

Party Organizer



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A Lesson from Soviet Elections on Planned Work

Vol. IV

MARCH, 1931

No. 2

Issued by

CENTRAL COMMITTEE COMMUNIST PARTY, U. S. A

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PARTY ORGANIZER

Vol. IV

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PARTY LIFE AND PARTY ORGANIZER

THE aim of the Central Committee is to make the *Party Organizer*, a monthly magazine for inner-Party discussion, clarification and guidance in improving the structure, functions and work of the Party. If the *Party Organizer* is to serve this purpose it must be the collective work of the entire Party and must be regularly read by every active member of the Party.

The February issue was written in its entirety by the comrades in the Central Office. Moreover, the circulation of the *Party Organizer* was limited only to about 20% of the Party members, due to very poor efforts of the Districts to circulate it in spite of the extremely low price of 5c per copy.

The problems raised and treated in the *Party Organizer* are daily being discussed in the Party Life column of the *Daily Worker*. Leading and active Party comrades are urged to write for the Party Life column as well as for the *Party Organizer*.

The Party has acquired rich experiences in its recent activities. The Party has made substantial progress in new territories, among native American workers and farmers, among Negro masses, etc. Hundreds of new problems arise daily in our activities. Our methods of work are improving in many Districts, especially in new territories.

On the other hand sections of the Party are going backward, bureaucracy develops in some Party Committees, the turn to mass work is hindered by inadequate leadership, by "leftist" and opportunist practices, etc. Exchange of experiences, merciless self-criticism, development of new methods of work and analysis of our weaknesses must proceed side by side with our increased activities in all fields of work.

The *Party Organizer* and Party Life in the *Daily Worker* must become a decisive factor in transforming our Party into the leader of mass struggles of the American workers.

MID-WESTERN ORG-AGITPROP CONFERENCE

By R. B.

THE Org-Agitprop Conference of the mid-western Districts clarified a whole series of key problems and created a firmer basis for the improvement of the Party organization as the leader of the multiplying mass struggles. The Conference confined its discussions to the inner-Party organizational problems, inner-Party education, development of cadres, new members and literature connecting, however, all these problems with the day-to-day activities of the Party.

The discussion on the work of the basic unit, the Unit Buro, departments of Party committees, planned work and methods of leadership, reflected the fact that our District and Section Committees are paying close and systematic attention to these problems and that considerable improvements in the structure and work of the Party are being achieved.

The discussions on Agitprop activities, however, indicate that this most vital activity is still in its most elementary stage of development and seriously affects the successful carrying out of the activities and campaigns of the Party.

Organizational Unclearity

The Conference established that our Party has not carried into effect the Org Resolution of the Third Congress of the Comintern, the Resolution on Bolshevization of the Parties of the Communist International adopted at the Fourth Congress of the C. I., the resolutions of the second Org Conference of the C. I. held in April, 1926. Further, the Conference clearly proved that the above resolutions are but little known even to our leading Party Committees. Consequently the present attempts to improve the structure of the Party in line with the needs of the growing mass activities does not proceed on the basis of a clear and uniform plan provided by the Comintern.

Social democratic forms, practices and conceptions are still present in the Party and particularly express themselves in the lower units and departments of Party committees.

Basic Unit of the Party

While the Conference established the role, tasks, structure and methods of work of the basic unit, the discussion revealed a whole series of social democratic conceptions and practises still in existence.

The discussion emphasized the discrepancy between the activity, initiative and influence of a Party unit in a small town and a Party unit in a large city. The Party unit in a small city (where usually there is but one unit) actually plans, prepares and leads the struggles of the workers and conducts work on its own initiative even though this work is only of an elementary nature. The unit in a large city like Chicago, Detroit or Cleveland, however, functions solely as a working group that carries out the instructions in most cases of the District Committee. In either of the cases the Unit Buro may not function; however, in the small city the geographic isolation from the District puts before the unit the problem of developing its own initiative and activity within their territories.

The Unit Buro

The task of developing the initiative of the lower unit revolves around the establishment of unit buros and the clarification of the role of the unit Buro. In most of our Districts the conception prevails that the Unit Buro is a sub-committee of the unit that prepares the agenda for the unit meeting on the basis of all too-detailed org letters and instructions from the District Committee.

The Conference established that the Unit Buro is a leading Party Committee in the same sense as the Section Committee or the District Committee, that the Unit Buro is elected every six months and composed of the best comrades in the unit. The Unit Buro subdivides its tasks on a departmental basis and selects the Unit functionaries to be in charge of the various phases of activity. The Unit Buro meets weekly, plans the activities of the unit for the given week and assigns tasks to all Unit members for the week.

The Unit Buro draws up a plan of work for the unit out-

lining the tasks of the unit in the given territory or factory. The Unit Buro makes decisions that are binding on the members of the unit. The functioning Unit Buro carrying out a concrete plan of work in its given territory or the factory under proper and correct guidance of the Section Committee, is the key to the development of the initiative and effective work of the basic units of the Party. (The problems of departments of the Party Committees, Plans of Work, Org Letters and methods of leadership will be taken up in separate articles.)

PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION

ON THE INNER LIFE OF COMMUNIST PARTY UNITS

ONE of the principal tasks in Bolshevization of our Party is to overcome the organizational looseness and opportunist attitude to Party discipline, the remnants of which still cling to our Party. The weakest link in the structure of our Party is the basic unit. The weekly dues payments, the weekly unit meetings, the organization of unit buros and the activation of all members are some of the measures taken by the Party to put our basic units on a Bolshevik organizational basis.

In examining the life of our units, a decisive improvement is obvious over the old forms, methods and activities. However, our units still have many serious shortcomings, most of which are of an organizational character. Most of the weaknesses hinge around the unsatisfactory functioning of the unit buro. The Unit Buros in a Bolshevik Party are actually the leading committees of the basic unit, they make decisions within the scope of their activity that are binding on the unit members. The unit buros possess authority and power to make decisions on all phases of work and determine which of the unit problems shall be discussed and decided upon by the membership meeting of the unit.

The unit membership meeting has the power to review, re-

verse or approve the decisions of the unit buro. However, such actions do not take place under normal conditions unless the buro is composed of comrades who are incompetent or have serious political differences with the unit as a whole.

The above is a correct application of the principle of democratic centralism in a Communist Party. Our unit buro up to the present time met and discussed all the problems and formulated proposals for each of these problems which were brought into the unit and again discussed point by point and finally voted upon. The result was that the initiative and the authority of the unit buros was not developed and their effectiveness was destroyed. Today we still have the situation where the agenda of a unit meeting contains 10 to 15 points and the meeting lasts 3 to 4 hours most of which is spent on details of relatively small importance, each of which should have been finally decided upon by the buro.

The unit buro being composed of the most developed, active and reliable comrades is best fitted to take action on the detail routine problems of the unit as well as to outline the main political activities. This method of work leaves the unit meeting free from details and creates the possibility for a thorough discussion of the main problems.

The unit membership must recognize that after a unit buro is elected as the leading committee of the unit it must have the necessary authority and power to make binding decisions. The essence of the principle of democratic centralism consists in the democratic election of the leadership and accepting and fulfilling of the decisions passed by this leadership whether on the unit, section, district or national scale.

The meeting of the unit membership is held for the purpose of clarifying the membership on the main tasks of the Party and assignment of work and activity to members for the period between meetings. Only such problems are placed before the membership meeting which will result in the improvement of the work, raising of Bolshevik efficiency and the theoretical level of the unit. By improving the inner life and functions of our unit, we create the basis whereby we

can draw the majority of our members into active participation in Party work.

The new Party members who enter our units must see and feel that membership in a Communist Party is a serious matter. Our Party machinery must work with clocklike precision and Bolshevik efficiency on the basis of political clarity and iron discipline of all its members. The non-Party workers who accept the leadership of the Party also expect and want to see our Party work carried out in a true Bolshevik manner.

WE NEED A CHANGE IN OUR METHODS

By E. S.

SINCE the Twelfth Plenum our Party made tremendous gains toward Bolshevization. Our mass basis broadened, new blood began pouring in, and the inner life of our units improved considerably. Yet organizationally, we still lag fearfully behind, and one of the contributing factors is the bureaucratic machine and practices still persisting in the Party.

Figures tell the story. The Party apparatus in P—— proper, with a dues-paying membership of 250, consists of five District departments, three Section committees, eleven Unit Bureaus, a number of language bureaus and top fractions in unions, ILD, etc. Thus the total of functionaries reaches close to 125. But these comrades are also leading workers in the mass organizations (at least nominally). Each department, committee or organization necessitates a number of meetings. As a result we find the Party composed of functionaries and Party work embodied in meetings, no possibility of continuity of campaigns and the need for mobilization of the Party for one task at a time at the expense of the rest. I shall cite here at least two recent examples of this method. The work among the language speaking workers was neglected for a while. The District decided to improve the situation, and an apparatus of close to forty comrades was built up. The *Daily Worker* went into a subscrip-

tion drive, and again a new apparatus of forty was created. But these comrades of necessity are the same active comrades available.

This apparatus only hinders the work of the Party. It tends to inactivity, since no results can be achieved under such conditions, to isolation from the masses and even inability to speak to workers. They find themselves confronted with a dilemma which they cannot solve, which may be summarized as follows: Is it possible for one to be at two to three meetings in one night? Why is a member of the Party supposed not to read the Party literature or why must he isolate himself from the workers as soon as he enters the Party? The inevitable result is that this worker either drops out of the Party or joins the cadre of the "passives." This method of work will be suicidal, if the Party is compelled to work under changed conditions.

Some suggestions. The Party must adopt the principle of less meetings and more direct contact with workers. While it is necessary to have functioning departments in the District and Sections, the Units need not departmentalize the work. A Unit Buro of three can take care of all its work, provided it uses the calendar plan and division of work among members of the unit. The principle of three to a committee (Troika) would greatly diminish our apparatus. If a plan of action is adopted for a certain period (month or two), it shall no longer require meetings to discuss the same plan over and over again, but shall be a matter of carrying the plan into life. We must make our fractions real Party fractions, dealing with the Party campaigns and bringing them forward systematically in the mass organizations.

THE THREE MONTH PLAN OF WORK

BEGINNING April first our entire Party will begin functioning on a more or less uniform quarterly plan of work.

Each District Committee, Section Committee and Unit shall work out a Plan of Work for the months of April, May and June. Likewise each department of the respective District and Section committee shall do the same.

The purpose of a synchronized (starting and ending simultaneously for the entire Party) Plan of Work is to enable the Central Committee to give better guidance to the activities and to check up on the shortcomings, achievements and work of the Party.

The Plans of Work will coincide with the semi-annual elections of Section Committees and Unit Buros. While the elections take place every six months, the Plans of Work and begin every three months, so that the Units, Sections and Districts can regularly and more frequently review their work, analyze the weaknesses and take steps in the following three months to improve the work.

SAFEGUARDING THE PARTY

ONE of the chief recommendations in Ham Fish's report was to increase the powers of the Department of Justice to spy on the Communists. But everybody knows that such recommendations do not have to wait for any approval from Congress but are put into action first, and approved afterwards. At the same time the police terror is increasing greatly in many Districts. In one District, the police arrest any new functionary "just to get acquainted." In another, the police chief told our comrades "I thought you fellows were modern and here you go talking about old things like the Constitution!"

As far as our inner organization is concerned, this means to us just one thing: we must tighten up our whole apparatus! Looseness of methods, carelessness, negligence, all these must go. All information such as names and addresses of members, lists of contacts and sympathizers, inner Party documents, etc. must be kept in such a way that they cannot get into the hands of the police. No functionary should *ever* have any papers, address lists, etc. upon his person when he goes to a demonstration, or on the picket line. And don't think that this applies to the Party organization only. It applies every bit as much to the revolutionary unions and other sympathetic organizations.

Some functionaries still carry around all their Unit (or Section) records in their pockets or brief case, day in day out. This practice must be stopped at once. Bring with you to your meeting only those papers *which are absolutely essential* at that meeting. Remember that our own carelessness and negligence may be more dangerous than the activity of any stool.

In general the period we are approaching requires that our functionaries learn new methods of work, new habits of personal conduct, stricter discipline, and more rigid execution of instructions, in order to safeguard the Party apparatus. We shall touch on some of these phases in later issues of the *Party Organizer*.

CENTRAL CONTROL COMMISSION DOCUMENT

Points on Party Discipline

EVERY Party member should be thoroughly familiar with the extracts from the Statutes of the Party which are printed in all membership books.

Every Party member should know the following points pertaining to Party discipline, and should be guided by them at all times:

¶4-1. The Communist Party, like all sections of the Comintern, is built upon the principle of democratic centralization. . . . Election of the subordinate as well as the upper Party organs at general meetings of the Party members, conferences and conventions of the Party. . . . Acceptance and carrying out of the decisions of the higher Party committees by the lower, strict Party discipline, and immediate and exact application of the decisions.

¶12-1. The strictest Party discipline is the most solemn duty of all Party members and all Party organizations. The decisions of the C.I. and the Party Convention of the C.C. and of all leading committees of the Party, must be promptly carried out. Discussion of questions,

over which there have been differences, must not continue after the decision has been made.

The "leading committees" of the Party are: (1) The Unit or Nucleus Buro; (2) The Section Committee and Section Bureau; (3) The District Committee, Bureau, Secretariat and the District Control Commission; (4) The Central Committee, Polbureau, Secretariat and the Central Control Commission.

The decisions and instructions of the central bodies of the Party are obligatory to all other committees and to the whole membership of the Party. It is the duty and the right of the District leading bodies to concretize and to apply these decisions and instructions as far as the Sections, Units and membership in their respective Districts are concerned. The same rule applies down the line to the Sections, Units and individual members. Refusal to act in accordance with the line laid down by higher committees of the Party, or refusal to carry out specific decisions and instructions, issued by the leading committees of the Party within their respective jurisdictions, are absolutely impermissible.

This is fundamental in a revolutionary fighting organization, like the Communist Party; and from this it naturally follows that, after a decision has been made, it is not permissible to continue discussion as to whether the decision is correct and as to whether it should be applied and carried out or not.

It must be understood at the same time, however, that questions and explanations as to the basis and the meaning of a decision, and discussion as to the best ways and means for applying and carrying out a decision, are still in order and necessary. Sincere and whole-hearted execution of decisions presuppose real understanding and acceptance of same, and cannot be secured in a mechanical manner.

Appeals

Every member, as well as a lower Party committee, have the right to appeal against a decision (including disciplinary measures) to a higher Party committee, with the understand-

ing, of course, that every appeal must be based upon sincere grounds and arguments.

In order to expedite the handling of an appeal, a copy of it should be simultaneously furnished to the committee, against whose decision it is directed.

It must also be distinctly understood that the making of an appeal does not release the member (or committee) from obligation to carry out the decision in the meantime, if immediate execution is called for. An exception to this rule is possible only when the committee, against whose decision the appeal is directed, specifically agrees to await the outcome of the appeal, before insisting upon the carrying out of its decision.

Charges and Investigations

Charges and suspicions must not be raised and spread in an irresponsible manner, but must be made to the proper Party committee preferably in writing; and after a decision on same has been reached, they can not be raised and voiced again, except to a proper Party committee and upon new facts and evidence.

Neither can an individual member of the Party proceed to make investigations against another member, without first consulting a proper Party committee and getting its permission and instructions.

Before disciplinary action is taken against any member of the Party, he (or she) is entitled to a hearing; and all essential facts must be established, upon which a decision can be based.

All decisions for expulsion must be fully reported to the District Control Commissions, and by the latter to the Central Control Commission; and wherever there exists the possibility of non-approval by these higher Party committees, the decisions must be considered only as recommendations, which are not to be put into effect until they are properly passed upon by the District and Central Control Commissions.

The spreading of various charges and suspicions, instead of their being brought to the proper Party committees for investigation and decision, is very detrimental and disruptive to the Party organization and Party work.

RECRUITING AND KEEPING NEW MEMBERS

HOW TO ACCEPT NEW MEMBERS

WE must learn from our past mistakes. Don't recruit just application cards. Concentrate on good fighting proletarian types of workers. All new members must be accepted in the nucleus by a vote of the nucleus. To handle this, every nucleus must have a Membership Committee of three. This Committee meets before the nucleus meeting and calls in the applicant to question him. If not satisfied with the first examination, delay entry one week and visit home of applicant but inside of two weeks every applicant must be acted upon. In this way we help to keep out unfit elements. However, we warn against unnecessary delay.

Before being accepted every applicant must pay initiation fee (50c or 10c) and 10c for membership card. After the applicant has attended one meeting and has been accepted, he must get his membership book without delay. Every new member must be given free a copy of "Revolutionary Greetings," together with the new membership book.

How to Keep New Members

The following should be the guiding points:

1. Proper functioning of Nucleus-Buro-apparatus, so as to organize work of meeting, etc.
2. Every meeting must start at 8 P. M. sharp and adjourn not later than 11 P. M.
3. The Nucleus Buro is to assign an old member to every new member for periods ranging from one to two months. This must not be done mechanically. The new member must not know about it. The old member should be held responsible for getting to know him, helping him, show him how to work, suggesting what to read, etc. When it comes to choosing committees for distribution of literature, visiting, new members, etc., the Buro should assign these same two comrades.

4. At every nucleus meeting have at least one hour for political discussion on subject suggested by the District or Section.

5. Before the Nucleus meeting, the Agit-Prop director should have an informal meeting of all new members on basis of the questions sent out by District Agit Prop.

HOLDING NEW MEMBERS

By H. G.

IF our Party did not lose new members, its fighting power would be increased. Now, accepting this, and granted that a worker has joined, how is he to be retained in the Party and developed?

Firstly, it must be realized that it is a political Party. The Party is not a trade union open to all, regardless of ideology.

A new member is attracted to our Party by its ideal of Communism. It is necessary to develop that germ of Communist ideology into a thoroughly theoretically grounded Marxist-Leninist political conception. Theory must not be the monopoly of the Party leadership, but diffused throughout the Party which is the leadership of the class.

Secondly, never forget that, while the new member is on probation before the Party, *the Party is very definitely on trial before the new member*. It must justify the appeal it made to him to join. It must not conduct itself through the acts of members he meets and the Unit he attends, in ways which discourage and destroy the Communist ideal which attracted him to join.

Thirdly, while the worker has joined the Party, there are forces against which he had to struggle and overcome, to join—forces which still exert pressure to make him drop out again. *Individual attention* given by the Party comrades and Unit will help in maintaining and increasing the attraction of the Party to him.

Fourthly, the Unit, and the comrades in the Unit, are absolutely required to differentiate between new members and

old members in all phases of relations between the Party and the individual members. By this we do not mean that new members are to be looked upon with suspicion. The stupid "bull horrors" of old members and their repellant coldness toward new members has driven countless workers away from our Party and must be stopped. To bring the new member firmly "to anchor" in the Party, he requires special treatment. What are some of the things to be done?

a) An old comrade must, wherever possible, be appointed by and held responsible to the Unit as a "friendly guide" to personalize relations with the new member, to "buddy up" with him as much as possible in Party work *and in spare time*, to explain things he doesn't understand or direct him to those who can, to find out what arguments by his family or friends influenced him against the Party—and to overcome them sympathetically but persistently (not forgetting that old ties, especially family ties, are not easily disregarded), to discover his capacities and their limitations, to make him feel at home in the Party, win his confidence *for the Party* as his greatest loyalty. When such is done, the Unit must give due consideration to reports and recommendations from the old member as to what is required to keep and develop the new member. This is a very serious task for old members, and must not be treated frivolously.

b) Cut out any "snobbery." Because a worker doesn't understand what the "Third Period" is, he is not to be laughed at. He may fight better than those who laugh.

c) While we must draw in new members into active work the nonsense of smothering new members with work and electing them to responsible posts the functions of which they don't know, the first time they appear in the Unit, must be stopped. In a New York unit, the first time a man and his wife who had just joined the Party, attended a unit, they were both made functionaries of the Unit and given assignments of work and meetings enough to keep both occupied seven (perhaps eight) nights a week. What must workers think of the Party which promotes them so quickly to posi-

tions *they know that it knows* they cannot effectively occupy? Which abruptly orders them to change the whole arrangement of their private life?

(d) The new member is—strange to say—usually more respectful toward discipline than many old members, and more reluctant to decline tasks asked of him even when they seem unreasonable, or beyond his capacity. He takes the Party seriously, and it should exercise great care to avoid driving him away by violating what he regards as common sense. His capacities and limitations, physical, family and ideological, should be especially considered. There is too much taking for granted that if a comrade can walk and carry a Party card, he is both physically and politically equipped for any herculean task.

(e) The nature of the study and reading of new members must be carefully estimated. Further, it is nonsense for literature agents in the unit to force new members to buy literature they cannot assimilate. A worker takes home to his wife (who may be hostile to the Party) a piece of literature—in one case it was an Inprecorr with Varga's Economic Report — which neither can understand. Elementary classes, discussions on current policy, and simple reading must be provided, and new members are usually extremely anxious to learn.

(f) The new member is ordinarily enthusiastic about the Party and tries—sad to say more spiritedly than old members—to convert all his friends. He furnishes the Party contacts and expects it to help him. If it does not do so, he becomes disheartened. If it does not aid him to make over “his world” and does not give him a “new world,” he turns back to the old world, the non-party world.

(h) The life of the Unit is the occasion that the new member has to judge from as to whether he wants to participate. If it is disorderly, boresome, pointless or carried on stupidly or bureaucratically, he is repelled and drops out in self defense. Never forget that, even though old members may be hardened by long suffering to bad unit meetings, the new member will not stay to endure the ordeal.

BLOCKING THE DOORS OF THE PARTY

The letter below from a sympathizer of the Party in a small town is typical of hundreds of workers and poor farmers who are persistently trying to join our Party. This letter was accompanied by seven applications for Party membership. This is the fourth time these workers are trying to join the Party.

Three times the District Committee placed obstacles in their way. This is a clear example of how bureaucratic methods in some of our Districts block the doors of the Party to new members.

Each week hundreds of applications of workers are sent to the Districts and most of them meet the same fate. A formal letter is sent to them with formal bureaucratic instructions that cannot be carried out even by the old units in the larger cities.

In most Districts there are hundreds of applications for Party membership lying in the apparatus while these workers anxiously wait and finally realize that the Party apparently does not want new forces.

The Letter

The Communist Party,
New York City.

We, the undersigned workers and farmers, wish to join the Party of our class. Please send us more information on how to go about it.

Since the *Daily Worker* has been introduced here in ——— a number of workers here have signified a desire to organize. As the best informed among them previously had known of any form of radicalism only thru reading the old *Appeal to Reason* years ago, or seen accounts of Communist demonstrations in the capitalist press, we thought it best to start a study club. Mrs. V—— is allowing us to meet in her home, which is not large enough, but we cannot afford to hire a place.

I lent some of my books and each member is to explain to the club something from them that he has read, in this way we are hoping to train our speakers at the same time that we are studying the subject. We meet Thursday evenings and next week R—— will attempt to explain “commodities” after reading the first chapter of Marx’s Capital. The week after that L. B. will talk on “The Communist Manifesto” and “Principles of Communism.” The meetings are the first ever to be held in this country in Open Forum Style so far as any of us know. Undoubtedly we are proceeding in a manner that is very incorrect, but it is the best we know how to do, and so far we have been unable to get much cooperation from D—— (probably on account of our great distance—95 miles and our small size—1250 population in village).

Most of us thought we would like to join the Party and have therefore signed the enclosed application, but we are all so poor that I doubt if any of us will be able to pay any dues for some time to come. For instance, Mrs. V——, a widow, owns a farm of 27 acres entirely within the village limits, so that her taxes are very high and she is afraid that she will be unable to pay her taxes on it this year. A friend asked my father if she had anything to live on, saying that he had been to see her on business and found her grinding roasted corn to make “coffee” with. Her son K—— is a cripple, his legs paralyzed from the knees down so that he cannot walk without crutches (had infantile paralysis when 18 months old). He earns a little money repairing automobiles when he can get such jobs to do, and in the summer does what work he can on the little farm; he pitches hay while sitting down, picks cucumbers on his hands and knees while carrying the pail in his teeth, etc. However he is a hot talker and I think he will make an effective speaker when he learns a little more about communism.

R——— has his aged and childish mother to support on the miserable pay given to unskilled labor around here, but I am told that they have been unable to pay any rent on the miserable shack they live in for the past five years. He seems to regard \$1.25 per day as good pay when he can get it, for much of the time this winter the only work he could get was

at "cleaning fence rows" at which the men can seldom make more than 35c per day. Mr. A——, a neighbor to Mrs. B, is now out of work entirely. E. C—— used to be a "wobbly," but thinks the Communists are better; he is a laborer on K——'s farm. Perhaps we are not very good material for the Party, but I hope that you can use us to get something started, there are others who would like to join, but it is impractical until we can get a place that is larger and more centrally located.

If we can't get into the Party, perhaps we can organize something else. Comrade M—— asked me to organize an unemployed council, *but would not tell me how to do it*; and besides, practically all of the poor folks here are working long hours for little or NO pay (e. g. cutting stove-wood *on shares* in order to keep warm and cook).

This is my fourth application to the Party. In answer to my last one (last summer) I received a letter from you saying that you had sent instructions to D—— to admit me. I received a request from D—— for Initiation Fee and Dues, but as I had been unemployed for 18 months (I have no license and don't know where I can get the money to get one—am at present living off from dad) I could not pay even 10c per week regularly, *and they answered they would admit me to a unit when they organized one in my neighborhood.* I hope that you can get one started soon, either here or in K——, or that you can at least give us instructions for doing more effective work than we can do in our little study club. All the small towns around here are in hard circumstances. A neighbor who used to live in W—— came back from a visit there yesterday and said that they had to feed 170 pupils at the schools there every day—which, in spite of the chronic poverty of these small cities, seems to shock all the 100 percenters immensely—to think that "Americans" have to accept charity on such a scale. Hoping you will be able to help us work more effectively, I remain

Comradely yours,

O. H. O.

MASS WORK**WORK AMONG NEGRO MASSES****(Examples of how not to work)**

— 1 —

SOME of our leading comrades, although realizing the necessity of doing work among the Negroes, have the conception that this work could only be done as long as a Negro comrade is in charge. Comrade W. S. in a District found it very difficult to have the District Committee establish a District Negro Department. The comrades declared that they were short of leading forces and that the only capable comrade to head the department was a Negro League comrade who was involved in League work. This we objected to along with the League. The result was that the comrade was removed from District Negro work and no one else was put in his place and the department was liquidated. No white comrade could even be found to head this department.

Now the League has sent a Negro D. O. and the District Committee sees fit to establish a District Negro Department by placing the League D. O. at the head. Because he is a Negro comrade. The comrades have the conception that he must head the Negro Department. This is wrong. A comrade who is a League D. O. properly discharging his duties cannot give any time to establishing and activizing such an important department as the District Negro Department. White comrades can be trained for this work.

— 2 —

Comrade J. said we are too formal about our work among the Negroes. He said we have a Section in which live very few Negro workers, yet we have elected a Section Negro work Director and in reality there is no work to be done among the Negroes in our Section.

It is essential to elect a Section Negro work Director and committee for those sections which are isolated from the Negro population because in those sections the white workers

must be drawn in to support the struggle for Negro rights. The Section Negro departments and the District Negro departments do not only work among the Negroes but they are for transmitting of the general Party campaigns and activities among all workers and especially to draw in the white workers in the struggle of the Negro masses.

— 3 —

In a certain section, the Unemployed Council has a great following among the Negro workers. At the Lenin Memorial meeting over 200 of these workers were in attendance. The comrades of the section remarked that just as soon as we get time, we are going to build the L.S.N.R. group out of these workers. These workers have been drawn into the Unemployed Council because of its activities in fighting against evictions. They are to be engaged in the every day struggles and campaigns of the councils and are not to be drawn into L.S.N.R. groups. We do not recognize transfers of such sorts. It is true that these workers will give support to the paper and the L.S.N.R. but not so mechanically do we just transfer them.

In the New York District it became a debatable question as to whether the Party or the L.S.N.R. should be in the forefront in waging a struggle against an attempted lynching of a Negro worker in New Jersey. The majority of the comrades were of the opinion that the L.S.N.R. should be in the lead as this would give it an opportunity to build a group in the District and that the Party could give support.

While debating this question all comrades were, however, agreed that 2 *leading Negro comrades* should be sent to New Jersey to organize this struggle. The question of selecting a white comrade for this work never even entered their mind. So accustomed are we to relegating work among Negro masses to Negro comrades that even the defense of a Negro in danger of lynching is left to Negro comrades.

The Party is the leader in the struggle for Negro rights. The work of the party in this fight is not relegated to the L.S.N.R.

6 P. M. COMMUNISTS

(The Task of a Communist in the Shop)

THE majority of our Party members become Communists only after working hours, around 6 P. M. In attempts to realize the slogan of "Rooting the Party in the Shops" our Party Committees overlook the fact that the majority of our comrades are actually in the shops. Because we don't have the required number (from 3 to 5) in a given shop to form a Shop Nucleus, we fail to give tasks to the individual comrades working in the factories and mines. The problem of how our comrades shall carry on communist agitation and propaganda in the shops *only arises after a nucleus is formed*. If no shop nucleus exists comrades are attached to street nuclei and given various tasks that at best begin after working hours.

This is one explanation why we have so few shop units and a further explanation why we are unable to win new members from the shops where individual comrades are working. We have today individual Party members in no less than 5,000 factories, mines and mills (taking into consideration the unemployed, housewives and miscellaneous).

How to Work in a Shop

Our Party Committees (District Committee, Section Committee, Unit Buro) must establish that the first and main task of each comrade is to carry on work in the shop where he or she is employed. This must become a definite part of the plan of work of each Party unit.

Detailed weekly guidance and instructions are to be given to each member *what to do in the shop and how to do it*. The Unit Buro shall ascertain in what shop each comrade is working, what are the conditions, grievances, etc., and give close guidance and advice to each comrade on how the work is to be carried on inside the shop.

The Unit Buro shall arrange discussions in the Unit meetings of the activities, problems, difficulties and methods of conducting work in the shops. The Unit Buro shall fur-

ther check up on the activities of the comrades in the shops to determine what assistance is needed and what possibilities exist in the shops that perhaps require the assistance of a shock brigade or the concentration of the entire unit, issuing of a shop leaflet, holding shop gate meetings, etc.

Too often our lone Party comrade in the shop is entirely isolated. He often considers the workers too "backward," "indifferent," "contented," and "hopeless." He fails to become "one of the crowd," fails to cultivate intimate friendships with the workers next to him. At noon he sits in a corner and reads a pamphlet while eating his lunch. Riding home in the street car he again reads or silently contemplates on the "terrible backwardness of American workers," and finally, when he meets the Party comrades in the unit or some committee he breathes a sigh of relief, he feels "at home" at last.

Win the Individual Worker

While it is important to leave the *Daily Worker* and leaflets in the dressing room, toilet, on the conveyor, this is not enough. Our comrades must mingle with the workers freely, become a part of the workers, discuss all problems with them and carefully guide the discussions into economic and political channels. Especially must the Communist mingle with his fellow workers at noon time and participate in the general discussions and conversations that take place.

The more advanced workers are to be singled out and cultivated, and should be given a copy of the *Daily Worker*, invited to meetings, etc.

A worker recruited direct from the shop is the most valuable recruit for the Party. The close contact based on friendship and daily meeting in the shop is retained with him. He joins the same unit and personally knows at least one comrade who brought him into the Party. Such a worker remains in the Party and creates the basis for the formation of a Shop Nucleus, Shop Paper, Shop Committee, and he further has the advantage of knowing other workers in the shop who can be brought into the Party.

While we cannot underestimate our general activities, unemployed work, mass meetings, demonstrations, mass organizations, etc., we must remember that the working class is in the shops, that our primary approach to them is through our comrades and sympathizers in the shops and by unit concentration on the shops and this primarily on the living economic issues such as wage cuts, speed-up, etc., which we best learn by studying how to approach the worker in *our own shops*.

AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

To whom it may concern:

RECENTLY a leading functionary of the Party was removed from his post because of serious bureaucratic tendencies. This comrade to this day is not convinced that he acted like a bureaucrat. He explains his inability to establish collective leadership and mobilize the membership for work on the grounds that the local comrades "disliked" him, that they were not bolsheviks, they failed to carry out decisions, etc. Bureaucracy is one of those diseases that the person who has it never is aware of.

We have lots of elements of bureaucracy among our leading comrades. This is largely due to our inexperience and immaturity. It is because we have relatively few mature bolsheviks. Bureaucracy manifests itself in numerous forms. There are some comrades that become extremely dignified when assigned to a responsible post. They feel that all comrades "below" them must show great respect and honor to them, accept their opinion and shortcomings as the last and final word on every subject.

This dignity and artificial importance repels the proletarian rank and file of the Party. Sometimes we see a case where a comrade from the shop approaches a District leader for advice and is sternly told to go to the Unit or Section organizer, often on the pretext that "I'm very busy" and with an air of importance that would fit a young Napoleon.

The most serious effects of bureaucratic tendencies among the leading comrades results in that they stand as barriers to the development of collective leadership and firm authority for the Party Committee. The rank and file of our Party are simple, frank, honest and unassuming proletarians. On the whole our comrades are good, loyal and disciplined Party members ready to carry out work assigned to them if it is explained *how the work is to be done*. Our comrades both, thru proletarian instinct and as Communists, recognize the need and the role of Party leaders and leading Party Committees.

However, our comrades expect our leaders to be bolsheviks, to possess ability, initiative, energy, self-sacrifice, devotion as well as a proletarian comradely attitude to rank and file comrades. Party functionaries must bear this in mind always. A Party functionary is not only a political leader and organizer but also a bolshevik teacher. His task is to systematically develop new forces, draw new comrades into leadership and establish his authority on the basis of effective mobilization of the Party for action.

SYMPATHIZERS' MAILING LIST

EVERY unit must have a list of sympathizers and contacts from its territory.

The systematic canvassing of working class neighborhoods which is carried on prior to election campaigns, Red Sundays, Daily Worker drives, signature campaigns, etc., must be utilized to make contacts for further work.

When canvassing the comrades find a sympathetic worker, his name and address must be saved for the units and efforts made to bring him into the union, ILD or Party. A list of names of sympathizers is useful when calling open forums, mass meetings, etc. Such lists can further be supplemented by issuing blank cards at meetings and asking workers to sign them.

AGITPROP ACTIVITY

INNER PARTY EDUCATION

THE inner Party education is not separated from the mass work of the Party. On the contrary. It must be so understood and organized that it will activate the Party membership by raising their political level.

At the time of the Zinoviev-Trotsky bloc the opposition was quoting Lenin to prove their anti-Leninist position. Comrade Stalin at that time told them that this method will not help. Why? Because, as comrade Stalin pointed out, the publication of Lenin's writings accessible to the entire Party membership, enables it to understand and judge the Leninist position of the Central Committee as against the non-Leninist position of the Zinoviev-Trotsky bloc which was distorting Leninism.

Democratic centralism is based on agreement with the line of the Party. Understanding of the line of the Party creates conviction. This in turn creates enthusiasm and devotion to the tasks growing out of the general line of the Party. The understanding of the basis of the line of the Party, how to apply it in practice, prevents the development of deviations, of attempts to revise, to develop a different line, or to crystallize and organize an opposition to the line of the Central Committee.

The popularization of Marxism-Leninism, not merely for the top, but for the entire party membership, is one of the very most important conditions in enabling the Party membership to understand the line of the Party in order to increase their mass activities.

Why are mistakes repeated, continued and persisted in? Mainly because of lack of a Bolshevik method of self-criticism. Leninist self-criticism is based on an analysis of the basic causes which gave rise to the mistakes. It means to analyze the objective conditions in which the mistakes were born, as well as the subjective factor (organization, political maturity) which accentuates the mistakes. Only in such an approach lies the guaranty of not repeating the mistakes, of overcoming the difficulties. *Without Leninist training, there can be no Bolshevik self-criticism.*

Bolshevik self-criticism is not merely based on the fact that one is more virtuous or honest than the other or more ready to admit the mistakes. Why is it that many with the best intentions and even anxiety to admit mistakes, so readily continue and deepen the very mistakes they a while ago repudiated? Any wonder, that very frequently mistakes are admitted, merely to relieve our conscience so that we may continue making the very same mistakes with an easy conscience. Where lies the guarantee that self-criticism will not degenerate into catholic confessionalism, that one will not react subjectively to criticism, to one's mistakes? This guarantee is to be found in the acquiring of the Marxian-Leninist method.

Achievements in certain fields of Party work are the exclusive property of the limited circle of the fortunate ones. Mistakes made in one District are repeated in another. Why such a state of affairs? Because of the inability to exchange experiences. The failure to exchange experiences is not mainly due to technical organizational shortcomings in relating them, but primarily because of the failure to generalize these experiences in order to draw lessons from them.

Why is it that so many comrades in the shop don't "notice" bad conditions, fail to sense the moods of the masses? Not only because of isolation from the masses, but also because of insufficient political training to be alert to the conditions and understand their meaning and grasp their significance.

We speak of local initiative, of developing local struggles on the basis of local issues. But so many issues exist and very few are "noticed."

The inner Party education must be so understood and organized that it really improves the mass work of the Party on the basis of raising the political level of the entire Party membership. We cannot develop the inner Party education on the basis of "Thou must study." We must also remember that study is not an easy matter. It requires concentration, attention and time. We must therefore so organize and develop our inner-Party education, that it will both create the understanding and need of study and make possible organizationally the carrying through our organizational program.

In the next issue we shall deal with the methods of education.

MATERIAL FOR PARTY STRUCTURE CLASSES

BOLSHEVIK ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES

From an Outline on Party Structure from the Soviet Party Schools

Importance of working class organization. "The power of the working class lies in its organization." "Unorganized the proletariat is like nothing, organized it is everything." "Organization increases the power of the proletariat tenfold." (Lenin: *Spontaneity and consciousness in the labor movement.*)

The organizational forms of the Party are determined by its role in the revolution. The Bolshevik Party has been built up as a militant Party to direct the proletarian revolution, while the Menshevik Party as well as the social democratic and "socialist" Parties in the capitalist countries have developed as Parties playing the role of an opposition to the bourgeoisie. Hence the united, monolithic, centralized, disciplined, iron Party of the Bolsheviks and the loose, flabby, makeshift Party of the Mensheviks.

Flexibility of organization. The organization forms of Bolshevism are not the end, but a means to the end. The Party must adjust the organizational forms and methods of its work to the tasks and conditions of the concrete situation (the illegal and semi-legal period of struggle, the civil war, the period of peaceful reconstruction, etc.) The Party is a "living organism" and its organization must therefore be *flexible* while always retaining unity of leadership, will and action.

While changing the forms and methods of its work in one or another degree, the Communist Party is built upon the following fundamental organizational principles that have been adopted by the Comintern for all of its sections:

1. *Democratic centralism*, by which is meant:

- (a) A uniform principle and form of organization of all the Party organs from top to bottom.
- (b) The existence of an authoritative Party center, direc-

tion from one center, and all lower Party organs being obliged to comply with the decisions of the leading Party organs.

(c) Full initiative allowed to the local Party organizations within the limits of the general Party directions and decisions (autonomy in the solution of local problems).

(d) Electiveness of all Party organs.

The principle of democratic centralism during the different periods in the history of the Russian Communist Party and the different practical forms in which it manifested itself during the epoch of the absolute monarchy (illegal party) and during the civil war (strict centralism, appointeeism, Party mobilizations, appointments to different places, fighting orders).

2. *Inner-Party democracy.* All higher Party organs are elected and are responsible to the lower organs, freedom of criticism within the Party, encouragement of initiative and activity, (training of activists), collective direction and collective execution. The question of discussions in the Party.

Different views and tendencies on the question of inner-Party democracy: "broad democracy," "consistent democracy" of the economists and Mensheviks; the Trotsky opposition in 1923, the neo-Menshevik opposition. Distortions of the principles of inner-Party democracy and democratic centralism: suppression of criticism, formal elections, etc. on the one hand, and anarcho-syndicalist tendencies and the struggle against them, on the other.

3. *Party discipline.* Payment of membership dues, attendance of meetings and conferences, fulfillment of assignments, subordination to Party decisions (majority rule). Also: devotion, thoughtfulness, consistency, self-sacrifice, responsibility of every member for the Party and of the Party for each member.

Combination of discipline with freedom of discussion, provided minority accepts the rule of the majority. The mistake of opposing inner Party democracy to firm Party direction and discipline (Trotsky's view of discipline). The particular importance of Party discipline during the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the struggle against breaches of discipline.

4. *Party unity.* The ideological and organizational unity of the Party as the basis of Party organization. The essence of cliquism and Lenin's struggle against it. Federalism and its incompatibility with the organizational principles of Bolshevism in relation to the structure of the Party. The inadmissibility of fractions and groupings within the Party. The main opposition tendencies within the Party unity. The necessity of the monolithic solidarity of the Party during the struggle for power and particularly during the dictatorship of the proletariat. The inadmissibility of legalizing other Parties under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The necessity of maintaining the Russian Communist Party as the only and absolutely united Party.

5. *Active membership.* The Second Congress of the Party as one of the stages in the struggle for active membership; the dispute over paragraph 1 of the constitution. The importance of the dispute over paragraph 1 and the connection between the question of active membership and the composition of the Party and the rate of its growth. The changes of paragraph 1 at the subsequent Congresses. Active membership and the responsibility of every Party member for the work with which he is charged. Accountability before Party organs and the control of the latter over the fulfillment of the Party work by the Party members.

6. *Industrial principle.* Essence of industrial principle and history of organization of factory nuclei by the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. The factory and mill as the foundation and citadel of the Party. The distinction from the West European social democratic Parties in organizational forms (street, local, territorial units). Reasons why social democratic parties organize nuclei on territorial basis (adaptation to election campaigns). Industrial principle in organizational nuclei and the question of the Bolshevization of the Comintern Parties.

FROM INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

A LESSON FROM SOVIET ELECTIONS ON PLANNED WORK

SOVIET elections take place in the factories. Just prior to the Soviet elections, let us say in Leningrad, in each factory there is a discussion of the report of the Deputies to the Soviet from the given factory. The final discussion and actual election takes place in a hall with all workers from the factory present and they always participate 100%.

Prior to the general meeting and elections the nominations and discussion take place on the departmental basis. The workers from a given department of the factory may spend a number of evenings at these discussions.

In the course of the discussions of the year's work of the city Soviet the workers formulate instructions to the incoming Soviet Deputies. These instructions range from building a municipal hospital to improvement of street car service. The instructions are gathered from all departments, read and approved by the general meeting and given to the newly elected Soviet Deputies as instructions of the workers that must be carried out by local or city Soviet. The sum total of instructions from all the factories are thoroughly studied and classified in the meetings of the Soviet Deputies and divided according to the departments of the Soviet as tasks that must be carried out during the course of the year.

Just before the year expires and new elections take place, the Soviet compiles a book of all the instructions it has received and indicates which of the factories made each instruction. The instructions are numbered and next to each instruction is a column which shows which of the instructions were carried out, which were begun, which were not taken care of and why. Thus at the end of the year the workers in a given city have a complete list of all their instructions together with a report of how and to what extent they were carried out.

In addition to the yearly publication of the instructions and results the Soviet Deputies report at least once each month to the factory from which they were elected (and in which they continue working) how the instructions are being carried

out. Workers at these meetings of course ask questions as to what is being done about his particular instruction, so that there is a close control and check up by all the workers.

Our Plans of Work

The Plans of Work of our Party must be formulated by the respective Party Committees, departments and units. Each plan of work must briefly indicate what is to be accomplished in the forthcoming three month period, the points are to be numbered and the plan is to be used as a guide to the activities of that period.

Frequent check-up must be established at least monthly, so as to assure that all tasks are being carried out.

At the end of the 3-month period the Plan of Work must be analyzed point by point and indicated which point was carried out, which begun and to what extent realized, and which neglected and why.

SOME PROBLEMS OF ORGANIZATION

(From Vassiliev's Pamphlet)

What Kind of Workers the Party Needs at Present

THE circumstances of sharpening class struggle which are growing up demand a new qualification of the leading Party workers. As before, we need speakers, writers, treasurers, formulators of resolutions and so on. But above all we now need organizers closely connected with the masses, devotedly giving themselves to the cause of the revolutionary organization of the masses, not reckoning with any difficulties and hindrances, not reckoning with days and hours of holidays and with questions of personal comfort and well being. "It is essential to have a system of recruiting responsible comrades from those Communists who live the workers' life, know it inside out, know how to define without making mistakes in relation to any question, at any moment the mood of the masses, their real desires, the demands of the masses, who know how to determine, without any tints of false idealism, the level of their consciousness and the strength of

the influence of this or that prejudice or survival of former times, who know how to win for themselves unlimited confidence of the masses by comradely relations with them, by taking pains to satisfy their needs." (From the resolution on the trade union question of the 11th Congress of the C.P.S.U., point drafted by Comrade Lenin).

In the concrete conditions of the moment we must add to those demands put forward by Comrade Lenin another demand—the ability unceasingly and mercilessly to struggle against social-fascism, social-democracy and the whole Second International at present acting as the fundamental force of the fascist dictatorship and bourgeois reaction, as the open enemies of the working class. Further, more than was ever the case, the successes of the working class movement must now be measured by the degree of the breaking up and disorganization of the Second and Amsterdam Internationals. Party leaders incapable of guaranteeing the development of these successes must be changed for those who have given proof of their ability to carry out the tactic of the united front in winning over to the side of the revolution the masses of social-democratic workers and members of reformist and yellow unions, whilst at the same time carrying on a merciless consecutive ideological and organizational struggle against the social-fascist leaders.

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