Lodges and, in spite of this, we managed to get **eight out of twelve lodges** that function in the district to be represented at the conference. . . Besides this, 250 workers crowded into the hall, non-union workers in the main, and sat for five hours in the conference, listening to the proceedings.

"A very important incident happened. The ——— delegation brought two Negro delegates. We did not know the composition of the delegation. They went into a restaurant to eat and the restaurant keeper refused to feed the Negro delegates. They returned to the hall and presented the facts to the conference, and asked the conference to elect a delegation to make a protest to the restaurant keeper, which was done. After the conference the whole delegation picked up and walked into the restaurant, and forced the keeper to serve everybody. This was done mostly by Irish-American workers, Southerners, and this incident provoked tremendous hatred towards Jim-Crowism and the methods that were practiced by this restaurant keeper. The presence of Negro workers resulted afterwards in **these Negro workers joining the union. . . .**

"In regard to elections in the districts. We elected a district board which includes four offices, with an organizational committee of five. Out of these nine we managed to elect three Party members, and two close sympathizers, that is, five out of nine . . .

"Now, on the question of the Party, I want to say very frankly that with the changed situation at the present time the recruiting campaign among the steel workers has been slow, and it is not measuring up to the same growth of the union. This situation must be changed by more intensive recruiting of the best elements into our ranks."

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## How to Penetrate the Negro Organizations

(Excerpts from Report to Plenum)

**“WE** HAVE some excellent experiences in New York. In Queens we have been able, just on one issue, and maybe this is the secret of it, to get together over 60 various organizations of the Negro people on the question of discrimination in the hospital in Queens. We have the Alpha Benevolent Association, the American League Against War and Fascism, the Amity Baptist Church, Arrawat Democratic Club, Bayside City League, N.A.A.C.P., etc., about 70 organizations that have come together and conducted a struggle in Queens for the right of Negroes in the hospitals in the City of New York.”

\* \* \* \*

“These experiences have shown us that it was possible to get this united front by simply taking up one section, one issue, one grievance of the Negro people and developing a struggle around it. In this case we can see that if we properly approach these organizations there is a possibility of getting into the Negro organizations for a united front. We have had in Harlem in the preparations for the unemployed conference at Washington, a conference of 29 organizations, different organizations than we have had heretofore, into a conference at Abyssinia Baptist Church, N.A.A.C.P., church organizations, etc. Comrade Benjamin spoke there, and we elected delegates to the congress at Washington. We had also the followers of Father Divine, the Negro ‘God’.”

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“In connection with the united front policy in the trade unions we find that the secondary cadres are usually sincere people who make very good fighters once they are convinced. One of the most sincere fighters in the I.L.D. is a member of the Board of Directors of a church. He fights for the right of the I.L.D. to meet there, etc. The same goes for fraternal organizations, in spite of the elaborate pageantry and ritual in these organizations, which have great attraction for the Negro people, as a contrast to the drabness of their lives—in these organizations they discuss the history of the Negro people, the problems of the Negro people. We have some comrades in one of the Oddfellow organizations, and we are organizing a class of 12 members on the History of the Negro people, with a Communist to teach this class. This



shows the possibilities of penetrating the fraternal organizations."

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"If we see the possibilities here, I think we will be able to overcome the difficulties of stewing in our own juice with the present forms of the L.S.N.R. In building up Scottsboro-Herndon Committees in my opinion, although it is not L.S.N.R. in name, there should be the possibilities of an L.S.N.R. council. If we bring in the question of Scottsboro and local issues it should become a center of the L.S.N.R."

"I think that with the new Party membership in Harlem, we have the possibilities for carrying forward this united front among the Negro masses."

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"In connection with the question of the united front on the Negro question—if we work properly now and see that we must penetrate these organizations, there is the possibility of building up a National Negro Congress on a broad united front basis. We had a discussion about this conference in the N. Y. District in which we discussed the Negro question, and the possibility of a National Negro Congress. If we make the proper orientation, we will be able to build the biggest Congress of Negro people ever held. It means patient work in Negro organizations."

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"With regard to the Labor Party, here also there are great possibilities. I am sure that no Labor Party can develop unless it has at the center of its program the national question based on the whole question of struggle for liberation of the Negro people, for Negro rights. The Negroes have also become disillusioned in the two bourgeois parties. They have always supported the Republican Party. But the Negroes in the last election went over to the Democratic Party. They felt maybe the Democrats would do something for them. The demagogic promises of the Roosevelt administration made many of them go directly over to the Democratic Party. However, we have seen the discontent of the Negroes just as we see the discontent of the working class generally. If such a mass Labor Party is developed there is the possibility of mobilizing these Negro workers into such a movement if we work within these Negro organizations, as well as in the trade union organizations. The possibilities are very great."

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## Women's Work and International Woman's Day

(Excerpts from Report to Plenum)

**"I**t is 13 years that the Party has been organizing an apparatus for women's work. In this period of time, it is true that there has been some work developed among the proletarian housewives. During seven years we have been emphasizing the necessity of making a turn in work among women, to begin work among women in the factories, in the trade unions, etc. But today we can not yet say that there has been a turn made in this direction as far as women's work in the factories is concerned, although there is some slight improvement in this phase of our activity..."

"We have a magazine, **The Working Woman**. We decided to try to put a principle of ours into effect, namely, that of making of our periodicals an organizer as well as an agitator... We got a group of women together in the Chicago stockyards where no copies of **The Working Woman** were ever sold before. Last month there appeared a story written by the stockyard women workers themselves, and we were able to sell 425 copies of this first issue, in the stockyards alone.

"We were able to improve the circulation of **The Working Woman** from a paid circulation of 2,000 copies to nearly 7,000 paid circulation. And we must record that **The Working Woman** is now self-supporting (with volunteer workers)....

"Our work among women assisted in the Boston strike, particularly the help given by **The Working Woman**. Our work among women helped to get together a group of 25 women and to organize them in a rank-and-file committee in the A. F. of L. Local in ———....

"With the shifting of our trade union work towards work in the A. F. of L. we see what a good field of activity we have for women's work, which necessitates more attention to such work in the A. F. of L..."

"Now a word on March Eighth—International Women's Day. March Eighth should not only be a day of celebration; it should result in some organizational gains. We should organize one or two women's delegates meetings. The main purpose of the women's delegate meetings is to develop women cadres for trade union, Party work, etc., particularly women in the shops, not only Party members but sympathizers, towards the support of militant workers on a labor ticket. This should not be abstract education, but about conditions and activities in the factories, the industry in

which they work. If we carry on better work among the 'backward section of the working class', (backward because of certain historical conditions—and there is a big section of working class women in the U. S.) we will be able to develop a broader united front and help therefore to win the majority of the working class in the U. S. A."

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## Harlem Concentration on Transport

By LOUIS SASS (Harlem)

**A**FTER our Extraordinary Party Conference, we seriously undertook to carry through the Open Letter and its central principle: **concentration**. One of the concentration points assigned to us by the District is the city traction, an industry where thousands of American workers, hitherto untouched by our movement, are organized into company unions on the I.R.T. and B.M.T. systems. The task of organizing these workers requires a great deal of activity, skill and concentration. It is very important in organizing city transport in New York to select the proper forces to give daily guidance to the comrades who undertake this task.

In Harlem section we first carefully selected seven comrades, all new Party members, who are American workers, and formed them into a concentration unit. The comrades in this unit were either unemployed or night workers, working such hours as made it possible for them to devote considerable time to the shops on which we decided to concentrate.

We had a favorable start. A worker in ——— shop of the transport system called up the **Daily Worker** and gave some information about the conditions in the shop. We immediately contacted the worker, who was somewhat sympathetic to the Party. Through him we began to build a small group, to be the organizational committee for the union. We had a difficult job at first, for the men in the shop had been disappointed time and again by the A. F. of L. They had the company union, of course, and believed that all unions are detrimental rather than helpful to the workers. The first thing that we had to convince them of was that our main interest is to protect their jobs by careful organizational methods. We told them to approach their most intimate friends, those upon whom they could depend, those whom they had known for years, and organize them into groups of threes and fives, so they would avoid recruiting one who would squeal and thereby destroy organization and endanger the jobs of the men. The men were soon convinced that our organization was a rank-and-file organ-



zation interested sincerely in bettering the conditions of the workers and in protecting their jobs.

At the same time the union issued leaflets that were, in the main, written by the men themselves, about the conditions existing in the shop, and how best to remedy these conditions. Our forces in the concentration unit singled out the most class-conscious and active workers. These we approached to join the Party. In the shop we had, by this time, 25 to 30 workers who had signed up with the union. Finally we were successful in recruiting one worker into the Party. We explained a number of things to this worker. He arranged a little gathering at the home of one of his friends at which two workers were present. The section sent a leading comrade down to this gathering, who outlined to the workers the role of the Party. He was successful in convincing them to join the Party, so that we had a nucleus in the shop of three members. From then on we tried to place the leadership and the responsibility in the hands of the Party members on the inside, with the concentration unit members helping to visit contacts, conduct open air meetings, distribute shop papers and **Daily Workers** at the shop gates.

We have kept to the system of organization mentioned above, namely, the groups. The men in charge of the groups were responsible for the collection of dues, the holding of meetings, etc. and they constitute the leading committee of the shop. At all times, both the union and the section paid the utmost attention to the individuals that comprised the leadership of the shop. We have spent hours in conversation with the comrades and the workers who were genuinely interested in building the organization.

The bosses have done their best to raise the "red scare" and to brand the organization as Communist. This was met squarely. First the C. P. explained what Communism stands for. In the meantime, the union organization pointed out clearly that the union is composed of all workers, among whom there are workers of various affiliations, that the union does not exclude anyone, but welcomes everyone. It was pointed out that the "red scare" is used by the bosses to prevent organization among the men and make them accept the company union. The men accepted the explanations of the union and the leaflets and bulletins issued by the Party nucleus. The union kept growing. A great number of the workers enrolled were activated. Of course, all sorts of schemes were invented to divert the attention of the men from real organization and struggle. First a self-appointed shop-committee sprang into existence, with quite an influence among the men, promising things such as betterment of conditions, shorter hours, etc. They did not fulfill their promises and the union was quick in discredit-

ing the group. The pension plan was next introduced by the company. Our union took up this question, analyzed it carefully and found it to be very detrimental to the men. We decided to fight it. A very careful expose of this plan resulted in its rejection on the part of the workers. Hundreds began to write in to the company, demanding that their names be taken off the pension list. The authority and standing of the union as a result of this careful and correctly waged struggle increased considerably.

However, there were still some illusions among the men as to the possibility of turning the company union into a fighting body, while the members of our union have been in favor of deserting the company union completely as something that cannot be utilized for strengthening organization in the shop. Our stand on the question was that they should remain inside of the company union for the present, that they should participate in the elections, and that they should utilize the company union as the legal expression of the sentiment of the workers in the shop.

The elections, which were not held at all but were merely appointments made by the company, exposed the character of the company union completely. This was particularly demonstrated with the acceptance by the delegates of the new agreement which has failed to give back the promised 10 per cent wage-cut taken from the men two years ago. At the company union meeting the agreement was rejected by the men. In the meantime, this opportunity was seized upon to begin to bring the Transport Workers Union into the open. The first open meeting of the union was called with the most important people in the shop who were members of the union. It was a highly successful meeting. There it was decided to call another meeting of all of the union members in the shop. The organization of this meeting was the responsibility of those present.

In the meantime, another company union meeting was called and the question of the Transport Workers Union was openly raised by the workers. They voted non-confidence in the delegates of the company union and told them plainly that if they wanted to stick with the workers they had better get into the only union that really represents the interests of the men, and is in a position to fight the company for better conditions. They also succeeded in electing a delegate to the Washington Congress for Unemployment and Social Insurance from the company union local. The sending of the delegate, however, was sabotaged by the central delegates council. All of these things served to arouse the anger of the workers. Soon after this company union meeting, the second meeting of the rank-and-file union at the shop was called. It was a meeting of several hundred workers—all union men. At this meeting a decision

was made to call a general meeting of the shop. During this period we continuously sold the **Daily Worker**, issued three numbers of the Party shop paper and recruited four additional members into the shop nucleus. Our position in this shop today is quite stable. All attempts of the company to destroy the organization of the men have so far failed. Stool pigeons were exposed; the "red scare" was met, and open union organization was established.

We have a number of important shortcomings, such as the irregularity of the shop paper, our inability to get some very important workers into the unit, the failure to sell the **Daily** in great numbers every day at the gate, and the failure to raise sharply some very important questions in the union. In this connection we have made some beginnings. We have been able to raise the Negro question at leading committee meetings, but that is as far as we have gone. Our concentration unit as well as the Union, has not yet undertaken a broad campaign for the organization of Negroes into the union; also the demands for Negro rights are yet too general. However, steps are definitely being taken by the section and the union to overcome and correct these weaknesses.

During the entire process of organization there has been careful and planned united activity between the section and the union. This is largely responsible for the results. From this achievement of our section, we learn the importance of (1) the proper selection of forces; (2) the very careful projection of an organizational drive; (3) the importance of continuous guidance and supervision by the leading committees of the Party; and (4) most important of all—the importance of applying the guiding principle of the Open Letter, that is, **concentration**.

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"The dictatorship of the proletariat is a determined struggle, bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, pedagogical and administrative, against the forces and traditions of old society. Without an iron party hardened in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all the honest elements of the class, without a party capable of keeping in touch with the sentiments of the masses and influencing them, it is impossible successfully to conduct such a struggle".

Lenin

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## Prepare For May First

**T**WO months separate us from May Day, great traditional day of struggle of the international proletariat. In the United States this period coincides with the developing strike struggles in the most important industries. The workers in the steel mills, in the automobile factories, are moving with rapid steps towards a strike. The rank and file of the American Federation of Labor unions in steel, over the head of the bureaucratic, reactionary machinery, are mobilizing the membership, and organizing and preparing the strike for better conditions. The automobile workers, disillusioned with the New Deal and Roosevelt, are preparing for struggle. It depends a lot on the intensity of our work whether these strike struggles will really break and be led properly or will be betrayed by the A. F. of L. bureaucrats.

The Central Committee Resolution adopted at its last meeting clearly states the main tasks for the coming period. In the preparation for May Day the carrying out of these tasks will have to be intensified. Working in the A. F. of L. with the aim of securing rank-and-file control in the locals and of organizing the unorganized, building the A. F. of L., especially the steel and auto unions, is one of the most burning tasks before the Party in the coming period. This is closely connected with the question of building the united front and the Labor Party in the localities.

There should be no shop paper, neighborhood paper, leaflet or other agitational material issued by the Party organizations (District, section, unit) in which the question of May Day is not brought forward in connection with the daily struggles, with the fight for H. R. 2827, with the struggle against the attack upon the Party, the trade unions, etc. We have to start immediately with the utmost energy to mobilize the locals of the A. F. of L. and other unions and the mass organizations of the workers to join with us in a united front for a huge May Day demonstration. In the daily struggles conducted by the shop units and the street units, the question of May Day should constantly be in the forefront.

We have to start in immediately with technical preparations for May Day. Banners, placards, permits for the demonstration must be prepared and secured in the shortest possible time.

If the Party membership is mobilized in proper time and every one of us will plunge into the work, the May Day demonstrations this year will far exceed all the previous demonstrations we had in the United States. All the objective conditions are favorable for huge demonstrations. The Leftward moving militant masses will be with us on May First.

# AGITPROP SECTION

## For Effective Mass Agitation— To Reach Millions

By ALEX BITTELMAN

**T**HE following is a summary of the second part of Comrade Bittleman's report to the National Agit-Prop Conference. The first part, dealing with the question of the contents of our agitation, is published in the March issue of **The Communist**.

### Methods of Agitation

The importance of the methods of agitation, the style and language used, and the character of the arguments, has been emphasized in the Resolution of the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.

"The contents and language of agitation and the press," the resolution states, "must henceforth be addressed to the broadest strata of the proletariat and the toilers, showing the face of the Communist Parties both in agitation and mass actions (demonstrations, strikes and other mass actions)."

There has been considerable improvement in this respect. **But we continue to speak above the heads of the masses. We are not sufficiently convincing.**

There are a number of reasons for this:

a. We don't think concretely of the masses when we write or speak. This is a sectarian weakness.

b. We don't study and digest the Party Resolutions as **guides** to agitation and action. We merely recite these Resolutions to the masses, often restated in a form which is not suitable for the masses. We are afraid to depart from the letter of the Resolution, from its exact wording, which is an expression both of sectarianism and of political immaturity.

We must correct all of these serious weaknesses, always bearing in mind the millions whom we must reach with our agitation, using the simplest possible language while being careful not to vulgarize our agitation.

### Forms of Agitation

"The principal forms of Communist propaganda and agitation are: individual verbal propaganda, participation in the industrial labor movement, propaganda in

the Party press and distribution of literature. Every member of a legal or illegal Party is to participate regularly in one or another of these forms of propaganda." (Thesis and resolutions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, June-July, 1921.)

I want to emphasize here particularly the need of **oral individual agitation**. This is practically undeveloped and totally unorganized. It is of great importance at all times, but it would become particularly important in semi-legal and illegal conditions.

"Every member of the Communist International," states the Thesis on Agitation of the Fourth Congress of the C. I., held at the end of 1922, "must consider himself an agitator among the masses. This can always take place wherever and whenever workers shall gather—in the workshop, in the trade unions, at mass meetings, in workers' clubs, in sport clubs, musical societies, tenants' and consumers' organizations, in people's houses, in workers' restaurants, on the trains, in the villages, etc., and even in the homes of the workers (house-to-house agitation)."

It is not enough to know the importance of this form of agitation. We must emphasize it much more than we have done heretofore. Moreover, there must be a check-up. Units must begin to check-up, in the words of the above mentioned Thesis on Agitation, "whether he (the Party member) is conducting any agitation among the non-Party masses: (a) regularly, (b) casually, (c) not at all."

This oral individual agitation should be organized by the Agit-Prop Depts. Outlines should be issued for unit discussion, and the units should discuss and exchange experiences in individual agitation.

### Leaflets

It is gratifying to note that we now have more leaflets than ever before. Especially important is the fact that a larger number of leaflets is being issued by the sections and units (as was the case during the election campaign, in the textile strike, in San Francisco after the raids, etc.). What must be stressed now?

We must stress:

a. The wider use of this weapon, not only in the actual course of major struggles, but also in the course of **preparation for struggles**, and its more systematic use, raising every grievance and all the issues of the struggle.

b. We must emphasize especially the need of more leaflets to be issued by the sections and units.



c. The using of **Daily Worker** editorials on burning issues of the day for widespread distribution in leaflet form or the using of the editorials as the basis, adding local material and popularizing in each leaflet the **Daily Worker**.

d. More effective methods of leaflet distribution—at the shops and factories, house-to-house, at all mass gatherings.

e. More initiative by the lower Party organizations in the writing and printing of leaflets.

### Shop Papers

There is hardly any need of stressing at this conference the importance of shop papers. However, in connection with agit-prop work, we must point out that:

a. We have not as many papers as we could have with our present strength. While the launching of the shop paper is not always possible as the initial step in the organization of a new shop nucleus, no shop unit can successfully grow which does not consider the issuing of such a paper as one of its major tasks.

b. We are not utilizing fully and properly the shop papers that we have, either in their contents or in the distribution.

The following are the principal weaknesses of our shop papers:

1. In many cases, when we speak of grievances, we do not propose a solution, do not formulate demands and fail to point out how the workers are to organize and fight for better conditions.

2. We do not bring the trade union question in systematically. In this sense, many of our shop papers are not even good trade union papers from the Communist standpoint.

3. Political questions are handled either badly or not at all. The exposure of the N.R.A., fascization, war preparations and defense of the Soviet Union is in about the same unsatisfactory state in the shop papers today as it was at the time of the Eighth Party Convention. That is, these questions find very little reflection in the shop papers. The struggle for the united front and for the revolutionary way out of the capitalist crisis is just beginning to penetrate into the shop papers. Party recruitment is dealt with mostly in a formal fashion, chiefly by slogan. There is little agitation in connection with the daily struggles and on the question of the role of the Party.

4. There are insufficient contributions in the shop papers from the workers themselves.

5. The editing and even the technique of printing and make-up—are too much centralized by the sections.

### Eliminate the Shortcomings

These weaknesses must be overcome. We must stress the need of:

a. More systematic attention to shop papers by the leading Party committees. The publication by the Districts and by the National Agit-Prop Dept. of shop paper bulletins.

b. Where shop papers are issued, the shop unit as a whole should discuss every forthcoming issue. It shall not be left to one or two comrades or to the section, as is sometimes the case. Non-Party workers should be drawn in more boldly into contributing to the paper and making suggestions for it.

c. Polemics should be carried on systematically with the company union papers where such exist.

d. The **Daily Worker** should be followed carefully for leading slogans to be linked up with the struggles and problems of the respective shop and industry.

e. Periodic section conferences should be held to review the shop papers and to plan political campaigns through them.

f. There should be technical decentralization, to prepare the shop units to handle the issuing of the papers themselves.

### Literature

There will be a special sub-report on this question. I shall merely outline the most important points.

We are now publishing and distributing more literature than ever before. But we are still only at the beginning and are lagging behind the demand and need of the masses, especially for popular propaganda pamphlets to sell at 2, 3 or at most 5c. For instance, we have only one pamphlet on the N.R.A., only two pamphlets on the revolutionary way out, only one or two popular pamphlets on the Negro question, one on the Kirov assassination, none dealing with the bourgeois "Lefts" none on fascism, none on the Senate munitions investigation, none on Trotzkyism (except the pamphlet dealing with the Minneapolis situation).

We are undertaking to change this situation. We have decided to prepare and to publish within the next few months two series of pamphlets which will radically remedy the present shortcoming in this type of pamphlets.

Our scope has been much too small. We have been publishing pamphlets in thousands. We must begin to plan for and to publish in hundreds of thousands. We must concentrate on popular pamphlets. We must plan ahead and prepare for every campaign.

In this connection it is extremely important that we build a more effective machinery for the distribution of literature. We must improve our bookshops and the Party literature

departments, with the chief emphasis on the section and unit distribution apparatus.

Our language groups should utilize more the existing English literature and translate more of the literature issued by the Party in English. In this connection it is sufficient to mention that there are no pamphlets in a number of languages on the Negro question.

### **New Forms of Agitation**

Agitation must not be confined to the old customary forms. We must be no slaves to routine. The sections and units particularly should initiate and devise new forms of agitation. Just a few suggestions in this connection. We should resort to such forms as (a) painting of slogans on sidewalks and walls; (b) the use of stickers with popular slogans; (c) wallpapers, especially in clubs; (d) so-called "stunt" forms should not be underestimated if used in connection with mass actions, either during the preparations for or in the course of such struggles; (e) wider use of the movies.

## **PROPAGANDA**

### **A. Party Education**

We have made certain progress in the teaching of Elements of Communism and in courses on Marxism-Leninism, chiefly through Workers Schools and to some extent through Party classes. But thus far the study of Marxism-Leninism has embraced a very small percentage of the membership of our Party.

The education of our Party membership on questions of Party program, Party policies and organizational principles is still sporadic, taking place only in spots and affecting an inconsiderable number of Party members.

With regard to current problems and struggles. Discussion of these questions in the Party units takes place, when it does, from campaign to campaign and is practically always belated, inadequately organized, and with little effectiveness in directing these discussions towards improving the work of the units and of the individual members.

To improve our propaganda work and theoretical education, we need:

a. Wider utilization of the Workers School courses by Party members. This must be organized by sections and units.

b. A system of section and unit classes, from elementary to higher.

c. Regular organized discussions at the meetings of the units (half of each meeting) on current struggles and policies.



d. More propaganda and theoretical literature (Stalin's **Foundations of Leninism**, **Lenin's Works**, etc.).

e. Systematic training of propagandists and of class instructors (in district and section Training Schools).

f. Better utilization of the National Training School. In this connection we must state that there is still considerable underestimation of the importance of the National Training School in some districts. This expresses itself in the fact that some districts either do not send a sufficient number of students to the National Training School or do not select qualified comrades for the School.

### **B. General Workers' Education**

We have made substantial progress with the Workers' Schools, but we still suffer from serious weaknesses.

a. There are not enough workers in the schools and still fewer workers from the basic industries.

b. Instruction is too academic. There is not enough concrete tying up of theory with practice, with the actual developments in class struggle and the Party's policies.

c. Workers' Schools exist only in the district centers, with few exceptions. Only in a few smaller cities are there any Workers' Schools.

What must be done to improve this work? We must:

a. Bring the Workers' Schools closer to the workers and to the basic industries. We have had valuable experiences in this regard in Chicago, Youngstown, Pittsburgh and New York.

b. We must work for the organization of more trade union classes, either under the auspices of local unions, or through extensions of Workers' Schools, or through combination of both. It is important in this regard that the Party fractions take initiative and play an active part in the establishment of such classes.

c. Extension of education in the other non-Party mass organizations and closer collaboration of the Party with our Agit-Prop Depts., district and national.

d. We must have classes to train teachers for the schools and more political education for the instructors of the Workers' Schools.

### **C. Immediate Tasks of Party Education**

We must see to it that there are well-organized unit discussions of the Party policies (a) on the united front, (b) trade union work, (c) Labor Party.

a. **United Front:** "The Party must explain in its own ranks the significance of the united front in the conditions of the United States." This must include "the explanation of the role of the Party, its tactical principles," with the aim of "ideologically overcoming sectarianism" hand in hand with the struggle against the right danger.

b. **Trade Union Work:** "It is necessary to carefully explain inside the Party the tasks of the reorganization of trade union work." (C. C. Resolution.)

c. **Labor Party:** Unit discussions on this question must aim to show:

1. The way life is raising the question. That this slogan is a method of breaking the masses away from the bourgeois parties and social-reformism and to direct the drift of the masses away from the capitalist parties into the channels of revolutionary struggle.

2. The character of the Labor Party we aim to build and the organizational tactics to be pursued.

3. The role of the Communist Party.

4. The correctness of the previous Party position on this question.

d. **Seventh World Congress** of the Communist International. The above discussions should be linked up with the discussion of the Agenda of the Seventh World Congress of the C. I. In this we must aim at:

1. A thorough review of the Party's work in the light of the above tasks (united front, trade union, and Labor Party).

2. Linking up these tasks with the general theoretical and political topics for discussion as already formulated and published by the C. C.

3. Drawing in of Party members as well as non-Partyites (especially Socialist and A. F. of L. workers) into these discussions with the method of Bolshevik self-criticism to expose lagging behind and to improve the work of the Party.

### **Organization and Agit-Prop Cadres**

One of the outstanding weaknesses of our agit-prop work is in its organizational aspect. There is insufficient understanding of the fact that agit-prop work **must be organized** and must be linked up organizationally with all the Party campaigns and activities.

"The agitational and propagandistic activity is to be considered possible, in all Parties, or at any rate, in the advanced Communist mass Parties as a **special branch of work of the Party apparatus.**" (Fifth Congress of the C. I.)

This means that:

- a. We must have specialized agit-prop workers, agit-prop cadres.

- b. Agit-prop work must be properly organized (agit-prop is not only writing and speaking, but involves also organization of this work, the selection of the right people and check-up of the work).

- c. Proper relations of collaboration between Agit-Prop and Org. Depts.

d. Leadership and supervision of agit-prop work by the leading Party committees.

Today we are suffering from the following weaknesses:

a. A lack of agit-prop cadres: few agit-prop directors, discussion leaders, speakers, propagandists, etc.

b. Many districts have no District Agit-Prop Directors. Large numbers of sections and especially units have no agit-prop directors, not to speak of Agit-Prop Depts.

c. The selections of agit-prop workers is not always done with due regard to the character of the work. And there are too frequent changes of the comrades assigned to agit-prop work.

d. The Agit-Prop Depts. are not always working hand in hand with the Org. Depts.

e. Leading Party committees (District, sections, and units) neglect to give guidance to agit-prop work. For instance, **How many District Bureaus have discussed the agitational content of such campaigns as the anti-Hearst, Dickstein Committee, munitions inquiry, Kirov, etc.?**

f. Agit-prop directors in some districts are chiefly Workers' School directors.

g. Literature agents in many places are not an organic part of the Agit-Prop apparatus.

h. There is very little utilization (just the beginnings) of auxiliary forces for **research** and the utilization of this research for our agitation, leaflets and shop papers, speeches, oral propaganda, etc.

i. Agit-prop problems, as a rule, are not conceived as such, are not raised for discussion. Even our advanced agit-prop workers have made very little use of the Agit-Prop Section of the **Party Organizer**.

#### What Must Be Done?

1. Each District must have an Agit-Prop Director and committee.

2. There must be qualified section agit-prop directors.

3. Literature agents should be included in the district and section agit-prop apparatus.

4. The section and unit agit-prop apparatus must be systematically built up. The section apparatus should include a competent mass worker as director, together with some research workers and trained propagandists, literature agent, shop paper director, etc.

5. Leading Party committees, in planning actions and campaigns, must consider and outline the main content for our agitation, including the type of literature required. On the basis of such discussions, the agit-prop apparatus would be able to outline more fully directives for agitation to the lower Party organizations and their agit-prop depts. These directives should, as a rule, be brought from the district



to conferences of agit-prop directors of the sections and from the sections to conferences of unit agit-props, thus insuring a correct application of these directives by the agit-prop cadres. Such conferences should, of course, include the respective literature agents and shop paper editors and directors.

6. Closest contact between the Agit-Prop and Org. Depts. in the center, districts, and sections.

7. District bureaus must see to it that their agit-prop director is able to give adequate attention to this work and that he does not become transformed only into a director of the Workers' School (where such is the case).

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## Bring Schools Closer to Workers

By BEATRICE SHIELDS

I want to deal with the question of the schools. In Chicago we have approached the problem from the point of view of how our schools can serve us to produce cadres for our concentration work. When the school was organized, it had the experience of all our schools. We had a miscellaneous influx of people into the school. After the first year of existence we had to conduct a bitter fight against the Trotsky elements who made a happy hunting ground of our school because of the petty bourgeois elements in it.

On the basis of our fight against Trotskyism, and kicking out the Trotskyite teachers on our staff, we were able to change the atmosphere. But this was not sufficient. The school did not give us enough material. In the summer of 1933, therefore, we organized what we called "industry classes", that is a class for steel workers, a class for stockyard workers, for railroad and metal workers, numbering 100. These classes were conducted by the comrades in charge of the particular field of work. The composition, of course, was 100 percent proletarian.

The results were immediately felt in our points of concentration. We felt a better approach and better results, and on the basis of this experience, we went further. We discussed the question of organizing, as Comrade Bittelman indicated, in the neighborhoods where these workers lived, schools, institutions that will function permanently and as regularly as our central institution does.

In this work, we met difficulties. I would like to mention some of the difficulties because I think the question of extension schools, especially in the concentration districts, must become the chief form of schooling in the future. We must also see the difficulties and handicaps in this work. For instance, in our steel school, when it was first organ-

ized in South Chicago and Gary, there was an excellent response. We tried to build around the steel workers, who were a little reluctant because of the spy system in the mills, a wider base—to create a sort of miscellaneous character. We conducted the class in such a fashion as to secure results. We had a first registration of 100 in the South Side Chicago School. Out of this 100, 54 were employed in mills and the rest were unemployed steel workers. We had a similar experience with Gary.

### **Bring Their Problems to the School**

I have watched very closely the work of the Chicago South Side School. What did we find? In the class in trade unionism, comrades came with their shop problems, with trade union problems, with questions how to fight against the spy system. And right there in the class collective attempts were made to answer these problems. But what were our handicaps? Campaigns were started against the school. Workers began to go back to work, because the mills began to work on temporary production. Our school, therefore, is not faring so well.

This raises another series of problems. Does it mean that we should give up these schools? No. Even if we are unable because of these attacks to get the mass enrollment of steel workers, railroad workers, stockyard workers, the very existence of a center in these neighborhoods where they find literature, where discussions are held, etc., is already a revolutionary stimulant. This, I think, we should continue, and besides this, because of the attack on us, begin to develop new forms of training these workers.

I want to raise generally the question of the schools. I feel very keenly that although these miscellaneous schools of ours, these central institutions, are very necessary, we in Chicago had to put up a desperate fight to retain our school. We were not attacked by Hearst first. We went after Hearst. He came back at us. We started a fight against Hearst on the basis of distortions of writings of Lenin. And we plastered the whole town with stickers, sent delegations and demanded retractions of these statements. Of course, he did not retract them. But we created sentiment, and discussion. Hundreds of workers came up to the school to examine the pages and places where Lenin had written and what he had written. Hearst began a whole series of articles, and the school was given tremendous publicity.

We were able to rally around the school a wide mass of organizations, and individuals to defend us and to prevent the breaking down of our school. But, comrades, this is not enough. Hearst has done some damage to us. He did damage to us precisely in those places where we are most interested to grow, that is, employed workers have dropped

off. They tell us quite frankly that they cannot afford to lose their jobs. The A. F. of L. workers are very reluctant, although we had a good enrollment of A. F. of L. workers. We must find a solution for this problem.

### **Link Theory With Practice**

The attacks on our Party and the fact that the main attack is being leveled against the schools, raise before us some very serious problems. I think that we have to stop waiting until the Party will be illegal before we find forms in which to work. I think we have to begin to utilize first of all the facilities created by the school to train more of our Party members, and we have made certain progress.

In our local schools we make it mandatory (though not everyone obeys this) that every unit organizer attend the Party organization class. After this class, the comrades meet and take up their business. We have also instituted a rule this semester that every functionary of the units attend the school, and we have provided special classes for them where the instructors will be able, besides giving the theoretical basis for their work, also connecting it up with their problems in such a manner as will enable them to have the effects of the school when these comrades go back. In many sections this has been met with a great deal of enthusiasm.

One more important question: The comrade from Paterson, N. J., made a very interesting report to the C.C. meeting. She showed us that in a slate of 20 workers, there were 5 Communists, the rest voted with us. These workers voted with us on a single issue, but cannot be approached yet on the question of joining the Party. This shows that these people are not yet ideologically completely ours. The question arises, therefore, what can we do in order to take these people, these progressive workers, these honest workers, to educate them so that we would be able to recruit them into the Party and broaden our forces right in the locals of the A. F. of L.? We have previously discussed this question in Chicago. We have made certain approaches which I think will be valuable to the other districts. We anticipate when the election is over, that at least 25 Left and progressive workers will be delegates to the Chicago Federation of Labor.

These delegates will be almost of the same type as the Paterson comrades have been. We are therefore preparing a class in the history of the Chicago Federation of Labor. We are preparing a manual, or an outline, and we are also preparing our best forces to go to these workers and teach them the history of the Chicago Federation of Labor and thereby drawing them closer to us and educate all these forces.



Comrades, the question of importance that now arises is carrying this out in the smaller industrial towns. In Illinois, we have undertaken to carry out Agit-Prop activity in the mining region, to organize schools, but circumstances were such that it did not materialize.

One very important experience we had, I thought Comrade Bittelman would deal with but he had no time. We organized a Party school in the Red village of Taylor Springs and, comrades, we did not have any difficulty in securing headquarters there. Our Party school met in the City Hall of Taylor Springs. (Applause) And in the evening when the comrades were through with the lessons, miners from the vicinity came to the City Hall to discuss their problems with the Communists. In similar places where we have some influence, we should organize such schools. We are planning to organize circuit schools. These are very difficult, especially where transportation is difficult and the Party organization is not firm enough to supply us with transportation to another region. This is very difficult although I think some way must be found in order to go through with it.

We not only had to teach principles of Communism, but we had to create a dictionary. The workers did not know what we were talking about. One worker asked our instructor what is the bourgeoisie. He says the only "burro" that he knows is one that kicks. And this is an indication of how our words are not understood. The whole terminology, of course which is ours, we must teach it to the workers, but without teaching it to them it means absolutely nothing.

I want to say that it is high time that our Party, from the top to bottom, changes its conception of Agit-Prop work. I cannot forget a letter which characterized a certain comrade. It said: This comrade is not an organizer, is a very poor worker and other such compliments, but he can be used for Agit-Prop work.

Comrades, with that kind of an attitude to Agit-Prop work we will not only not organize, but we will not make any headway. And I found out, comrades, in my experience in District 8, that if an Agit-Prop director doesn't know how to organize, how to talk to the masses, he is no damn good for anything. That is why the question arises before us now. The tone of the Central Committee meeting is to speak of millions. We have now no trained forces down in the bottom to speak to those millions. The question of training of cadres is a question of proper organization which must become the duty of every leading functionary of our Party. When we do that we will establish for ourselves a guarantee that the decisions we have made will be carried out.

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## Literature to the Masses

(Excerpts from Report to Plenum)

By ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG

**W**ITH the growing maturity of the Party, there is also a growing recognition of literature work in our Party. The Central Committee had to wage a persistent struggle to change the entire attitude from handling literature as mere merchandise, to a recognition that literature is of far-reaching political importance. The literature which the Party issues must be considered instruments of education and organization of the masses. In the past, we also had to combat what we used to call "financial hooliganism". Literature was sent out and the funds taken in from sales of this literature were used for something else, and then no more literature could be sent out. This practice has been given up in the main and the literature funds are kept separate and used for literature only. Those working in this field recognize that we have made a great step forward in this direction, but there are still weaknesses here. When funds are not sent in for the literature, the publishing of more literature is curtailed.

It is very important that, from the outset, we understand that the prime objective in our literature work is the distribution of mass agitation literature. This is the basis of our work. We have made as yet **only a beginning** in this field, as I will show later by figures—certainly not commensurate with the activity and needs of the Party.

Of course, the distribution of our Marxist-Leninist classics, the writings and speeches of Lenin and Stalin, has greatly increased. Here, too, only a beginning has been made. Precisely because of the prevailing situation and the conditions ahead of us, we must increase the tempo of placing in the homes of hundreds of thousands of workers Marxist-Leninist propaganda literature while reaching millions with our agitational literature. We now have very extensive literature—literature that was not available to us before. This literature is very important to have, not only to arm ourselves with the understanding of the theory and practice of our movement, but to stock up little libraries in the homes of workers for future use as educational media for great numbers we will have to reach with our fundamental program and principles. Therefore, our publishing program, too, has to be extended, the tempo has to be increased, the type and kinds of literature must be increased a hundredfold.

The question of the relationship of the Agitprop Dept. and the Org. Dept. has already been raised. We find in most

cases that the Literature Director is altogether removed from both the Agitprop and Org. Dept. in the Districts. How can the Literature Director function without having the help and cooperation of the Org. Dept.? On the other hand, I cannot imagine how the Org. Dept. can plan its activities without utilization of literature. Literature work must be a component part of org. work. It must be integrated in it. The Agitprop must not only utilize, but also popularize our literature. Very little of this is being done now, though the **Daily Worker** itself is giving more space to publicity and announcements.

We are satisfied when a pamphlet or book has been published. But we must push these books and pamphlets among the masses. The District Agitprops must particularly help make known every piece of literature that is being issued and made available through the literature departments. It is necessary to make the workers understand why this or that publication is of real value to them. Even in the Party it is necessary to popularize the contents of the books and pamphlets and relate these to the immediate needs. Outlines of contents, reviews, etc., must be sent to the press and units and generally a feeling for Party literature must be created throughout the Party.

In this connection the building of functioning literature apparatus for the present and for future eventualities becomes of greatest importance.

These literature departments manned by qualified comrades, distributed in every organized base of our movement—Party, mass organizations, etc.—led and supervised by the agit-props must be considered basic political departments of our activity. They are a link to the masses and their proper functioning is of great import to the whole movement.

As far as our work in the publishing field is concerned, I must admit that as yet our work is not planned. It is spasmodic. We miss many important issues and many of our pamphlets are published late and not on the spot. We were late with the Kirov pamphlet. We took too much time in preparing an anti-Trotsky pamphlet. In the next period we must see to it that this work is planned ahead and comrades gotten to write even if they are busy, so that the program is planned and expedited.

Even when we publish in time, time is lost in reaching the lower units. Before the Districts order and they in turn receive orders from the sections, etc., much valuable time is dissipated. So we are now dealing with the sections directly, at present with about 120 sections, particularly in the outlying districts. This procedure cuts down transportation expenses, it does not allow the accumulation of large debts in the District centers. This decentralization cuts down the lag between publication and distribution and should help

build reliable literature apparatus throughout the country, if the Districts will only help.

If we take agitational literature, we doubled our sales this year. This, of course, is only literature in English. If we compare New York to the rest of the country in agitational literature, we find that both in 1933 and 1934 it represented one-third of the total sales. The ratio is different with regard to theoretical literature. New York, of course, is a large book-buying center generally. The increase in our book publishing program was taken advantage of by New York more than anywhere else and great results were achieved both by the bookshops and the sections which also began to distribute books. In the case of agitational pamphlets, however, the Party is growing and developing all over the country, which is very important. Most of the Districts should be given credit for the increase of our literature distribution.

Last year the C. C. published 41 agitational pamphlets, 25 propaganda pamphlets, averaging  $5\frac{1}{2}$  pamphlets a month, over one a week. Our problem is that we still publish small editions. The figures show that the total number published was about 900,000, but the actual sales were only about 600,000, or only two-thirds; the rest remained on our shelves and the cost of publication is being felt by the Central Committee's not being able to sell these pamphlets—it cripples the finances of the publishing department. The comrades must bear in mind—unless we sell what we publish, we are unable to publish more. The literature sold must cover the cost of production and overhead expenses at least. A certain amount of profit is required to take care of such cases when a pamphlet must be priced below cost or to take care of literature left unsold.

The latter category is really the most disturbing. We published an average edition of only 17,000 of each of the pamphlets and have sold an average of 11,000. Both figures are very bad. We must publish larger editions and the percentage of sales must be much higher. How can we speak to millions if we did not publish even one million pamphlets in 1934. The plans for 1935 call for a radical revision of these figures. We should add the over half a million pieces of theoretical literature which were also published in 1934. Altogether this makes about one and a half million pieces during last year. Among the 65 pamphlets published by the C.C., 8 were priced at 2c, 16 at 3c, 16 at 5c, 19 at 10c, and 6 at 15c. The year before we had more penny pamphlets and the number published was higher.

The lowest edition published this year was 4,000 and the highest 60,000. The 60,000 wasn't a one-cent pamphlet either. It was **Why Communism?**, and retailed at 10c. We are preparing a new edition of the pamphlet at 5c. We expect to



publish 250,000 during the year—starting with 100,000. We published 11 pamphlets on trade unionism and labor struggles. We published 4 Y.C.L. pamphlets. It is very interesting to say that the best distribution was received of the youth pamphlets. Ninety percent were sold. They were published in 20,000 to 25,000 editions. The Y.C.L. primarily handled the distribution.

As far as our theoretical literature is concerned, we have a great increase in interest in this type of literature. At the beginning of the crisis, about 50,000 pieces were published a year. In 1934, over 500,000 were issued. This shows a tremendous interest in Marxist-Leninist literature, precisely because of the crisis, and we must encourage still further the distribution of this type of literature. A good example, of course, is Stalin's book of 128 pages, 100,000 published to retail at 10c. About 80,000 have been distributed already. This sort of literature is wanted more and more, but agitational literature is still our main task. In connection with our theoretical literature, we must remember that we have to be constantly on guard against any and all attempts to bring alien ideology into our movement. Our literature is a great weapon against this. All sorts of would-be Marxist literature is being published by bourgeois publishers and the renegades. Our job is to fight it with our own theory which must be kept clear and undefiled.

Our periodicals have grown in circulation. **The Communist International** magazine was a very important achievement for us. Up to now it was published abroad. We received about 1,200 copies an issue. We undertook to publish it here. We have already raised our circulation to 5,600 and we propose by the Seventh Congress to raise it to 7,000-8,000.

**The Communist** has also increased. In 1933 we sold 4,800, now about 8,000, and special editions, like the Lenin issue, 9,500. Our quota is to raise the sales to 12-13,000 before the end of the year.

**The Party Organizer** we have also increased to 8,000. We used to sell 6,000. By the end of the year, we propose to increase it to 12-13,000.

In this connection, I want to call your attention to one problem, and that is, the book stores. They are very important centers. They reach elements that don't come to our headquarters and Party organizations, but, unfortunately, we must record that in some cases it developed that the book-stores become the centers of literature activity. This is wrong. Our center of literature work is in our units where we must build our literature apparatus, and in the trade unions and other mass organizations where we must also have literature apparatus. That is where our emphasis must

lie. And because of that, we have allowed in some cases the creeping into our bookstores of books alien to our ideology. The Agitprops must be on guard against such things. They must control the entire literature work, including the bookstores.

I said before that our press has begun to give more attention to literature work. I think, however, that this applies so far only to the **Daily Worker**. We have now started a literature column every week. We want the column to be written in the various districts, not in the Center, and the experiences of the literature agents must be recorded in the column.

I would also like to call attention to the fact that there is being started a book league, a sort of a book club, to enroll individuals throughout the country who cannot find our literature, particularly the theoretical writings, even if they try. This would enable us to count in advance on some sales of books which would make the problem of publishing much easier. Direct sales to individuals on special terms will make possible a broader distribution of our books.

There is a great deal to criticize ourselves for. I have already pointed out some of the things which bear criticism.

As far as the tasks ahead of us: We must publish more agitational literature, written attractively and in cheap pamphlets. We must change our orientation from small editions to much larger editions, but we must have the guarantee from you that they will be distributed. We must be on time to meet issues. We want to publish and distribute pamphlets in the millions. We must develop a faster tempo in publishing larger editions. More agitational pamphlets but not losing sight of our theoretical literature, which is at present a burning problem, but developing our cadres and members, as well as building up small libraries in homes of workers for self-study and group reading. We have made a start in developing distribution through the units, but the mass organizations are still neglected. A much larger publishing program is planned for 1935. We must be ready to reach with our literature the millions of workers in the shops, homes, in their organizations, wherever they can be found. We must speak to the millions. Literature is an important means. Let us use it with intelligence and purpose.

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## Shop Papers in the Cleveland District

By A. LANDY

**W**HAT is the status of the shop papers in the Cleveland District? Before May of last year we had only one shop paper—the **Spark Plug** in the Fisher Body Automobile Plant, the biggest plant in the city of Cleveland. At that time there was a considerable fight (perhaps that is putting it too sharply) on the question of issuing shop papers. Zack, who was then head of shop paper work in Cleveland, tried to introduce his mechanical trade union theory and raised the slogan—**no shop papers**. His opinion was that it was sufficient to have trade union papers.

I must say that the District Committee took a very sharp stand against this position and rejected it; and beginning last May the District began a very energetic campaign to build shop papers in all the concentration plants where we had shop units. Between May and January, there appeared in the Cleveland District about 21 shop papers. Here I must say immediately that all of these papers have not been appearing regularly, and that practically all of these papers are to be found in three industries—steel, automobile, rubber. You can see therefore, that these papers have a very important role to play. But when we look at the fluctuation in the appearance of these papers, when we examine the issues that have appeared, we immediately see some of the problems facing us in developing shop papers, and we see some reasons for the failure of these papers to appear consistently and regularly.

Only one paper, the paper of probably one of the best organized units, has appeared consistently; and that is the **Red Express**, shop paper of the Party unit in the New York Central Railroad Yards. All the other papers appeared two, three, five times and one appeared seven times, but they did not continue to appear from month to month. Here I think one principle stands out, that **the strength of the shop paper is really the strength of the shop unit**. We will not be able to solve the problem of shop papers until we have succeeded in building our shop units. When we examine the shop units that have issued papers, then we can understand why there has been such a great fluctuation in the papers that have appeared, in the number of issues that have appeared.

Most of the shop units in our district are relatively new. They are small in point of number and they are extremely weak politically. When we add to this fact that the composition of the shop units is not very strong, the fact that most of these shop units have foreign-language-speaking workers, we see another difficulty. This has led to the fact that where



there was a strong connection between the district shop paper committee and the shop units, there the papers were much stronger, there the contents were much better. Where there was a stronger section committee or a relatively good section organizer, there the paper tended to come out more regularly and the contents were better.

In all of the 21 that have appeared, possibly with the exception of the **Red Express**, the shop unit is incapable of editing the shop papers. This immediately points to a serious shortcoming and danger. It also points out the tasks we have of stabilizing the shop units.

### Weaknesses of Shop Papers

Now, comrades, it would be good if we could analyze some of these papers from the point of view of the weaknesses in the shop paper work and some of the positive achievements. As a matter of fact, some of the problems raised in Bittelman's report reflect this also in the shop paper work, the problem of tying up the struggle for immediate partial demands and the fundamental political program of the Party, the fundamental ultimate aims of the Party.

On the one hand you will find a sharp break towards shop issues, to the exclusion of political arguments, political position of the Party on fundamental questions. Sometimes you will have a paper, for example, the paper called the **Red Motor**, dealing primarily with trade union questions, sometimes, you will find a paper, as in the case of the **Red Express**—our best paper—dealing primarily with political issues and subordinating shop issues. But nowhere in our papers do we have a balanced presentation and connection between concrete shop issues and the Party's position on basic political questions. That is still one of our **central tasks**, but that task will not be solved until we can build up in the units themselves comrades who will be able to connect independently the concrete shop issues with the definitely political questions which the Party has to answer and to meet.

Of course, there are a whole number of other reasons, technical reasons which assume political proportions, hindering the regular appearance of our shop papers. For example, we have not yet built up in the units a technical apparatus capable of getting the paper out regularly. If the District cannot help, if we cannot supply a stenographer or typist, someone to run off a stencil, then the shop paper has a tendency not to appear. Only in a few instances have we succeeded in building up street concentration units around the shop unit which helps to get out the paper. We are trying to overcome these shortcomings.

There are many other shortcomings in addition to the basic ones, that is, that we do not yet have in the units comrades



capable of putting out a shop paper by themselves. And here I want to state that until we build up these shop units, make them stable, build stable leaderships, stable unit bureaus, it is going to be impossible to expect from these units regularly appearing shop papers. In most instances the paper is edited by the Section Organizer.

That means that we must concentrate from the viewpoint of agit-prop work first and foremost in the shop units, and here I must state we have not yet succeeded in doing this.

### Shop Paper Commission and Bulletin

One of the important factors in getting out the papers to the extent they have come out is the establishment of a District shop paper commission. This commission is not very strong yet, it is really composed of comrades who have taken shop paper work to heart, young comrades who understand the importance of shop paper work, comrades who are willing to put all their time into this work. Here we have a special problem, the problem of getting agit-prop cadres around the agit-prop work. In order to strengthen our agit-prop commission we asked for the editor of the **Red Express** to become a member of our District shop paper commission, to add a proletarian right from the shop. Well, platonically, the comrades agreed and "theoretically" he was a member of this commission for one week, but as soon as something developed in the A. F. of L. work he was immediately yanked out. We are still a sort of step-child and it is quite difficult to get stable agit-prop workers to develop within the sphere of agit-prop work itself. Our task here is to build up this shop paper commission, as it plays an important role.

We have been issuing a **Shop Paper Bulletin** here and it has been a very good paper. It takes up concrete questions of production, editing the paper, the political issues, it reviews papers, it takes up special technical questions, it tries to deal with experiences in distribution, it is an organizational help to the comrades who put out the shop papers.

Incidentally in Cleveland we have resorted to the photograph and we used colored ink such as in the **Red Express**. We cannot underestimate the importance of just such a technical detail. When workers pick up the paper, the moment they see the red they examine it.

In conclusion I think we can draw certain lessons from this report. First of all that the shop papers will grow to the extent that we stabilize the shop units, that we build up in every shop unit a **strong unit bureau** capable of giving leadership inside the unit and the shop. This is our first step. This also shows that we cannot separate agit-prop work from organizational work. And I want to state that the rise or fall of our shop papers depends on the weakening or strengthen-

ing of our shop units. And that proves to be the case in every instance.

The third suggestion is that we will have to concentrate our agit-prop work first in the units, give organizational directives and classes, educational work. The agit-props should actually attend unit meetings of the shop nucleus and give personal guidance. I think that we must find one comrade who will be responsible for the shop units in the District.

Incidentally we have got to follow up the shop paper with other forms of agitation. It is not enough in itself. It comes out once a month only. Of course, we try, in special conditions, in strikes, to issue one sheet of the shop paper every day. This helps, but must be supplemented by the issuing of stickers, other types of leaflets, etc., and other follow-ups.

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"The Party must, first of all, constitute the **vanguard** of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit and their unbounded devotion to the cause of the proletariat.

"...the Party must have a good ear for the voice of the masses, must pay close attention to their revolutionary instinct, must study the actualities of their struggle, must carefully inquire whether their policy is sound—and must, therefore, be ready, not only to teach the masses, but also to learn from them." (Stalin: "**Foundations of Leninism**" p. 106)

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