

Expand the Cadres of the Party!

"Revolutionary epochs are to the social democrats the same as war time to the army. We must expand the cadres of our army, from peace contingents, the reserve forces must be mobilized, the men on furlough must be called to the colors, new auxiliary corps, detachments and services must be set up. One must not forget that in war time it is inevitable and necessary to replenish one's ranks by raw recruits, frequently replace officers by rank and file soldiers, accelerate and simplify the promotion of soldiers to officers' rank."* (Lenin.)

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THE Twelfth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International discussing the problems of our Party emphasized that one of the most important tasks confronting us is the development of new forces, especially for the lower organizations (districts, sections, nuclei, and locals of the revolutionary unions). This is not a new task. Already the Fifth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. stated:

"One of the foremost tasks of every Communist Party should consist in selecting very carefully the leading cadres among the more advanced workers distinguished by their energy, capability, knowledge and devotion to the Party . . . these workers must be systematically helped to become real organizers of the masses, Party and trade union leaders. . . Working class leaders should be treated with patience and care and encouraged to work for their own improvement, given opportunities to prove their worth by the allocation of more important and increasingly responsible work."

Our Party has many basic weaknesses in connection with the training and developing of cadres. Particularly today are these weaknesses appearing in a sharp and pronounced form. The rapidly developing mass movement requires not only greater initiative, decisiveness and effectiveness from our leading cadres from top to bottom, but also an extensive broadening of the leadership to include ever wider sections of comrades who have close contact with the masses. We will deal here only with a few of the most important weaknesses:

Criminal Negligence of Party Forces

1. During the struggles in the last year or year and a half (Pennsylvania miners' strike, textile strikes, veterans' march,

* When Lenin wrote this the Bolsheviks were members of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party. In using the term "social democrats", he meant members of the only revolutionary working class Party at that time. Today of course, this means the Communists.

Warren steel strike, unemployed struggles) splendid elements came forward. We did not succeed, however, to draw them sufficiently into leadership and further develop them by careful and systematic attention and guidance. As a result many of these very good forces were lost.

2. The selection of students for the various training schools was carried through in a very haphazard way. Instead of carefully choosing those Party members who were participating in mass struggles, who were active in the nuclei, working in big factories or in the revolutionary unions, we sent to school in many instances those comrades whom we could "spare" most readily. We did not have in mind the character of the work they will do when the course is ended. We completely forgot that our main problem today is to get new cadres for the most important sections of our front—concentration factories, concentration unions, Unemployed Councils. Instead, the selection of students was influenced in many cases by the erroneous conception that the aim of the school is to train only functionaries for the district and section. We viewed an organizer, Party worker, professional revolutionist as a comrade who is taken out of the factory and works full time in a Party or trade union office. This misconception permeated our Party committees from the top to the bottom. Because of this false conception we took a comrade who came from a factory or town where he knew the situation, was already known to the workers, had gained their confidence and was looked upon as their leader, and we assigned him as full-time functionary to another city, in a strange environment, new people, new problems with which he was not familiar.

A Correct Cadre Policy

What is the Leninist conception of an organizer? *"The Communist organizer, Party worker, must not be similar to a social-democratic 'responsible' functionary and official. The Communist organizer must lead and work among the masses in the factory, in the shop, in the mine."* (Fifth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.) And, we could add, work among the unemployed.

We should have the policy of selecting our cadres for further development from the factories, from the mines, from the revolutionary unions, from the Unemployed Councils and send them back to the same place where the theoretical training they get can crystallize into immediate practical application. Only in exceptional cases, should we assign a comrade to a different place, and even then we should keep in mind his or her past experience. We must develop miners as organizers among the miners, textile workers for the textile industry, and so on. This should not be construed to mean, however, that a good Bolshevik cannot organize any kind of workers. But, we must have a cadre policy. This is the only way to enable our Party to keep in close touch

with the broadest sections of the non-Party masses.

3. In the last two years, hundreds of Party members went through the various national, regional, district and section training schools, but only a small number are today in the leading cadres. Some of these comrades have even left the Party. This is due to a failure to systematically follow up these comrades after they have been assigned. After a comrade is sent out to work, where he faces many difficulties, the district considers its job finished and does not give close personal supervision and aid to the comrade in his new undertaking. In addition to the political problems, he faces financial difficulties. Again, no help from the higher committees. Result—a complete demoralization and breakdown, physically, and in many cases, politically. Many old forces were lost because of this criminal neglect by the higher committees.

Systematic selection of the best militant elements from the factories, mines, from the struggles of the employed and unemployed; proper training; correct policy in the assignment of work; systematic follow-up and constant help and guidance of these forces will forge the necessary strong Party cadres.

The school is only one of the means of developing new forces. The leading committees of the districts, sections, units, and the fractions in the mass organizations should steadily watch, in the course of practical work, the new elements who distinguish themselves by their militancy, energy, ability, knowledge and devotion to the Party, and pay special attention to them (individual help, encouraging self-study, and help in the selection of literature, conferences, etc.)

4. In addition to the training of new forces we face the problem of further developing our old cadres. These cadres are overburdened with tasks, are busy day and night and have no time to read and study. The leading committees must find ways and means to solve this question. Study circles should be established for the various categories of Party workers. We must supply them with literature. And what is more important, systematize and organize the work so as to enable these comrades to spend a certain amount of each day for self-study as a part of their Party task.

5. In connection with the shifting of forces we find another serious shortcoming. In many cases comrades are shifted to other work when they have fallen down on one job. This is correct in many cases. A change of scenery, or a change in the assignment, will improve the character of the work of the comrade. But in most cases the solution is the removal of the comrade and sending him back to a factory.

Know the Party Forces

6. The thorough knowledge of our cadres is an important prerequisite for the proper distribution and utilization of our forces. We must know each individual comrade in all leading committees

of the Party and mass organizations. We must know their strong and weak points, what work they are best fitted for. This is essential, Lenin pointed out, to enable the Party leadership "not only to advise, as this has hitherto been done, but really conduct the orchestra, one must know exactly who is playing first or second fiddle and where; what instrument he was taught, where and how; where and why he plays out of tune (when the music begins to be trying to the ear); and what changes should be made in the orchestra so as to remedy the dissonance." Each Party committee shall examine all its forces, not only their abilities but their background, their connections with the masses, etc., and work out a systematic policy for the use of the comrades.

The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. states: "The end of relative capitalist stabilization has come. . . . What is taking place at the present moment is the *transition* to a new round of big clashes between classes and between states, a new round of wars and revolutions." In this situation, our Party needs forces more than ever. These forces are here, springing up and coming forward in the struggle. Our task is to develop them. Simultaneously we must eradicate the constant cries of our comrades in the units, sections and districts that we have no forces. Such comrades should read and study the following words of Lenin, "*The organizer who in such situation complains about the lack of forces does not see the forest for the trees; he admits that the happenings make him blind . . . it is better if such an organizer goes on pension and makes place for the young forces whose energy very often will make up for their lack of experience.*"

—J. P.

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: