

For a Proper Utilization of Party Forces

AMONG the many organizational shortcomings that have held back the Pittsburgh District—and that are now being corrected—was the wrong organizational conception of how to build the Party apparatus, especially on a section scale. During the time of the big miners' strike, the Party membership rose to some 1,200 members and tens of mine nuclei were built. In order to be able to guide them, new sections were established.

Was the line of organizing new sections correct? Certainly. On account of the big territory of the district, the difficulties of communication and the past experiences, it was obviously impossible for the District Committee to reach all the lower units of the Party and guide them in the development of local struggle. This was not a mistake.

The mistake was in importing too many full-time functionaries. Here we can give a concrete example which will be a valuable experience to all our districts:

In the small section of Library, not far from the center of the district, where a few mine nuclei of the Party and a few locals of the National Miners Union were built, for a long period we had the following full-time functionaries: a section organizer of the Party, a section organizer of the Young Communist League, a sub-district organizer of the National Miners Union, an organizer of the unemployed movement, an organizer of the women's auxiliary, a Negro work director and perhaps some others—practically six or seven full-time functionaries for a movement embracing a few hundred workers in the Party, unions and auxiliaries.

Was it possible for the few organized forces to maintain such a staff of functionaries? Especially, if we take into consideration that the majority of the organized workers after the strike were blacklisted, starving miners; that hundreds of miners were thrown out of the company towns and forced to build barracks and tents in the outskirts—of course it was impossible. The result was that when the so-called full-time functionaries were quartered with big families of starving and demoralized workers, friction arose between these leading comrades.

The presence of such a large staff of functionaries did not develop the initiative of the nuclei, the initiative of the rank and file, the initiative of the locals of the N.M.U. On the contrary, it choked this initiative insofar as the Party members and the members of the N.M.U. expected everything to be done by this staff of functionaries. Naturally under these conditions no local leadership could be developed.

Functionaries were shifted from one section to another as stop-gaps. The result was that these functionaries were demoralized and no local struggles were developed in spite of the splendid opportunities.

It is true that in order to develop new cadres, schools were established by the district. But if today we look for the workers that attended these schools, we will need a searchlight to find them. Most of them disappeared. Why? For the reason that the district leadership treated these new forces as if they were already professional revolutionists. They were shipped from one place to another without taking into considering their personal economic and family situation. They were shifted around, instead of sending them back to work in their own localities. Sent back to their own towns and cities, where they are known to the workers, they could have been developed into genuine local leaders.

One of the organizational problems before the Pittsburgh district at this moment is the cutting down of the staff of so-called full-time functionaries, to see that these comrades go back to their original localities and at the same time reorganize the sections in such a manner that full-time section organizers are not needed. In this way it will be possible to develop local initiative

PARTY ORGANIZER

and local leadership. In this way it will be possible to develop the initiative of the section committees which must be strengthened politically and organizationally through continuous guidance from the district center, not through circular letters but through personal contact. The org. secretary and members of the buro must become real instructors, who remain in each section for one or two weeks at a time and work closely with the section committee.

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