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# Double the Party Membership!

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It would be a great achievement for our party if we could double the strength of the party organization during the next two months. Every party member would hail that as a great victory for the Communist movement in the United States.

It is possible for us to do that. While we may not be able to double the membership of the party in two months' time, we can double the strength of our party in efficiency and working power during the next two months.

At the present time the party organization is working on about one-fourth of its potential strength. Through an aggressive and energetic campaign to increase the number of members who actually participate in the work of the party organization, we can at least double the amount of work we are doing.

An illustration of the way the party is working as an organization is given in the figures which the national office has received from the District Organizers covering the branch reports for the month of March. The following table† contains these figures:

D.	Total Branches	Total Reporting	New Members	Total Members	Members Paid to Date
1	84	54	38	1,506	985
2	127	58	96	2,825	1,757
3	59	29	21	515	326
6	56	44	15	1,170	758
7	39	21	65	662	404
10	63	46	28	646	468
13	16	14	11	511	323
Ag.	13	5	2	91	33
<b>Tot.</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>7,926</b>	<b>5,054</b>

Look at this table and see what it shows! First, out of 15 Party Districts, seven districts have reported the tabulation of branch reports for the month of March. That means that we have eight District Organizers who are not efficient enough to even carry out a little routine work which has been assigned to them. Then look at the picture of the way the branches of the Party function. In the districts which reported there were 457 branches. Out of these, about one-half were interested enough in the Party work to fill out a report card requiring about 15 minutes' work and send it to the District Organizer.

Then take a step further and come down to the membership. In the branches reporting to the 7 districts which sent in their reports there were 7,926 Party members. Of these Party members, 5,054 had paid their dues to date, and close to 3,000 were from one to three months in arrears in making dues payments. Is that the best we can do as a party? Can we find only eight District Organizers out of fifteen who will send in their reports monthly and one-fifth of the Party branches who will send their report cards to the District office, and only an eighth over half of the membership who will pay their dues regularly?

These facts show that our Party is not paying enough attention to the organizational efficiency. Efficiency within our organization means a more efficient organization in conducting the work among the masses of this country. We may be assured that if we are only one-fourth efficient in our organizational work, then we are even less efficient in our organizational work outside of the Party.

†- WPA District centers were as follows: D1 — Boston; D2 — New York; D3 — Philadelphia; D6 — Cleveland; D7 — Detroit; D10 — St. Louis (which was merged with the Chicago District in July 1924); D13 — San Francisco; Ag. District — Dakotas.

**First Step Toward Remedy.**

The first step toward remedying this condition is to create an organ in every Party unit which will be charged with the duty of developing organizational efficiency. This organ of the Party is the Membership Committee.

The Central Executive Committee at a recent meeting approved the recommendation that every branch, City Central Committee, and District Committee at once create a Membership Committee.,

This Membership Committee must consist of Party members who take their duty as Communists seriously and who are ready to give their time and energy, even at some sacrifice, to the work of improving the efficiency of the Party organization.

This work of the Membership Committee cannot be left in the hands of comrades who have not proven by their past work that they can be trusted to carry out earnestly any duties given them. Every Party unit should at once canvass the membership of its unit of the organization and pick out the three members of the Party unit who nearest fulfill the description above.

**Duties of Membership Committee.**

The duties of the Membership Committee are threefold. One: the Membership Committee must take the necessary action to see that every Party member regularly pays dues to the organization. Second: It must organize a persistent campaign to obtain new Party members. Third: It shall assign work to every member of the branch so as to draw all the potential strength of the Party into the work we are carrying on.

A Membership Committee which sets to work to carry out these three tasks energetically can, in a single month's time, double the working efficiency in a Party branch. It can improve the dues payments so that we will not have a picture such as the table above shows. It can organize so that new members are regularly brought into the organization. It can give some work to every member of the branch, thus increasing the amount of work which the branch does.

**Collection of Dues.**

The Membership Committee should, at the end

of the month, examine the branch records to see whether all members have paid their dues. It should see that the financial secretary notifies those members in arrears and carries on a persistent campaign to collect back dues and to induce all members to pay their dues regularly monthly.

Toward this end, the Membership Committee must conduct a campaign to see that every member who has not a good excuse shall attend his branch meetings regularly, and that those who neglect to pay their dues are called before the branch for explanation in case of persistent neglect in this respect.

If members are out of work, they are entitled to exempt stamps and should secure the stamps as evidence of their good standing in the Party. With a properly functioning Membership Committee, we will have 25,000 Party members paying dues regularly by July 1st.

**Campaign for New Members.**

The second task of the Membership Committee, of equal importance, is to conduct a systematic campaign for new members. In carrying out this campaign, it should adopt the following plans:

1. It should secure a list of the readers of all Party papers in the territory which the branch covers and assign Party members to visit these readers who are not Party members and endeavor to induce them to join the Party. (Subscription lists of Party papers have recently been sent to District Organizers, who in turn were instructed to furnish lists to the respective Party units.)

2. The Membership Committee should, periodically, ask each member of the branch to come before it and should secure from such members the names and addresses of sympathizers for the purpose of bringing them into the Party organization.

3. The Membership Committee should see to it that at every open Party meeting where non-members are invited, an invitation is extended to those present to join the Party.

4. The Membership Committee should maintain a malign list of sympathizers to be built up by securing names from Party members, and by using the mailing list of the Party branch and other means, send literature to these sympathizers from time to time and

should invite them to come to the branch meetings and attempt to get them to join the Party when the ground is sufficiently prepared.

5. The Membership Committee should see to it that every Party member who is working in a non-Party organization such as a trade union, cooperative, or fraternal organization makes an effort to draw into the Party those members of such organization who are sympathetic to our Party.

It is not sufficient that we should carry on general propaganda for individuals along the lines outlined above and the Membership Committee should be charged with the duty of seeing that these appeals and invitations are made.

### **Assignment to Party Work.**

The third task of the Membership Committee is the assignment of all Party members to work for the Party organization. For this purpose, the Membership Committee should create a file of the Party members through building up a card file in which there shall be noted the organizations to which members belong, such as trade unions, cooperative, fraternal organizations, and other facts in regard to their relationship with masses of workers such as the place of their employment. The National Office will shortly print cards for this purpose so that these can be in a standardized form. The work of the branch should be divided as follows:

1. Work in other organizations.
2. Literature distribution, including *Daily Worker*.
3. Defense work.
4. Propaganda meetings.

**Work in other organizations:** Those Party members who are members of other organizations, such as trade unions, cooperatives, and fraternal organizations, must be assigned as their first task the work in these organizations. By having a list of all such members, the Membership Committee can quickly mobilize all the members of the branch when the Party initiates a campaign. For instance, in relation to the June 17th Farmer-Labor campaign, it would give immediate instructions to these members, take up the questions of the organization of a state Farmer-Labor Party or send-

ing delegates to the National Organization. The Membership Committee would receive reports from all the members of the branch on what they have done along this line from time to time, and give such instructions as are needed. The same would be true in regard to outside organizations. These members, too, could be instructed, when the Party holds mass meetings, to advertise such meetings in the organizations in which they are members, to sell literature in these meetings, circulate Party defense and other contribution lists there, and generally to secure support of the Party work.

**Literature distribution:** Not all members of our branches are members of other organizations, and the remainder of the members should be organized in committees for the specific task of carrying on some other form of activity. One such is the distribution of Party literature. Every Party branch should have a group of workers whose first duty is to devote themselves to the distribution of Party leaflets and the sale of Party pamphlets and books. These members should not only work in their own branch and at public meetings but should be charged with systematic work in other organizations by canvassing to sell the Party literature.

**Propaganda meetings:** Similarly, a group should be formed in each branch for the purpose of building up interest and bringing sympathizers to the open propaganda meetings which the branch holds from time to time, and to support the general mass meetings which the Party organization as a whole in any city holds from time to time. By having a special group of this character to do the advertising, meetings can be greatly improved in attendance and in the results for the Party.

**Defense Campaign:** Another group of Party members should be organized for the purpose of supporting the defense work of the Party organization. It should be their first duty to support the campaign to raise funds for this part of the Party activities.

Other divisions of Party work will arise from time to time as the Party develops its campaigns. Whenever a campaign is initiated by the party, such as the Protection of the Foreign-Born Campaign, and similar campaigns, the Membership Committee should assign the specific task of supporting these campaigns by all the means at the command of the party branch to a specific group of the members of the branch.

If the membership Committee does its work

conscientiously, if it seeks to organize the whole membership of the branch and bring all the potential strength of the Party branch into its work, the Party strength would be doubled within the next two months' time.

This is indeed an achievement worth our struggling for. Let every branch appoint its Membership Committee at once. Let us show by the efficiency of our work that we are Communists, that we are capable of directing our affairs and training the workers for the direction of the affairs of society as a whole.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

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