

# Strike Wave Is Opportunity to Recruit Party Members

## Not Making Necessary Headway Because of Our Sectarian Practices

By J. PETER.

THE strike wave rapidly spreading throughout the country is now taking on added tempo as more and more workers are fighting against the effects of the National Recovery Act on their living conditions. The militant industrial unions are gaining numerical strength in the process of leading hundreds of strikes throughout the country. In Buffalo and Pittsburgh alone, the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union, which is coming forward as the only union in steel fighting aggressively against the N.R.A. steel code, leading and winning strikes for improved conditions, has gained thousands of member. We have led strikes and organized many thousands of workers in the textile, silk, dye, coal, marine, shoe and metal industries. Even the opposition work in the A. F. of L., although still in its elementary stage, is improving. Tens of thousands of new workers—who have never heard of Communism except from the mouths of reactionaries, are accepting Communist leadership and following a militant program.

In these recent strikes, we have even succeeded to some extent to overcome many of the weaknesses of the past, chief of which was our sectarian approach towards the developing of broad cadres of new proletarian forces. In the present strikes with new locals being set up, we have brought forward many non-Party workers into the leadership of the unions and struggles.

### Hampered by Past Practices

In this very favorable situation for the building and strengthening of our Party into a real mass force, we find our Party is not making the necessary headway. In fact, recruiting of these excellent new forces into our Party, is still proceeding at a snail's pace in relation to the rapidly developing government. Why is it that our Party is not growing more rapidly? Is it because these workers are not ready for our Party, or is it because we are still bound down by our past sectarian practices which hamper the rapid recruitment and training of the new elements?

The main reason, of course, for the lack of recruiting is the lack of systematic planned activity of the fractions and units; the failure to select the best fighters in the shops and winning them for our Party. But behind these weaknesses there was and is even today, in many places a dangerous opportunistic approach to our mass work, which is in the main responsible for the failure to build the Party. In many instances, we find that recruiting of these militant workers into our Party is consciously pushed to the background. In other places, some Party members have developed the theory that our work of building the union will be hindered if we ask the workers who are participating in the struggle to join the Party. We have even cases where the Party units are prohibited from distributing Party leaflets to striking workers.

The danger of pursuing such practices can hardly be seen in some of our recent experiences. The bourgeoisie very skillfully maneuvers with the "red scare." The A. F. of L. bureaucrats and other agents of the

bosses use this issue against the Party and the industrial unions. Our Party fractions in the unions and the Party organizations do not sufficiently meet this issue. In most cases we still capitulate before the reactionary forces, fearing that bringing forward the Party in these struggles would endanger the strike or the building of the union. This hesitancy in boldly combatting the "red scare," exposing its purpose to the workers and clearly bringing forward the role of the Party, has resulted in the smashing of many strikes and the loss of thousands of workers to the industrial unions. On the other hand, life itself has proven that where we met the issue squarely, we had no difficulty in winning the confidence of the workers. What is more, in the first case, the reformist leaders and other agents of the bosses were able to break the strike and the organization; while in the second case, the organization solidly withstood the attacks of the bosses.

### Wrong Methods

In the practical application of this opportunist tendency we find the following experiences; the Party organization (section committees, units, etc.) are working hard to make contacts and develop struggles in a given factory. After a strike breaks out, the Party organization no longer acts as a collective body, but our comrades as individuals actively participate in the strike and very often forget the Communist Party. The Party organizations stop functioning. The Party no longer speaks to the workers. No more Party shop papers, no more leaflets or meetings by the Party are arranged. Or else, the Party organizations are not disturbed by the strike. They continue their regular routine life, and do not realize that their revolutionary duty is to participate in every struggle of the workers. These comrades do not understand that there cannot be revolutionary life apart from the mass struggles. In both instances we have similar results. The Party's face is entirely hidden. The workers don't see the Communist Party.

We have to fight persistently against these opportunist tendencies which prevent us from making a sharp change in the situation of our Party. These mistakes isolate us from the masses and leave the road open for the reformist leaders to organize and deceive the workers. We have to instead, come out boldly in the name of the Party, telling the workers who we are, why the Communist Party fights with them against the bosses, against the agencies of the bosses, the city, state and federal government, to explain that we are the revolutionary Party of the proletariat which leads and helps in any struggle which is for the interest of the masses.

(Concluded Tomorrow)