

Nuclei Influence, Methods of Drawing Militants Into Party Examined

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ARTICLE I

This article deals with a few organizational problems which in my estimation are of decisive importance for the carrying out of the new tasks before the Party.

I raise these questions with the intention of contributing towards the pre-Convention discussion, and stimulating other comrades, members of leading committees, unit and fraction secretaries, and members of shop nuclei—to give their experience and their opinions.

It is on the basis of the collective experiences in the various phases of organization, that the next Party Convention will draw the correct conclusions, and accordingly equip the Party organizationally for a speedy concretization of its political tasks.

Are Forms Suited to Needs?

Already before the Seventh World Congress, the developments that had taken place in the United States made us raise the question of how to bring about unity of action of the disillusioned, discontented masses on a common platform of struggle around their immediate demands, against war and fascism, and as Comrade Dimitroff stated, to "Save the world from Fascist barbarism and the horrors of Imperialist wars."

Guided by the line of the Seventh World Congress, the November Plenum of the Central Committee not only answered this fundamental problem politically, but simultaneously raised the questions:

Are the actual organizational forms of our Party suited to the needs of the hour? Are they suited

to better connect our Party with the broadest masses and enable it to become the driving forces necessary, and in what direction—to enable us to really apply the Party line in life itself?

In answering these questions, we were able to find the guiding line to bring about the necessary readjustments and improvements in our organizational forms by which we will be able to strengthen our Party manifold and thus increase the tempo of the development of the United Front movement.

Today, we are still in a stage of experiment. We are gathering the first experiences, which are already proving the correctness of the C. C. decisions, and are preparing the Party for the next step forward in connection with the Ninth Party Convention.

Let us examine the most important phases of our organizational problems by raising and answering a few practical and simple questions.

Shop Nuclei—Basic Organization

How can we increase our influence among the masses in the industries and accordingly strengthen the Party in the shops, mills and mines, so as to bring about unity of action against the capitalist offensive on the standards of living of the industrial workers and against persecution in the factories?

How shall we make the Party forces in the factories, real factors for building the unions? How shall we raise the understanding of the role of the shop nuclei?

Undoubtedly, we are coming to the next Convention with some

positive results. Not only has the number of shop nuclei been increased, but a few of the shop nuclei became conscious of their role, and are regularly issuing their shop papers, and constantly improving them. There are a number of shop nuclei that are real examples—nuclei that take up the problems of the workers in the shop and bring before them not only the position of the Party on the various issues arising in the shop and in the same industry, but also the position of the Party on national issues. In general we can state that a number of shop papers are becoming real Party agitators and organizers among the industrial workers.

Many Weaknesses

Yet there are many weaknesses that have to be overcome. Bolsheviks don't rest on glory. Our aim has still not been reached. The fundamental problems, of further clarifying the shop nuclei on their role remains. Here is where the question of more direct personal guidance by the leading committees and individual leading comrades arises. Dozens of examples show that the shop nuclei which are progressing are precisely those that receive continuous attention and guidance. Many of the shop nuclei vegetate and often disappear simply because they are left to their own fate. Generally, one of the main weaknesses of these organizations consists in lack of sufficient orientation towards contacting and recruiting into our ranks the best workers in the shops. There are

shop nuclei which have a real influence among the masses (for example, the nucleus in Camden Radio), which regularly issues their shop papers, which have gradually become real agitators and organizers in the shop, involving in their work scores of progressive elements, strong supporters of the union, and of rank and file leadership. Yet in this particular case, and in others, there is no attempt by the shop nuclei to bring the progressive forces into our ranks. They still suffer from the weakness of acting more like a fraction of the trade union. They don't act as the Party in the shop, facing sufficiently and concretely the problems that arise in the factories, as for example, the maneuvers of the company unions.

By examining the various shop nuclei, we find that where these organs are composed of young native American workers, or key men in the shops, native or foreign-born, the comrades grasp the role of the Party in the factories very quickly. In such cases, we find that the nuclei are able to approach the militant element, to involve the progressive forces in discussing the problems in the factories, and in some cases, to get them to contribute to the shop paper, practically drawing them into Party work: (Phileo unit Philadelphia, Plymouth, Chrysler Detroit, Carnegie Steel, Chicago, etc.).

Not everywhere do the shop nuclei find the correct methods of best reaching the workers, and at the same time protecting themselves from the developed spy system, es-

pecially in heavy industry, where the workers are under the continuous watch of the company spies. There are many plants in which, outside of the Party members, there are groups of workers who speak very radically. In a few cases, read our press and spread our literature, and yet don't join the Party, because of the fear of exposing themselves. The Party appears to them as the Party of demonstrations, mass meetings, of open activities, and our comrades in many instances either don't make an effort to contact these workers, or don't make clear to them that in the industry, the Party is organized on the basis of shop nuclei, the best form of organization to reach the masses, and at the same time the best form to protect the individual Communist from exposure.

There are cases also in which large groups of workers in the plants are using all our arguments, are willing to fight, to organize, yet at the same time express opposition to the Communists. Again: also in this case, the nuclei lack sufficient initiative in devising methods of how to approach these workers and counteract the poison of the Hearst press. It is only by continuous assistance of the leading comrades that the shop nuclei will be helped in improving all methods and form to reach and speak to the masses, draw the best elements closer to us without jeopardizing their jobs.

Main Problems

One of the main problems at this moment is to correctly orientate the shop nuclei towards becoming the driving force in industry to bring about unity of action of the masses,

not only on the general issue of struggle against fascism and war, but concretely against reaction in the factories, around the immediate demands of the workers. It is by uniting the workers under the leadership of the shop nuclei and the progressive forces in the factories that we will be able to defeat terrorism and thus spur the will of the masses to organize, making a step forward in the direction of organizing the unorganized and heightening the struggle for industrial unionism.

On this point, the main conclusion to be drawn is: That the shop nuclei remain the basic organizational form of the Party: That our task is to double and triple the shop nuclei. A shop nucleus in every important factory should be our aim. More systematic guidance by the leading committees, by the individual leading comrades to this vital organ; to improve the shop papers, to make of them the voice of the Party in the shops. Regular monthly shop conferences with the shop nuclei bureaus should be held for the purpose of discussing not only the general problems confronting the workers in the industries, but concretely the problems in the various shops, to exchange experiences on methods of work and how to improve the activity of the shop nuclei. On a district and section scale the leading committees must build a special instrument to keep in contact with the life and problems of the units, and check up on their activities. The life of the shop nuclei will improve above all, with the improvement of the section leadership.

(To be continued)