

Strengthen the Fighting Ability of the Party

By J. PETER

THE RESOLUTION of the Eighth National Convention of our Party characterized the New Deal as "the aggressive effort of the bankers and trusts to find their way out of the crisis at the expense of the millions of toilers . . . The New Deal is a program of fascism and the most intense preparations for imperialist war . . ." The recent struggles in Toledo, Minneapolis and especially in San Francisco, Seattle, and Portland proved the absolute correctness of this characterization of the Eighth Convention of our Party. These struggles furnish us with rich experiences as to the trend and content of fascism and as to the problem of the functioning of the Party under difficult conditions. Comrade Browder in his article in the *Daily Worker* (August 4) on the San Francisco situation drew a picture showing how the extra-legal fascist forces financed by the bankers and supported by the Local, State, and Federal government tried to terrorize the workers and how the Party continued to function in spite of the most vicious fascist terror.

In San Francisco, out of 47 Party units, 46 met regularly in this period. Many of them every day. Twenty-two units issued leaflets independently during the strike and the concentrated effort of the fascist bands and police could not get more than an insignificant number of leading comrades.

The question we would like to deal with in this article is: why is it that the Party in San Francisco succeeded to a great extent in destroying the plans of the bourgeoisie, in preserving the fighting capacity of the Party, and in maintaining contact with the masses.

What was the main object of the bourgeoisie?—To isolate the Party from the masses, to cut off all transmissions which connect the Party with the toiling masses, to destroy physically the Communist Party because the bourgeoisie recognized the important role the Communist Party played in developing the mass united front of the toilers on the west coast.

What method did they use in San Francisco and Seattle?

1. Organized mass agitation using the press, movies, churches, etc., to spread their rotten poison against the Communist Party among the population.

2. The utilization of extra-legal fascist forces (vigilantes, American Legion, etc., and the uniformed gangsters, the police) to:
 - a. destroy the leadership of the Party,

- b. to destroy the headquarters of the Communist Party and the revolutionary mass organizations, and the literature and press of the revolutionary movement.

The San Francisco example proves to everyone, who had any doubt, that the American fascism in action is the same as Thyssen's brown army—as Mussolini's black guard, etc.

The San Francisco terror is a serious warning to our Party that no time can be wasted to plunge into the work with more energy and tempo,—root the Party in the factories, building the united front in the shops, docks, mines,—among the unemployed on the streets,—organize the fractions in the A. F. of L., independent unions, and other mass organizations. The mass united front will defeat the terror and the bourgeoisie will never succeed to isolate us from the masses if we have strong, functioning shop nuclei, and fractions in the A. F. of L. and other mass organizations.

In this article we will deal with the problem of forces. The bourgeoisie knows very well that by destroying the leading forces inside the Party, the effective work of the Party is hampered. But the bourgeoisie in San Francisco did not realize that our Party was also aware of this simple fact, that our Party had started to learn from the experience of the German Communist Party, and was prepared for such an attack. Because of the alertness of the Party, only few leading comrades of the District Committee were arrested during the terror and a few leading comrades from the sections. The picture would be entirely different if the comrades had not been trained for such a situation. The District, Section, and even Unit leadership would have been taken by the bourgeoisie, put in jail for a shorter or longer period, and in this way the work of the Party organizations would have been crippled.

In this regard there are two main lessons to be drawn from the experiences of San Francisco: 1. The proper safeguarding of the Party leadership; 2. The development of forces which immediately can take the place of comrades who fall into the hands of the enemy during struggles.

What are the problems we face in connection with the first question?

1. We know very well that the fascist terror in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Toledo, Minneapolis are not isolated cases, but a definite trend towards fascism in the United States. We know very well that in the present situation we need honest, sincere, steeled, leading comrades who will not break down under any circumstances. But are we sure that our leading forces are composed of such elements? Have we systematically examined our comrades in the District,

Section and Unit leadership? Have we examined their past? Have we watched their role and their behavior in different situations? If we consider the rapid development of fascism, the intense preparations for imperialist war, we dare not forget for one moment that the effective work among the masses will depend not only upon the reliability and stability of our leading forces, but also upon our having broad cadres and many reserve forces. The Center, the District and Section Committee should immediately start to examine every individual leading comrade in the organization. We have to know everything about our leaders,—about our staff from top to bottom,—their social background, their personal connections, their ability in doing certain phases of work. We must be sure that if we put a comrade in a certain position, he will fulfill the tasks and will not waver or break down under any circumstances. If we neglect to examine thoroughly our leading cadres, systematically, in time,—if we don't make this a permanent task, we will pay very dearly in the coming period. There is no time to lose! Every day, every hour counts.

Safeguarding our Party Apparatus

We have to safeguard our leading forces and the Party apparatus. It is understood that the leading comrades should be in the forefront of every struggle of the masses. If they fail to do this, they will not have the confidence of the masses, but, at the same time, we must find ways and means to protect these comrades from being arrested in a situation similar to San Francisco. Every comrade must have prepared already today a place where he or she can stay in case of any emergency; the home of a sympathizer who is not known by the police should be secured in advance so that when the terror breaks, the comrades can disappear from their home. We will not always know when the bourgeoisie will attack us; therefore we must be prepared at all times. We have to keep in mind that the bourgeoisie has an efficient apparatus in following up the leading forces of our Party and the Party apparatus also. They know quite well where prominent comrades live. The fact that the home address of a leading comrade is not known by other members of the organization is not a security against the police.

The most important problem in connection with the question of cadres is the development of new forces and at the same time the training of all our forces to do the work independently. Today in most of our Districts, there is yet a very unhealthy situation in regard to this question. There are many excellent exceptions, but we cannot say yet that the majority of the lower organizations of the Party have already independent life. The activities of the sections and

especially of the units are directed by the higher committees through instructions. In the event of an emergency situation, similar to San Francisco, when it will be very difficult to send these instructions down to the lower organizations, if there are no developed comrades in the sections and units who on their own initiative continue to work, the organizations will cease to function or will not function with full strength and ability. In San Francisco, for example, approximately half of the units issued leaflets on the situation in their own neighborhood, mobilizing the population for sympathy to the general strike. These units did not wait for any instructions. The comrades in these units and sections realized that the Party does not cease to function if instructions do not come from above. They realized that the unit is the Party in the shop and in the neighborhood, and they have to continue their work under any circumstances. We have to develop our forces today to use the greatest initiative in their work and not to wait for org. letters, to apply the general line and policy of the Party to the problems of the shops and territories. If we fail to make our cadres in the lower organizations realize the importance of this orientation, we will lose connection with the masses in situations where the fascist terror is unloosed against us. And that is the object of the bourgeoisie.

Developing New Forces

Another problem which we have discussed so many times in our resolutions and articles is the question of developing new forces. In Germany, thousands and thousands of leading functionaries were arrested, killed or sent to the concentration camps, but, when one leading comrade was arrested, there was another one to take his place. There was a systematic conscientious policy in the Party to develop new forces by the thousands. The question of continuous follow-up of every promising member of the party in the unit, in the section, individual attention to these comrades, schooling, promotion of forces from the lower committees to the higher committees, selection of promising comrades who are leaders in strikes, unemployed struggles, will help us to a great extent to solve this problem. There is yet a weakness in many of our Districts which must be overcome as rapidly as possible, and that is the failure to develop and bring forward to the leadership American elements. The new cadres must be developed mainly in the actual and concrete Party work, but this must be supplemented by the necessary training. Our new cadres will be developed on the basis of carrying on work among the masses, and through a maximum increase of the political activities of the Party by which the ideological level will be raised. How can we talk about de-

veloping new forces in the units when we find that in many units of our Party, in some of the concentration Districts, the Resolution of the Eighth Convention which was held in April, had not yet been discussed in July? How can the comrades in the units carry on independent work independently when they do not understand the general line of the Party?

One of the main sources for the training of new forces is the proper development of collective leadership in the Party organization. In the election before the Party convention, hundreds of new forces were elected to the Party committees in the sections and districts. But they have not been sufficiently drawn into the work, developed and trained. Many new comrades are coming forward in the fractions of the unions and mass organizations. Do we see to it that these comrades get political training? The basic weakness of our Party in many places is that one or two old comrades, in reality, do all the work. Nothing is easier than to build around one old experienced comrade a committee composed of new promising forces and distribute various functions among them. The result will be that the work will be really carried out and, in addition, these old comrades will be able to perform their real job of leadership and, which is most important, scores of young active comrades will be trained in the work and developed. The best forces, the best leaders, will come from the factory nuclei where the comrades are in constant touch with the masses, know their reactions on every issue, and will properly reflect the mood of the masses in the leadership. We have to concentrate on these nuclei, select the comrades there and develop them further in the Party. We know that we will have tremendous struggles in the coming period.

The possibilities of giving leadership to the fighting toilers are greater than ever before. The general attack of the bourgeoisie on the living standards of the workers (rising prices, wage cuts, speed-up) against the civil rights of the masses, the development of fascism, the war danger, increase the tasks of the Communist Party. We need more and more forces to carry on the work. Thousands of Communist leaders are needed to agitate, propagandize, organize the workers in the shops, unions, on the street, the starving farmers on the countryside. We need forces to work among the toilers in uniform.

In the coming struggles we will have many victims. Many of our leaders in the units, sections and districts will have to be shifted from one place to another in order to avoid persecution. We will have to replace these comrades. Our reserve forces must be built up now. There is no time for delay! Events are moving rapidly!