

Industrial Nuclei

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Characteristics of a Communist Party.

The average member of the C. P. of A. looks upon his party branch as the working medium for activities. It hardly occurs to him that the active unit of a Communist Party is not the Party branch but the nuclei. The characteristics of a communist party are that it is an organization that participates in all the struggles of the workers in order to accomplish its task. It enters all workers' mass organizations, no matter what their nature or purpose, whether labor, cooperative, military, etc. To what extent a communist party is communist can best be determined by the number of nuclei it has, the intensity of nuclei work, what percentage of its members are in nuclei, etc.

A party of action, a virile and healthy party, is a party of nuclei. In such a party all the energies of the membership are concentrated in the struggle against the real enemy. All members are active among the masses. There is no time for cliques and petty politics, for the class struggle is an absorbing and fascinating struggle, and so full of possibilities that it inspires the conscious rebel to great deeds. The truth of this can best be borne out by our own members in the nuclei. They are the most active of all the membership and the most capable. During the course of my activities as industrial organizer I have seen many of them develop from timid, grouchy spittoon philosophers to aggressive, enterprising militants and excellent tacticians, owing to their participation in the every day fights of the workers and practical experience in their struggles. They are the least disgruntled of our membership, for they are too busy playing real politics against the fakers in the unions, building, educating and strengthening the working class organizations everywhere.

The fact is that most of our members consider the C. P. in the same light as the S. P. with a difference in program and ultimate aims, and methods. The efficiency of the party and the activities of their branch is judged by them by the number of general leaflets secretly or openly distributed, the "inside" bulletins they receive from the higher units, the number of routine meetings they attend at which they spend their time proving to each other how revolutionary they are. Their whole attention is directed not toward action among the masses but on what is going on within the party. They do not realize that the only point of similarity between a Communist Party branch and a branch of the Socialist Party is that during election time it participates in general activities because of the readiness of the masses to listen to a solution of their political problems. But these general activities must

be only a small part of the activities of a local Communist Branch.

It is obvious that the Communist Party and its branches as such serve mainly in unifying the activities of the members in their various nuclei. The branch whose membership is not active in nuclei is like a body without parts. It is virtually outside the struggle, it being impotent to accomplish anything for lack of contact with the masses and hence with their struggles. It dies or fritters away its energies in dissensions. The energies of the virile element instead of being invested in the real struggles among the masses are spent in futile intrigues and peanut politics within the organization and until we get the bulk of our membership active amongst the masses in the nuclei we will dissipate and disintegrate.

Salvation of Party.

Am I justified to fear for the future of the movement or party branch whose members are not either in some nuclei or executive board? Such a branch can hardly be considered as a fit unit for the C. P. of A. The salvation of the party lies in making it a party of nuclei. We are not as yet an organization entrenched in the life of the masses. We are still fluctuating to and fro. A bad turn may bring us to the point of ruin. We have made some moves in the right direction so dynamic in effect on our inexperienced membership that many are in utter confusion as a result of the forced march we made in the past few months. Many new problems are facing us but we have gained valuable experience which we can now put into practical application.

This article deals mainly with the party policy of building up a network of nuclei involving our entire membership—nuclei among the foreign nationalities, in the labor unions, in unorganized industries. It also deals with the relationship between Nos. 1 and 2, its relationship to the left blocks and to the Communist leftist groups. With this understanding of the role of the nuclei in the Communist Party as such we may now proceed to practical application.

Labor Union Nuclei.

The most important nuclei we must build up is the nuclei in the unions. The unions are the largest workers' mass organizations created for the purpose of serving as defensive weapons against the encroachments of capitalism. The methods pursued heretofore made this work extremely difficult. New and more efficient methods are now possible. The nuclei work is the most legal of our activities. It can be organized for

a long time to come by using open methods, although the nuclei itself will more or less have to function secretly, upon the actual field of operation.

The element that comes into consideration in our nuclei work is (a) the membership of our party, (b) the membership of No. 2, left-wing elements, syndicalists, anarchists, progressives, Socialists, etc. Let us assume that this element forms a left wing block in their union in a given city functioning either under the name of a shop delegate league or progressive block. Such an organization may have been initiated by our own members, or if already in existence we may join it with a view of influencing or obtaining control over it. The program upon which these elements will unite is usually the achievement of some concrete immediate objective, like the amalgamation of craft unions, overthrow of undesirable bureaucrats and other reforms in the labor movement. Our task is to either innovate such movements and combinations ourselves or if already in existence organize our forces to obtain control over them, either one of which requires a parallel organization on our part, and even were we to obtain control of the machinery of No. 3 Left Wing, it would be necessary to maintain our party nuclei.

The objection will immediately arise in the minds of many comrades active in the nuclei work that such machinery will not be able to function, as it is too cumbersome, involving a nuclei machinery of our party and Nos. 2 and 3, in addition to the party machinery of Nos. 1 and 2. The actual process of organization and action, however, demonstrates the practicability and necessity of the machinery as above outlined. As our membership becomes more and more involved in intense nuclei activity in the labor unions or other organizations the party machinery as such will have to undergo a readjustment. The party machinery will have to be simplified to lend it more compactness and cohesion. Without this it will be a stumbling block rather than the unifying and controlling medium of our manifold nuclei activities. Weekly routine and membership meetings will have to be cut down in our party, as well as in No. 2, to a minimum consistent with the party's activities and needs. Outside of meetings absolutely necessary for the upkeep of the party a branch shall never meet except when it has a concrete problem to act upon or to be acquainted with. All routine business shall and must be transacted by the various executive committees, which must, of course, meet more frequently than the branch. Having this important time saving readjustment in mind we shall now consider the nuclei machinery.

As already indicated, the militant and progressive forces in the labor movement must develop an organization of a largely non-partisan nature—a sort of left wing composed of all factions on the basis of a consolidation of craft unions into mass unions, more pay,

shorter hours, ousting the reactionary leadership and similar objects. In some instances we may be instrumental in forming a branch of the bloc or affiliating the left wing body we already formed. We must work with these blocs for the integration of the left wing forces working as an organized minority throughout, subjecting ourselves at times to adverse decisions if we are outvoted, not imposing ourselves on the rest but recognizing that every one has the same rights within these same left wing blocs.

Let us call these left wing blocs No. 3 for future reference. In order to be able to influence No. 3, our forces within must be organized into a machine throughout. Our forces are the Communist Party members which for reference we shall call No. 1, or those who belong to political organizations and are very sympathetic to our program. For the sake of reference, let us call these parties No. 2. Thus we have C. P. of A nuclei No. 1, political sympathizers nuclei No. 2 and left wing groups No. 3. To some this may appear as impossible cumbersome machinery which is bound to break down by its own weight. But though all our membership must belong to the industrial nuclei, this does not mean that all must be in the active machine. On the contrary, we must carefully learn how to divide our work and distribute it so as to fill out everybody's time intelligently and harmoniously.

An active member must give at least four to five evenings a week for active work among the masses and the party. Those that cannot do it will do the party a favor by dropping out of No. 1. They really belong in No. 2, because in No. 1, they are a dead-weight. ACTIVE work must be divided, so many for primarily or purely party work, others for active labor nuclei work, and others for special work. Not a single member of the party will be permitted to be inactive before long. The following may illustrate to some extent the workings of such machinery, the method of organizing our nuclei having undergone a change under the pressure of circumstances.

Mode of Procedure.

A meeting would be called of all English speaking comrades in a party subdivision. At the meeting the labor program is explained and each member is grouped into nuclei according to occupation whether he belongs to a union or not. Certain comrades of each trade group are then appointed as nuclei organizers and instructed to take the addresses of their nuclei members. Thus in one evening the nuclei among the English speaking comrades is established; each leader having direct connections with the members of his nuclei, thus relieving the party channels from constant communications and calls. Then the labor nuclei shall meet and have their second organization meetings, each

individual is then examined and if not already a member of a labor union he must join. All should help to make it possible for him to join. If there is no union in his trade he may be instrumental in starting one. If it is impossible for him to do either then he is requested to join some other workers' organization where he gets contact with either reactionary or more or less radical workers. He should remain affiliated with his trade nuclei until he builds up a nuclei of his own in the organization he joins.

Division of Work.

Members who hold office in the party or branch section, or subdivision have of course limited time, and while they all must belong to their nuclei they may not have sufficient time to be intensely active in the nuclei machinery. In which case their work and evenings must be carefully economized and preferably other members in the nuclei shall become officials in the nuclei machinery. After the second meeting the work must be divided and the nuclei machinery definitely established. It shall be understood that all foreign speaking comrades who understand English but speak it imperfectly shall also be drawn into the English Nuclei.

Non English speaking Comrades.

The foreign Comrades shall also be organized for labor nuclei work in the same manner as the English; that is, all branches of a certain language in each party subdivision are called together. A comrade speaking their language and also understanding English, explains to them the labor program and the method and purpose of nuclei work. Then they are subdivided according to occupation and a comrade of their own language is placed in charge of each industrial or trade group.

A comrade of their language who can also make himself understood in English is then placed in charge of all the nuclei leaders of that particular language. At the second meeting, they go through the same procedure as the English nuclei placing every individual into active work, making him join a union and assisting in all the other nuclei work whenever necessary or called upon.

The English speaking leader in each trade shall have the connection of all members working in his trade, or industry irrespective of language. Thus we will have a machine drawing the entire membership, at the same time requiring full time attention on the part of only the leading members.

Industrial Committees to meet regularly.

To illustrate the workings of this machinery in its everyday phase, one may put it in this form: the district industrial and the City industrial committees

must be composed of comrades that spend almost all their time in labor union and nuclei work.

It shall not be necessary to have nuclei meetings for routine work in number 1. or 2. although the industrial committees must meet frequently and regularly. The regular meetings shall be the No. 3., that is the left wing blocks.

But our machinery shall be ready to function within at the pull of the trigger. Nuclei No. 2. can be organized using the same procedure as in organizing No. 1. The general procedure shall be when meetings previous to the left wing meetings are needed to hold meetings of No. 1. and 2. together. After No. 1. is organized it shall hold meetings separate from No. 2. and 3. only in cases of necessity. This will enable the members of No. 1. to spend most of their time in actual work amongst the masses and the left wing elements, instead of talking to themselves in endless routine meetings, and at the same time will enable us to exert maximum influence.

It is in this work that members of No. 1. will have to learn the meaning of true discipline. The deflection or lack of one vote sometimes affects important decisions. Meetings of the rank and file of No. 1. and 2. must not be called unnecessarily and it may not be necessary to call all the members of No. 1. or 2. in each case, but when they are called every member of No. 1. must be present and if not they should be severely disciplined unless a valid reason is presented and accepted for their absence. When entering serious work among the masses we will need good functioning nuclei machinery in good condition and stern discipline. The time needed for the upkeep of our general machinery must be reduced to a minimum so that we can spend the maximum time in actual work among the masses.

Sympathizers and Left Wingers.

Considering that we have a very small English speaking membership—less than 25% of the total and that this precious element is needed to lead in the party as such, as well as in the nuclei, it is necessary to point out the necessity of drawing into activities every sympathiser and left winger we can get a hold of especially as they have in some instances very capable elements. They should be given every opportunity and urged to work on the active committees.

On the ordinary local union nuclei committee, it is sufficient to have together with the members of No. 2. a bare majority. The rest can go to the left wingers, especially when we can put these individuals on these committees out of office by mustering our full vote in the general left bloc meetings. The less important the committee the more representation for No. 2. and 3. The higher the committee the firmer shall be our control.