

The Concentration Group (A Problem in Elementary Forms)

By SAM DARCY.

IN the biologic field the earliest form of living organism is the one called amoeba. This animal reproduced by growing a little in size until it was born and then split in half, thereby giving birth to another of its species.

There is in a certain sense an analogy between this early form of reproduction of cells and that of our present concentration groups. Many of the groups are not performing their functions—those functions for which they were organized. The greater part of the work of a concentration group by far—and in this sense it differs from a shop nucleus—is that of gaining sufficient members in each shop to form shop nuclei. In other words the task of the concentration group is to grow a little and then split into new organisms which would be really the basic units of our organization. Where the work of the shop nucleus—in a permanent form—is mainly that of providing leadership to the struggles of the workers, the concentration group—a transitory form—has the more elementary task of winning over sufficient workers to

establish units in the factories, in addition to its other work.

Are the concentration groups at present performing this function? This is a problem which can only be answered by taking stock of the results we have achieved. We must answer by listing the number of shop nuclei that have been formed as a result of concentration group activity.

Our list however turns out to be a very small one. Can any district point to any significant number of nuclei which grew out of such activity? Very few!

Some comrades will say that it is too soon to demand results. This is emphatically not so! We may evade the facts and remain smug in praising the success of our reorganization but this is not Leninist application of methods. Some districts, Boston, New York, Chicago, and their environs have been re-organized for several months now,—there are results but not of great significance. What does this mean? It means that our concentration groups instead of performing their function as temporary and transitory forms into shop nuclei are degenerating into permanent forms.

Why should this prove painful?

Have we not had experience with organizational forms very similar to concentration groups? What were the area branches of Chicago and Detroit? They were what correspond to our present section or enlarged concentration group without having small groups within it or perform certain functions. The difference is not sufficient to prevent similar results—that is, withering of the muscles of the groups because of failure to perform the functions for which they were organized.

What is our task in the face of this? It is that of rallying our present membership to the realization of the danger that faces us if we do not soon enough win over sufficient workers to build shop nuclei. Our task in other words is to activate the concentration groups to having them bring their fellow workers into the units. This is of tremendous importance. If the districts feel that a national membership campaign should be organized, instead of having it on the local scale only, the N. E. C. will consider it and begin to work on it. Our comrades ought to see the difficulties as well as

the successes and courageously face and solve them.

It is true that where we applied our tactics correctly—even if there were minor mistakes—we have grown. We have only to look at our success in the East Ohio conference and the organizational growth which has and is still resulting from that; our work in Passaic is creditable and the New York district is to be congratulated on their splendid work there; we have gained 400 new members in about four months thruout the country; there also are minor successes, successful union struggles, shop campaigns, etc. But let us not use these accomplishments as answers to our threatening failures. These must be met and solved. The greatest measure of solution can come only from our functionaries in the districts who are building the organization. Let them write their experiences, about their work, their more detailed problems, etc. In this period our problems no matter how detailed are very similar thruout the country. Thru such experiences we can carry on our work with greater sureness of foot.