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More Attention to Problems of Organization and Leadership!

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IN THE last few issues of the *Party Organizer*, as well as in the directives to the districts, the center has emphasized very strongly the necessity of combining the recruiting drive with the improvement of dues payments.

We are approaching the January 1938 registration—a period in which we aim to bring every Party member into good standing. The figures show, however, that while the recruiting drive is progressing (4,100 members having been recruited during October), the total dues payments do not indicate that any real efforts are being made to check fluctuation. Some districts have shown even a higher figure in recruiting than in dues payments during the month of October. With few exceptions, the figures show that dues payments are far below the membership on the rolls, below the number of Party members that are active and attend unit meetings.

Two outstanding examples of good work are the Seattle and California districts. They show that real concentration by the leading forces on the problem of attendance in the units, combined with intensive political life and organizational measures to collect dues, can solve this vital problem.

Seattle, in a two-month period, was able to stabilize the

dues payments to over 90 per cent, and rates first in recruiting. Three hundred and fourteen new members joined in October.

So far the results of the drive have shown that recruiting is done by only a limited number of the most active comrades. The bulk of the Party membership is not yet involved. The outstanding reasons for this can be listed as follows:

1. The basic organizations of the Party are not yet mobilized in the drive.

2. The leading organs of the Party, and especially the membership commissions, do not pay adequate attention to the problem of attendance and dues payments.

3. In the lower organizations there is lack of political life because of insufficient attention and guidance by the responsible leading committees.

The third point is the axis for solving the problem of Party growth.

The best proof of the lack of initiative, of political life, is to be found in the weak response of the lower organizations in developing their own campaigns; in the decided decline in agitational material issued by the branches and units; in the mass meetings held by the lower organizations, in the issuance of shop papers and other bulletins.

What must be done to strengthen the lower organizations politically, and thus strengthen the recruiting power of the Party and the agitational ability of the Party to reach broader masses?

Improve Political Education

1. It is necessary to intensify educational activities by developing regular discussions in the lower organization around the main problems facing the Party. Editorials in the *Daily Worker*, articles in *The Communist* and *Party Organizer* should be utilized to the fullest extent. Educational meetings will be more fruitful if the leading comrades themselves will go to the units and help them organize an effective discussion with the participation

of the members, and if the discussion is directed towards helping the branches work out their own concrete tasks. With intensified educational work in the lower organizations, the units of the Party will be better armed to bring the position of the Party, on various problems, before the masses. More agitational material must be issued, more meetings must be called, connecting the various campaigns of the Party with local issues, thereby bringing the masses closer to the Party. Through our increased mass agitation, thousands of workers, farmers, professionals, etc., will join our ranks because they will better understand our policies, will see that the struggles our Party is leading are part and parcel of the aspirations of the toiling people. They will see that the program of our Party presents the real solution for the final liberation from capitalist bondage.

Develop Leadership Below

2. It is necessary to concentrate on a few organizational problems, the solution of which will strengthen the political life of the Party organization. These are:

(a) Strengthening the unit bureaus by bringing into leading positions (as unit organizers, educational directors, finance secretaries, etc.) those forces which are not only the most active, but the more politically developed. Wherever necessary, even to transfer some comrades from industrial and professional units into the branches in order to promote neighborhood activity. Furthermore, wherever possible, especially in the larger districts, to find ways and means of educating the leading comrades of the units through special lectures on Party organization, special evening schools, week-end classes, and other forms.

(b) Supervising the life and activities of the shop and industrial units to revitalize these organizations, and clarify their role, thus preventing their transformation into mere fractions. Again, we will solve this problem only by assigning leading forces to the most important shop and industrial units, by setting up an apparatus that will help these organizations issue shop papers and agitational

material. Our goal should be—*A shop paper for every shop unit!*

The leading comrades in the trade unions must play a real part in putting these organizations on the correct road. This will not only strengthen our influence in the shops, but also strengthen our position in the trade unions.

Clarity on Party Structure

(c) We must bring absolute clarity on problems of Party structure, on the basis of the Ninth Party Convention decision. We must eradicate the confusion that has arisen on the role and composition of the city committees, which in some places has led to the abandonment of the sections, and consequently to a detachment of the leadership from the lower organizations, and a concentration of leading forces at the top.

Certainly in the larger cities there is a need for city committees, based on representation from the lower organizations, which works out the policies of the Party. At the same time, however, we cannot conceive of the City Committee itself guiding the daily activities of all the Party organizations in a city, not only because of the number of units but also because of distance, and other reasons that must be taken into consideration. Wherever the Party is growing, the necessity of maintaining the sections, or building them, is felt, as well as the need for strengthening the leadership below. Sub-divisions, such as assembly or congressional district (this depends on the political divisions of a given city or territory and the strength of the Party) must be built. Wherever it is impossible to build the Party on the basis of political divisions, then sections should be built according to the needs of the Party, with the aim of improving the daily guidance so necessary to the branches and units.

For Greater Initiative

These few questions, so vital for solving the problem of our Party's growth, call for a real democratization of

the life of the Party units. In some places this democratization has been misconstrued to mean laxity in activities, laxity in dues payments and attendance. This is not a correct understanding of the meaning of democracy in our Party. Democracy in our Party means more education, more and better discussions, the right of Party members to ask questions and the right to get answers which will clarify things that are obscure and not clearly understood. This will result in the Party becoming strengthened ideologically and, consequently, better mobilized in its activities. It means the right of the units to ask for assistance, and, what is very important, to exercise their own initiative in applying Party policies to their particular situation and tasks; to decide on the work to be performed, and convince every unit member of the necessity of participating actively, not only in helping to shape policies, but to carry these policies into life through proper assignments.

Democracy in our Party means the voluntary acceptance of certain obligations, in the fulfilment of which there are developed that unity of will and unity of action which really make it possible for our Party to give leadership to the masses. The discipline of our Party is also part of our inner Party democracy, because it is not an imposed discipline, but is a discipline that we accept the moment we join the Party, the moment we make up our minds to fight for the Party program, for the realization of the ultimate aims of the working class. Our duties are not imposed, but are the natural outgrowth of Communist political understanding.

We must abandon the method whereby the unit bureaus work out policies and assign tasks, so that at the unit meetings we are confronted only with a discussion on the assignments. Certainly the unit bureaus must prepare the agenda, must prepare proposals, and take into consideration the abilities and possibilities of individual members to carry through assignments. But one of the main tasks of the unit bureaus is to get the unit to discuss these proposals, to improve upon them and amend them if

necessary, so that the central point in the discussion shall be the working out of policies, and not the assignments. The moment the unit members understand the correctness of a certain policy, and the necessity of carrying out a given task, the discussion on assignments, as proposed by the unit bureaus, will be reduced to a minimum.

More Guidance by Leading Committees

We shall solve the above problems if the leading committees of the Party follow the example of the California and Seattle districts, which were convinced that it was not enough merely to discover what was wrong, but proceeded to take measures to solve some of the basic political organizational problems. Concretely, it means that in those districts where recruiting is poor, and the Party is not moving forward, the leading comrades themselves will have to go into branches and shop units to help, to teach, to get the units to make the necessary changes in the composition of the unit bureaus, in the selection of competent membership directors, financial secretaries, and other offices; to work out a better system to improve the attendance and dues payments.

Good political results cannot be measured only by the influence that the Party is gaining or on the basis of success in the legislative and other fields, if these results are not accompanied by the subsequent growth of the Party.

The recruiting power of the Party organizations, the status of dues payments, is the best barometer by which to judge the extent to which the organization is active and politically alert. In those districts and sections where the barometer is low, the leading committees must get to work at once, not to discover the causes (which are already known), but to eliminate these causes by properly concentrating all possible energy on two or three key organizational questions. In the present period, when the masses are in motion, when the masses are seeking guidance and are abandoning their prejudices against our Party, there can be no excuse for slackness in our activities to build the Party.