

# PARTY . . . ORGANIZER

. MARCH . 1938 .

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How a Metal Unit Functions —D. P.

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A Shop Unit Advances Progressive  
Trade Unionism —Eggert

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# PARTY ORGANIZER

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## Ohio Tackles Its Problems

By JOHN WILLIAMSON, District Organizer

OUR Party in Ohio has gone a long way towards freeing itself as a Party from sectarian isolation, although we must take note that it has been an uneven course—that some branches and individuals still have not freed themselves from old sectarian practices. But, as a Party in relation to the masses, in many shops, unions and communities we are already an important factor, influencing the life of those we are a part of. Our Party today in Ohio has stronger mass connections than ever before.

It will suffice to recall to you the active participation and leading role our Party played in the great mass struggles at Goodyear, Firestone, Fisher Body, Republic and Youngstown Steel, as well as the active, and in many cases, leading role of the Communists in Ohio in organizing drives of the C.I.O. in these industries and many others.

Of course, these last two years have also seen the Party's influence extend in connection with the numerous attempts to organize Farmer-Labor Party or Labor Party movements; our active collaboration in putting Ohio in the progressive column in 1936, and, more recently, the beginnings of independent labor political action through Labor's Non-Partisan League participation in the recent municipal elections, and especially the Ward 30 elections in Cleveland, in which the Communist Party, as the vanguard of the working class here in Ohio, has a lot of serious work ahead of it. This means that every Party branch, that every individual Party member, has a lot of serious work

ahead, because the Party is just the sum total of its lower organizations.

What is the organizational status of our Party today? The membership chart shows that we should have 3,400 members, of which, 1,460 should be in Cleveland. Have we that many members? The only organized membership we have is dues-paying membership, and the average dues payments for the first eleven months is 1,600, or less than 50 per cent. These figures dramatize an impermissible situation in the Party—and that means in practically every section and in the organized guidance of the State Committee.

We recruited 942 during the entire year of 1936. During the first eleven months of 1937, we substantially increased recruiting to 1,419. This increased recruiting is a definite sign of progress, but how do we treat our membership? It obviously must be in a very loose and unsatisfactory manner when we not only lose every new recruit, but also some old ones. I am positive that 90 per cent of those who are not attending branch meetings or paying dues sincerely want to be Communists.

It is clear that we must emphasize that despite all our good mass work we have been very bad Party organizers and our Party organizational status is definitely not satisfactory. We must adopt measures to change the situation.

### **We Must Bring Our Message to the Masses**

What is the extent of our mass agitation? Our Party committees in Ohio are not bad at working out policies for every given situation. But these decisions are not brought to the membership systematically so that they will be mobilized to do a good job. Worse still, we don't talk to the masses. We forget that we must convince the masses; it is they who must do these mass tasks.

Important events take place. Our leading comrades meet late into the night to solve all the minute problems of that situation. But take Cleveland, for instance, in the recent municipal elections. How can we explain that after the run off elections we did not issue a single piece of

literature to the masses, giving them our opinion on Burton versus McWilliams, or the idea of a progressive bloc in the city council, or our attitude towards the levies, etc.? And Cleveland isn't the worst example because here some serious efforts have been made to take up municipal issues, such as street car fares, etc. I could take city after city and you would see similar situations.

Take the workers in the C.I.O. unions—in the auto, steel, marine or electrical industries. Certainly, they are progressive-minded. We say that we want to base ourselves on the workers in the basic industries. We say that these workers and their unions are decisive for a People's Front movement in Ohio. But how do we explain that our shop papers have declined? Let us ask our Youngstown delegation: when did you last speak to the workers in Republic or Sheet and Tube on any issue in the name of the Party? Or ask Toledo. Do the workers in Overland, Chevy, or Auto Lite know the position of the Party on the recent elections or on trade union unity? Let us ask Columbus if fifty people in Columbus hear regularly the Party's interpretation of events? I don't say shop workers in Columbus—any fifty people.

It is necessary that the good decisions of our Party committees be written up in popular style and brought to the masses in various agitational material. The leading committees must take the initiative on this, but an alert branch could do much on its own hook: be alert to problems and write them up themselves, and at least every branch can copy editorials from the *Daily Worker* and distribute them in leaflet form, etc.

Our Party collects thousands of dollars from the workers to maintain our Party voice—the *Daily Worker*. Here, *every day* we have not only news but a political interpretation by our Political Bureau and by our leading comrades. It is clear that we are not bringing our paper to the masses. It is not because the workers will not read our paper. It is essentially that we do not make it possible for them to read it. If we would just do the simple job of making it possible for people to buy the paper, we

would multiply circulation by 3 to 4 times within a couple of months. I hope someone will explain why the *Daily Worker* is not sold at Fisher Body, at Goodyear, at Auto Lite, at Youngstown Sheet and Tube, or at Cincinnati Milling Machine Company.

Is it not clear, comrades, that part of the reasons for our difficulties are our own? We have tons of literature—we have a *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*. But we don't bring them to the people who want them. If we want to accomplish these big tasks we need the masses in motion—with knowledge. Let's reach them with our message, through our press, shop papers, neighborhood papers, language papers, leaflets and literature.

### **Equipping Our Membership Theoretically**

Is our Party theoretically equipped to meet the big tasks ahead? We must answer that our Party in Ohio lags seriously here also. We can do good practical and mass work only if we have grasped the fundamentals of communism, if we study and make our Marxist-Leninist theory a guide for our daily activities. We have some otherwise good comrades, including some of our trade unionists, who think they can live on their wits, so to speak. They become loud talkers, boasters, chatterers, but they do not answer the problem of the workers or of their unions. Then they wonder why they get the gate or get into trouble.

I feel the same enthusiasm that I felt 20 years ago in my first study class in Marxian economics when I attend such schools as our Labor Day nine-day school or our Thanksgiving Day four-day school, which we held last year. You see the comrades just drinking in knowledge like a sponge—a new world opens up to them, so to speak. Of course, in such short-time schools, they don't learn everything. In fact, they just get a few fundamentals, but they do learn that education must become a characteristic feature of all Party life, without which we can make no progress. I wish some of our so-called practical leaders and our old "hard boiled" know-it-all comrades would talk

to some of these recent students and get the same revolutionary enthusiasm, that enthusiasm that comes from organized and self study.

Not all of us can go to school, but theoretical development comes through organized reading, discussions and classes right in the midst of the class struggle. With political clarity, we will have enthusiasm and determination to fulfill our tasks in an able manner.

The heart of the problem is a political one. On the basis of an understanding of the vanguard role of our Party, after evaluating the relationship of forces in Ohio today, and outlining our tasks, we must come to a realization that the central problem is to understand that the growing progressive movement in Ohio cannot move forward, cannot rise to higher levels and fulfill its class role, cannot meet and solve the manifold and difficult problems ahead, unless the Communist Party is substantially increased in membership.

We are determined to achieve this. We are determined to tackle all the problems before us and put our Party in such a shape that we will be able to accomplish the big tasks ahead.

## How a Metal Industrial Unit Functions

By D. P., Philadelphia, Pa.

*"When the leading comrades in the union guide the industrial and shop units, these units can become the best spokesman of the Party."*

IN THE year 1935, considering the special needs of our Party in the metal industry, the metal branch (an industrial unit) was organized. For over a year, although a number of recruits were taken into the Party, the unit

as such functioned badly, with only a few comrades actually carrying out the Party tasks and campaigns in the union.

A real turn was made in the life of the unit around June, 1937, with the assignment of a capable comrade as unit organizer, and with the leading comrades in the union assuming personal responsibility for the work of the unit. A unit bureau was elected and began to meet regularly, preparing the work of the branch. Personal discussions were held by the bureau with the individual comrades who were inactive, and on the basis of a joint understanding tasks were assigned.

As soon as the unit bureau began to function, the attendance at the unit meetings increased. Regular educational meetings were held, to which non-Party active union members were invited, and some of them soon came into the Party. An effort was made to start a special study circle for some members, but this was not successful. To bring the face of the Party before the entire union membership, we began the publication of a regular monthly bulletin in the name of the Party branch, and it was well received by the members. All major campaigns such as the Japanese boycott, the struggle against war and fascism, as well as the struggle against lay-offs, were raised at the union meetings by our comrades.

### Experiences of Recruiting

It was natural that with the improvement in the life of the branch, we decided to look over the field for prospective new members. In August we decided to start a recruiting drive in our own unit. The national drive found us somewhat more prepared than other units, because the entire question had already been discussed. It took some time to shake up our comrades. However, *as some of the leading comrades began demonstrating by example that it is possible to recruit*, more and more of the comrades began falling into line. Up to date, our unit has recruited over forty new recruits, which is 200 per cent of our original quota. Some individuals in our unit did exception-

ally good work and are leading the entire district in the number of recruits.

In the process of our recruiting some interesting experiences were brought out. First we did not limit ourselves only to sympathizers, but began discussing the entire program of our Party with the workers in the union at large. As a result we were able to recruit some who only several months previously were actually antagonistic to us, mainly on the basis of religious prejudices. Among our recruits are some former leading Coughlinites, and quite a percentage are of Irish-American, Pennsylvania Dutch and German descent. The best recruiting was done by the leading comrades in the unit and the union.

We faced certain difficulties in our drive. Some comrades, not clear on the difference between the Party and mass organizations, swung a little to the other extreme, getting applications from people who were not yet ready for the Party. This was however corrected. The second and biggest problem was to involve all comrades in the campaign. While quite a percentage of members did actually recruit, we still could not involve all comrades. It was mostly the newer rather than the older comrades that did the best work.

As soon as a substantial group of new members were taken in, the unit bureau had a special meeting to discuss ways and means of keeping them in the Party. We at first decided to hold a special class. This however was not successful, because the new comrades failed to see at the class the people who had brought them into the Party, nor did they see in the class the Party as concretely as they saw it in action in the union. We changed this immediately, and brought all these new members into the unit. However, we changed the life of the unit, limiting the business to only one hour and the unit bureau assigned a chairman who runs the meeting in a business-like manner. The rest of the meeting is devoted to educational activities. The older comrades are now adopting a more social attitude to the newcomers. They seek them out at meet-

ings and talk with them, go out for a glass of beer with them, etc.

Our experience shows that when the leading comrades in the union become the guiding spirit in the industrial and shop units, these units can become the best spokesmen of the Party. Furthermore, in spite of our difficulties in recruiting in the past, the national recruiting drive has made our unit recruiting-conscious, and our recruiting has now been placed on a permanent basis.

## Let Us Keep Our New Members!

By REBECCA GRECHT

OUR Party, in the national membership recruiting campaign, from September 1 to February 1, has brought 22,000 new members into its ranks. Of these, about one-third are women, and approximately 15 per cent are Negroes. Half of them are members of unions affiliated with the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. A substantial number come from basic industries, including steel, mining, auto, marine, textile, lumber, transportation, oil and railroad.

This is a great achievement for our Party and the labor movement as a whole, proving the correctness of the Central Committee declaration at its July, 1937, meeting, that the economic and political conditions today are favorable for the building of a mass Communist Party in the United States.

### A Higher Party Consciousness

One of the most significant results of the recruiting drive has been the development among our members of a higher Party consciousness, a deeper realization of the need to build our Party, not simply in drives alone, but in the course of all tasks. Furthermore, throughout the campaign, there was stressed the fundamental need of paying attention to the *Party as an organization*; of determined

efforts to improve the inner life and methods of work of the Party units as a prerequisite for mass recruiting and the retention of new members; of giving major consideration to the education of the Party membership, new as well as old. We can note a very definite improvement in this respect, although it is by no means adequate.

The recruiting of 22,000 new members places before our Party, as an immediate fundamental task, the *assimilation and education* of the new members. Our most serious problem today in respect to membership growth still remains—how to keep the new members. A basic necessity to insure their retention is their education and training.

Very many workers have joined the Party because of their support of our immediate program, our leadership in the struggle against fascism, for peace. They may not yet understand the broad implications of the People's Front policy. They may not yet understand the ultimate aims of our Party, as the Party of socialism. In joining our Party these new comrades, front-line fighters in defense of the interests of the masses, enter an organization different from any they have ever been in before. For these reasons, among others, we must teach our new comrades, as rapidly as possible, the principles of Party organization; we must instruct them on the fundamental tenets of our Party, acquaint them with basic Communist theory, the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

Districts have already developed various forms of special educational mediums: new members' units; new members' classes organized on a territorial, industrial, or language basis; study circles, etc. These must be extended and developed on a much broader scale. Qualified new members must be drawn into the special schools now being organized in all districts. There should be a greater utilization of the *Workers Schools*. At the same time, however, we must bear in mind that eventually the new comrades attend their regular branches and units, and that their education cannot be separated from their practical activity in the Party. This makes it all the more essential that increasing and systematic attention should be given to all

forms of educational activity in the basic organizations of the Party themselves.

We have repeatedly emphasized the necessity of utilizing our press for the recruiting of new members. We now stress the need for making use of our press for the education of those who join. We now have not only the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*, but the *Mid-West Daily Record* and the *West Coast People's World*. We must strive to make our new members readers of our daily press. That is not all. We should see that these new comrades receive at least a minimum of necessary Party literature and strive to popularize *The Communist* and the *Party Organizer* among them. Where the individual comrade is not able financially to get at least a minimum of reading material, we suggest that the units to which these comrades belong find a way to supply them through contributions and the organization of branch circulating libraries.

#### **A Personal Approach to New Members**

It is essential that the branches and older Party members adopt a friendly, personal approach to new comrades. The branch executive committee or the branch membership committee or membership director should discuss with each new comrade his or her interests, desires and problems. Ofttimes new members feel like outsiders when attending branch meetings, and may consequently become easily disappointed if the branch manifests weaknesses, organizationally or otherwise. But, if we make these new comrades feel that they are needed in the Party, that their contribution will help us overcome our weaknesses, and strengthen us greatly for the tasks before us, then these new comrades will participate much more readily in the life and work of the branch.

It is essential to involve the new members in activity. It has often been said that too many responsibilities are usually given to new comrades, thereby discouraging them. This would be quickly remedied if we involved the new comrades in those forms of activities in which their special interests lie; if we give individual attention to such groups

as the new members recruited from trade unions; women; Negroes; and comrades from various national groups. For example, discussions with the trade unionists, newly recruited, on the problems of their particular industry and trade union, on the role of the Party, and the particular work that these comrades, as Communist Party members, can carry on, will help greatly to promote their understanding of Party work, and encourage their activity.

Similarly, consider the large number of working class housewives, and members of trade union auxiliaries who have joined the Party in this recruiting campaign. In the coming period we can discuss with them their participation, not only in campaigns against the high cost of living, but in activity around such demands as summer playgrounds, recreation centers, and other needs of their children. In short, we must try to make each comrade feel that he or she has something to give to the Party, and through the Party, to the masses. This will stimulate them, arouse enthusiasm, and bind them closely to our organization.

#### **Responsibility of Recruiter to New Member**

Lastly, we must begin to establish the responsibility of the *recruiter* to the member recruited by him or her. Too often, when a Party member recruits another, he considers his job done when his contact signs an application card. The new member is attached to a new members unit, or to a new members class, or to a regular branch, and the recruiter forgets about him. This should be changed. After all, the new member, upon joining the Party, knows best the comrade who has recruited him. We must state that the responsibility of the recruiter should continue for a time after the new comrade has joined. This means that the recruiter should maintain contact with the new member, should visit him to find out whether he has been assigned to a branch, whether he attends, what questions he has to raise, what problems he faces and what difficulties he may have. This is one of the best ways to demonstrate that warmth and comradeship which we must try to promote within our Party.

It is now the task of every branch and every unit to make an immediate check-up of every new member recruited by the branch or assigned to it. *Every new member should be accounted for.* This is the first step in the retention of the thousands of new members who have joined our Party during the last few months.

It is our job now to activize these new comrades, to develop them, so that they in turn may become bearers of Party policy among the masses, thereby immeasurably strengthening the leadership of our Party.

### **Political Leadership to the Masses**

Although we have added 22,000 new members to our ranks, and established two new daily newspapers in Chicago and California, our Party is still small numerically in the light of the great tasks before the American people. The masses are confronted with the beginning of a new economic crisis, with lay-offs, threats of new wage-cuts, an ever-rising cost of living. We say: Make the rich pay!

Fascist aggression is driving headlong to a new world war, and the American people are faced with the burning issue of the struggle for peace. We say: Peace through collective security!

The struggle for labor unity, for the defense and extension of the democratic rights of the people; active preparations for the coming Congressional elections so as to promote the independent political action of labor, so as to defeat reaction and advance the forces of progress in Congress—these and other tasks demand political leadership not alone of our Party as a whole, but of each and every individual Party member.

These comrades can give tremendous aid and leadership to the American people in the fight against monopolies, for peace, democracy, and security, through organization, agitation and propaganda among the masses, through their direct participation in the front ranks of battle. The situation today demands more recruiting, more political guidance, more education—a stronger Communist Party!

# A Shop Unit Advances Progressive Trade Unionism

By KEN EGGERT, Section Organizer, Toledo, Ohio

THE Central Committee of our Party has made it very clear to us that the tasks of Communists in a factory include the following: to help in every way possible to organize the workers and to consolidate and strengthen the union once it is established; to be the best fighters for the interests of the workers in the factory; to bring before them the Party position on political questions through discussions, leaflets, bulletins, and in other ways promote the understanding and class-consciousness of these masses.

*Our experiences have shown that the stronger our Party is in shops and factories the more militantly are the interests of the workers defended and the sooner are the trade union organizations built by these workers.*

In Toledo, Ohio, we have an example of the work of a shop unit, which illustrates these points.

Six months ago, in a certain auto-parts factory, there were three Party members who belonged to different Party branches. The Section Committee decided to bring them together to form a shop unit, and one of these comrades was given this task. This comrade took his assignment seriously and it was principally through his energetic efforts that the unit was built. He had been selling the *Sunday Worker* in the plant for several months. After receiving the assignment to build the unit, he increased the bundle and concentrated on selling it to selected workers. Each day he made it a point to eat lunch with some of the *Sunday Worker* readers, utilizing the lunch period to discuss with them plant conditions and union matters, as well as general political problems.

As a result of these efforts, three workers were recruited into the Party, making a total of six in the shop. They were then immediately formed into a shop unit.

## Strengthening the Union

The unit at once began to discuss how to strengthen the union among the workers, how to raise forward-looking, progressive policies. It was decided also to recruit additional members. At the next unit meeting, three more workers attended.

Largely as a result of the activities of the Party members in the plant, now organized as a shop unit, the workers adopted a more progressive viewpoint, saw to it that progressive union members were elected to office, and won good concessions from the company in their new agreement.

The shop unit meets regularly and discusses shop and political problems. The unit executive meets before every meeting, and often at lunch time, as problems arise in the shop. *The unit functions well because the Party members see how much has been done through the work of the unit to strengthen the union, and they realize that a well-functioning branch is fundamental to continued progress of the workers in the shop.*

Of course, there are weaknesses. Too much still depends on the comrade who organized the unit, without enough of the other members of the branch feeling the responsibility of their work. There is insufficient circulation of the Party press and literature, and a better political education of the new members is essential.

Correction of these weaknesses is imperative to guarantee our retaining the ground gained and progressing further.

The example of this branch has shown us how necessary it is to convince other comrades working in factories in Toledo that they must build units in their shops. Some of these comrades, who work very hard day and night on union problems, do not yet realize the necessity of rooting the Party in the factories. We must bring this home to them more sharply, and convince them that shop units must be built. In that way our Party will be much stronger and much more able to give leadership to the working masses in the important industrial city of Toledo.

# Make Dues Payments Equal to Your Membership!

By ORG.-EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION, C.C.

A REVIEW of the dues payments for all districts for 1937 reveals the following serious situation:

1. There is an extreme unevenness in dues payments, with great fluctuation from month to month. *This indicates that there is a lack of systematic attention, check-up, and control of dues payments in the branches and units.*

2. There was a very sharp fall in the average monthly dues in the first three months following the January, 1937, registration, indicating a tendency to relax and go easy with the comrades after their registration. This only makes it more difficult for comrades to pay up when they fall behind in their dues, and consequently a severe drop is very often not made up even during the course of a year.

3. An extreme drop in dues during the summer months, far greater than warranted, by an unavoidable lapse during this period.

In the light of these facts, every county, every section, every branch and unit should immediately check up on the dues payments of their membership.

This is especially important now after the recruiting drive. We want to make 1938 a banner year in dues payments. We must strive, as quickly as possible, *to bring dues payments up to the level of the membership.* This can be achieved only through earnest and systematic attention on the part of all leading committees, *especially the branch and unit executive committees.*

Here are a few measures which can give guarantees for improvement in dues payments throughout the Party. They are:

1. Every branch and unit should have a membership director, chosen from among the best comrades. Large branches may even have small membership commissions.

2. Select immediately an active live wire as fi-

nancial secretary in all branches and units, this comrade to be not simply a technical worker, to take dues when offered and to keep books in order, but a comrade who is qualified to check carefully on the dues payments of each individual comrade, to have the initiative to make reports, to bring to the attention of the branch or the branch executive committee those comrades who do not pay dues regularly. Branch membership directors and financial secretaries should work very closely together.

3. Many comrades who registered January 1, 1938, took advantage of their right to register even when three months arrears in dues. If there is laxness in the first few months of 1938, especially with these comrades, indebtedness will mount up rapidly, making the dues situation extremely difficult. See to it that these comrades pay up their 1937 dues as quickly as possible. At the same time, guard against any tendency to postpone dues payments now, as regular dues payments during the first few months of the year will go far to determine the standing of your branch or unit.

4. Efforts should be made to establish a system whereby members are encouraged to pay their monthly dues the first week of the month so that the subsequent weeks of the month may be utilized to concentrate on the comrades who do not pay regularly.

5. It is advisable to organize classes of short duration for membership directors and financial secretaries. In this connection it is essential that the question of dues payments and activity be discussed in the branches and units as political tasks, as part of the Leninist principles of Party organization.

6. Branch executive committees should make regular reports to the branch as a whole and also to section committees. Section committees should make such reports to their county committees, or to the districts where there are no counties.

Similarly, counties should make regular reports to their District Committees. In this way, the entire question will receive the proper authoritative attention.

The Org.-Education Commission of the Central Committee proposes a New Year's resolution for 1938, to be adopted throughout the Party: *We pledge ourselves to do everything to bring dues payments up to the level of our membership!*

As a measure to give meaning to this resolution, we propose that all districts immediately set into motion a vigorous drive to bring all members into good standing, and to establish functioning membership apparatus throughout the districts.

## The Dorchester Branch Recruits

Collectively Written by Branch Executive Committee

OUR branch feels highly honored that the Massachusetts State Committee will award a mimeograph machine for the best record in the recent recruiting campaign to the Dorchester Branch in Boston. We are located in a residential section of about 75,000 population, made up mostly of workers, with a generous sprinkling of middle class people. At a branch bureau meeting two weeks after the campaign was launched, in discussing various phases of work, we felt that we did not have the trained or necessary forces to carry through our campaigns and develop a People's Front movement in Dorchester. It was then for the first time that we recognized the real meaning of the statement of the Central Committee that the best guarantee for the successful building of the People's Front is the existence of a strong Communist Party. We decided to get the forces.

We outlined our campaign to double our membership at least. Each comrade was appointed a recruiting committee of one. Comrades in mass organizations were to submit a list of individuals who were considered ready for Party membership. All comrades were asked to sub-

mit a list of their acquaintances whom they would attempt to recruit. The bureau was to check on progress made. The more developed comrades agreed to place themselves at the disposal of the others to help where necessary. Several comrades volunteered to arrange gatherings at their homes for specific groups of contacts. A series of open branch meetings was planned. Several of the comrades volunteered as shock brigaders to recruit at least three new members each.

No organizational steps can succeed without clear political understanding. Realizing this, the branch executive committee arranged to make each comrade fully acquainted with the political issues involved through discussions and in other ways. Systematic checkup and personal discussions of their problems with individual comrades facilitated the activity.

For some time the executive committee had been taking particular pains to make our work interesting, to involve comrades in work they liked and for which they were suited, to improve our meetings and develop a collective method of work. We had not yet fully succeeded in these particulars, but enough progress had been made to infuse the comrades with a fresh cooperative spirit, a desire to help build.

### **Open Branch Meetings for Recruiting**

Our open branch meetings were organized with the same extreme care exercised by our State Committee in their arrangement for important mass meetings. They were planned two weeks in advance. Each comrade was made to understand that relying on the others to bring contacts was not enough. The importance of bringing leading individual members of mass organizations was stressed. These were not mass agitational meetings, but direct organizational-political meetings to which we brought specific close contacts.

The following is typical of the proceedings of such meetings:

1. The branch organizer opened the meeting and spoke

for about five minutes on some local issue, showing the work of our branch.

2. Entertainment. Musical program about 10-15 minutes.

3. One or two points of regular business. The meeting as a whole was arranged so that it would be interesting and well conducted. Therefore much of the routine details were left out. The business that we did discuss was calculated to show what type of work our branch was doing and something of the method employed.

4. Discussion. Some leading comrades from the city office spoke on some important and pertinent political topic for about one-half to three-quarters of an hour, tying this up with the recruiting campaign.

5. Chairman made direct appeal for membership. (About five minutes.)

6. Question period.

7. Tea. Teatime was arranged so that a friendly get-together between Party members and visitors would take place. Everybody was made to feel at home. Everybody was introduced to everybody else. Everyone was spoken to. We discussed with each one his individual questions regarding Party membership and many were signed up.

### **Recruiting in a Campaign Spirit**

The recruiting campaign was brought home to each member of the branch as his or her own individual job. Constant reminders; systematic discussion of the problems encountered; socialist competition, not only between branches, but also between the members of our own group; the added incentive of the mimeograph machine offered as a prize—all contributed to the *campaign spirit* we generated. Recruiting became for us an exciting, interesting, eventful activity with well-understood political ends.

We set out to get all the people who should belong to the Party. We pointed out to the "as-good-as-Party-members," our loyal close sympathizers, that no matter how much "Communist work" a sympathizer did so well, his work would be very much more effective if he were a

Party member. We discussed frankly with our sympathizers the danger of fascism, the necessity of combatting it with *organization*, the rich possibilities for building a People's Front in Dorchester, the most favorable objective situation; and our sad lack of forces; many joined. In one case we brought a specific problem to the attention of the wife of one of our members, who "would join the Party some day." We needed somebody to do certain work among the women, work for which she was well suited. We needed her help. She joined the branch. A former Y.C.L.'er, away from the movement for some years, came back. She did not want to join the Party because she preferred giving her time to building the youth movement with particular attention to the Y.C.L. She is now a member, working with the youth.

We attained our quota and more than doubled our membership. We recruited 49 new members, of whom 23 are men and 26 women. It is significant that, while only one of our members recruited more than five new members, on the other hand, a large number of our members were involved in recruiting. Registration, which took place during the drive, took us but one week to attain 100 per cent.

As for the weaknesses, of most importance is the fact that our recruiting was almost entirely on a personal basis, carried on among friends and relatives. Very little was systematically done in the mass organizations and the unions. We got only 12 from the unions. The next step is to recruit and build our influence in these decisive groups.

The task before us, no less in importance than the task of recruiting, is to hold and activize our new membership. In our branch, this task will be approached with the same serious planning, the same systematic check-up, the same attention to individual problems and preferences, the same *campaign spirit* as was the recruiting drive.

# Party Building in the Northwest

By LOUIS SASS, Organization Secretary, Northwest District

**I**N THE Northwest, the objective political conditions for the building of a mass Communist Party are extremely favorable. The struggle against reaction in Washington and Oregon has attracted large sections of the population to the progressive movement. The Washington Commonwealth Federation is broadening out more and more to include organizations and people holding various views on some political questions, but united on the immediate objective of defeating reaction and preserving and extending the much-curtailed democratic rights of the people.

Labor racketeering, complete lack of democracy in unions dominated by the notorious Dave Beck, have created a genuine desire on the part of a majority of the members of the A. F. of L. to do away with these practices and unite with the C.I.O. to present a solid labor front against the lumber barons and Chambers of Commerce. The growth of the C.I.O., particularly in lumber and marine, thus advancing the forces of progress, adds considerably to the possibilities of building a mass Party.

The district leadership, as well as the membership of the Northwest District, realize that only by strengthening our Party politically and numerically will we be able to participate effectively in the election campaigns now being conducted in such cities as Seattle and Tacoma and serve as an important factor in the unification of the Northwest labor movement. Our first job, therefore, in connection with the national recruiting and Party building campaign was to get the membership of our district to understand the political meaning of a large Party. This meant an intensification of our educational work in all of our sections and units, through full-time and week-end classes, unit discussions, and a campaign to get our comrades to read the basic Party literature.

## **A Broad Campaign of Mass Propaganda and Agitation**

One of the principal problems we have confronted is the necessity of developing a broad campaign of mass propaganda and agitation to overcome the I.W.W. and syndicalist traditions, and the influence of the Technocrats and Townsendites, which still exist among the people of the Northwest.

We have noted a number of shortcomings in our work as, for example, our inability to establish a functioning educational commission up until very recently; our weakness in factories, as evidenced by the fact that in the entire district we have built only two shop units during the national recruiting drive; the lack of leadership by our neighborhood branches, which have not yet given sufficient attention to problems of their community. The drive has also demonstrated to us the necessity of building our Party in the smaller industrial towns, where branches existed at one time but collapsed due to lack of attention and leadership.

We have certain positive achievements to record, however, very significant for our district. Take, for example, the development of our section in Aberdeen. Last year, the section registered 60 members. Comrade Henry Huff, Section Organizer of Aberdeen, and the Section Committee decided to concentrate on the lumber industry. Schools were conducted to develop comrades in this industry, particularly as to the way to conduct effective Communist work in the unions.

Socialist competition was introduced as a method of involving the largest possible number of members in Party building. At every one of the unit and branch meetings, discussions were conducted on the important local and national problems. The section committee has consistently checked up on its own decisions, so as not to permit itself to forget about them. One full-time section school was conducted for one week, with about 50 people involved.

As a result of constant political activity, Aberdeen has registered 165 members, and Comrade Huff, the Section Organizer, tells us that they are by no means finished. The

delay is caused by the fact that many of their members are working out in the lumber camps, and are hard to contact. The dues payments of this same section, for the past four months, show an average around the present registered membership. However, Aberdeen is not alone in doubling or more than doubling its membership.

### **Advances in Party Organization**

Seattle, in January, 1937, registered 472 members. Now, it has over 1,100 members, and it has registered to date (January) over 900. We have succeeded in breaking through the terror of Mayor Dore, at least partially, by signing a contract for 26 radio broadcasts on a small station in Seattle. Here, the major organizational problem was the establishment of sections on a legislative district basis with strong leading committees that would be able to give leadership to the units and branches in the very intricate political problems facing them in their localities.

At the present time, Seattle has eight sections, all of which have just held conventions. In most instances, these are the first section conventions since the organization of the Party in these localities. They were well-prepared, laid down the main political tasks confronting the sections, and concretely tackled the problems of Party work. We can appreciate the great significance of these conventions in every field of the Party's activities in the Northwest when we realize that they were attended largely by native sons and daughters of the Northwest, many of them descendants of the first pioneers who came to this region, and that these comrades are very new in the Party.

The county organization in King County has and is conducting county classes on Principles of Communism, Current Problems, Trade Union Methods, Organizational Problems of the Party; in addition to which specialized classes for organizers, membership directors, and finance secretaries are being held on a section scale.

As another example, take the city of Spokane. Our District Organizer, Comrade Raport, conducted a school in Spokane for one week, in which about 60 comrades

participated. He also led an informal class for the leading members of the Section. In this way, the examples of Aberdeen, Seattle and other sections were brought home to our Spokane comrades. As a result, Spokane, which had registered 95 members in 1937, now has a registered membership, including the December new members recruited, of over 180.

The registered membership of our district at the beginning of 1937 was 1,181. So far, we have registered 2,115 members, and we expect to register about 200 more members. There has been a significant increase in dues payments. In August, they were 1,320; September, 1,796; October, 2,223; November, 2,119; and in December, 2,684. This compares with an average dues payment of 1,056 for the first six months in 1937.

The average monthly recruiting for the last four months was about 250, as compared with a monthly average of about 90 for the first eight months of 1937.

While we are proud of our advances we are, at the same time, very much aware of our weaknesses. Our District Committee is taking steps to overcome these by involving a large number of people in leading work, by strengthening our departments and committees, by working more directly with the section committees and county organizations and by broadening our educational activities. We are going forward in the Northwest to realize our pledge to the Central Committee of 3,000 dues-paying members by July first.

# Our Responsibility to New Members

By MARY VICTORIA, Pittsburgh, City Membership Director

IN THE city of Pittsburgh, we almost doubled our membership during the National Party Building campaign, recruiting 384 by January 4, and have registered over 650 members.

Only 30 per cent of our members participated in the drive. Fifty comrades have recruited only one new member; two recruited over 30 each; others have recruited from two to 14. Ten new members themselves brought in 17 additional comrades.

The majority of the new comrades are steel workers and housewives. *Negroes comprise the largest single group.* We estimate that about 20 per cent of the new members belong to families of older comrades; the number of wives, husbands, brothers and sisters of Party members who have been recruited shows how important it is to do Party work *right at home!*

## Problems of New Members

The question of what to do with new members once they joined was our most important problem. Too often the Party comrades who participated in the membership drive felt that their task was done as soon as an application card was handed in. Furthermore, the section's lack of apparatus to introduce the Party to new members had resulted in the loss of many. As an experiment, a new members unit was established to meet weekly at a central location in the city, to which the new comrades were assigned for a period of six weeks before being transferred to their regular units. This unit, although it elected its own organizer, financial secretary and literature agent, was under the guidance of a leading Party comrade who conducted the political discussion each week.

We found that although this was a step in the right direction it was not sufficient to take care of new members in outlying parts of the city. As recruiting increased, therefore, we were able to establish several other new

members units in the vicinity of existing branches with a political leader assigned to each one.

Fractions in national groups and some industrial units requested that their new members be left entirely to them. This seemed reasonable because, in the case of language groups, new members might not feel at home in an English-speaking unit, and in certain industrial units, new recruits had been under the tutelage of Party comrades for a long time in their trade union work, before signing application cards.

We discovered, however, that the establishment of new members units was not enough. Approximately 50 per cent of those notified to attend did not show up, and a fairly large number who came once and received their membership books did not come the second time. Checking up on the reasons for non-attendance was too large a task for the City Membership Commission alone, since the necessity of personal contact with all new recruits was obvious. It was also felt that some responsibility for the new recruits should rest upon the individual comrades who recruited them. Therefore, a system of check-up was established.

Some new comrades were assigned directly to regular units and their books given to their unit organizer. A list of these members and their units was kept by the City Membership Director who checks with the unit organizers after a period of a few weeks to see what had happened to the new comrades.

Another group of comrades was assigned to new members units, and their books given to the political leader in charge. Each week the membership director, who has a list of these comrades also, checks with the political leader of each new members unit to find out which new members have attended. If, after two weeks, a new member has not shown up, a letter is sent to the comrade who recruited him, directing the recruiter to visit the new member and to report to the Membership Director the reasons for non-attendance. If the recruiter does not answer within a reasonable length of time, his unit organ-

izer is sent a directive to check up at the unit meeting the recruiter's failure to carry out his responsibility.

### **Solving the Problem of Fluctuation**

While this method requires a great deal of clerical work and time, and experience with it undoubtedly will point the way toward simplification, it appears at present that a fairly strict adherence to the system will help solve the problem of fluctuation. Party comrades who recruit will be given to understand that they have a responsibility to their new member beyond getting the application card signed. At the same time, the City Committee will be in close touch with the problems new comrades encounter in their first experiences as Communist Party members.

During the Party Building Drive, we found it necessary to form several new units to suit the needs of our new recruits, especially of the industrial units and language branches. In the case of the latter, we considered neighborhoods in which most of the people speak one language. By establishing a language branch in the community, we were able to bring back into activity some old members and to recruit a large number of new members who would attend unit meetings conducted in their own language.

For instance, the present Lithuanian branch, which was formerly a neighborhood unit, and now is composed only of those who speak Lithuanian either entirely or with greater ease than they speak English, has recruited more than forty new members during the drive and the unit is actually functioning better than some of our old-time units which we have always considered our best. Similar instances could be given of the Croatian, Greek, the Polish, and the two Italian branches. Very soon a Slavonic branch will be organized on the South Side where large numbers of this language group live. This is a new experience for Pittsburgh and still is in the experimental stage. Considering the numbers recruited by language branches during the drive and the seeming increase in interest and activity of comrades in these language branches, it appears that our experiment will be successful.

# Educational Work in a Shop Unit

By N., New Jersey

THE shop unit of which I am a member was organized at the very end of 1936, when a progressive worker in our shop was convinced by an active Party member of the section that a shop unit was needed to advance the work of our union. This worker selected several other active union members and invited them to a meeting at which a district representative spoke. They joined the Party. The unit at first consisted only of four members, and met irregularly until the District Organizer of the Party began to attend the meetings. Today the unit has several more members including key men in the union.

The main task of our unit has been to help build up the union. This we have done vigorously. Before the unit was organized, the union had tended to drift aimlessly without any efforts to increase the membership, which at that time was barely 50 per cent of the workers in the shop. The leadership and activity of our Party members in the union made the union-organizing campaign a success, bringing this 50 per cent up to 95 per cent.

After this our shop unit began to agitate for several reforms, such as fair timing on jobs, equal sharing of time-off, seniority rights, etc. The union raised these issues and succeeded in winning our demands. Our Party comrades were also active in carrying on a campaign among the workers for affiliation with the C.I.O. The union voted for affiliation—six to one.

## Educating the Union Local

When these tasks of primary importance were finished successfully, we took the initiative of raising the need of strengthening our local through education. Most of the members of our union have little or no experience in the labor movement. This meant that a complete educational program would have to be adopted. In order to make this more interesting, this program began with what was

uppermost in the minds of the workers. This was just prior to the elections, so the union had several speakers on the question of the political action of labor. A class to study trade unionism was also inaugurated. This has helped to develop progressive thinking among the workers and to draw many of them closer to the Party.

During the recent period the union has faced the problem of lay-offs, has organized its relief committee which has been successful in obtaining relief or W.P.A. work for many of our unemployed members. The union has also aroused the sentiment of the town against the entrance of several runaway sweat shops, protesting to the Borough Council against conditions in these shops, broadening the movements to include other unions, as well as churches, social and political clubs of the town. Our Party members organized in the shop unit have been an active force in furthering these activities.

Soon elections for the School Board will take place. Our Party is calling for joint support by these groups mentioned above to more progressive candidates for the boards. Such a movement will advance the People's Front in the town, and may lay the basis for building a Labor Party.

Thus we see how our Party has shown its constructive role as a vanguard in the struggles of the workers. Our unit still has many weaknesses. Most important of these is our lack of understanding of the basic theories and principles of our Party. We started a class in trade union problems but this was not carried through. No doubt there are many difficulties but these should not excuse a Communist from educating himself. We have thoroughly discussed the problem and decided to start the class on *The Communist Manifesto*. From this we will proceed to a study of Leninism.

In the past we were in danger of becoming too absorbed in trade union problems only, but with this class, and the beginnings of labor political action in our own town, we have taken steps to remedy this defect in our work.

# New Life in a Street Branch

By Section Organization Secretary, Flint, Michigan

*"Organization and Education Brings Results."*

SIX months prior to the great General Motors strike in Flint, our street unit had about 25 members. It lost members gradually until only five remained. Thereupon the Section Committee of Flint assigned to the Section Organization Secretary the task of reviving the unit.

Before the section representative took any formal steps, he attended several unit meetings to see why the unit did not function. He found that the meetings were disorganized; many reports were made which lasted several hours but no decisions were reached. One thing was evident: the political understanding of the comrades was not high enough to meet the problems confronting them. *The first step, therefore, was to raise their political level.* This was done by a series of political discussions in the unit.

The first series was on problems of Party organization, and considerable time was spent discussing the functions of a unit, and unit structure. This gave the comrades a sense of organization and acquainted them with methods of Party work. Two concrete tasks followed—the setting up of a branch executive committee and a special committee on trade union work, each to work with the Section representative. These committees discussed the work of the branch prior to the meeting and then presented concrete proposals to the membership for their discussion and adoption. Thus, with this preliminary preparation, the unit had more time for education.

## **Studying and Applying the People's Front Policy**

The next step in political development was a study of the policy of the People's Front. Many comrades still do not see how this policy can be used as a method of approach to all problems of the day. They think of it only in the broad terms of developing the general unity of workers,

farmers, and the middle class against fascism, but do not apply it to the people around them—in trade unions, fraternal organizations, or neighborhoods. Hence in the Flint street unit a study of the People's Front emphasized its application to local problems which the branch could concretely tackle in its own community. We emphasized that effective work to develop a People's Front movement in Flint demanded a strong Communist Party, and that it was necessary immediately to increase the membership of the branch. Two recruiting brigades were set up with the result that *the unit grew from five to 40.*

As the unit grew more sub-committees were set up, working with the unit executive committee, so that everybody was given some personal responsibility. The section representative studied the comrades individually so that they would be placed in work for which they were best fitted. For example, comrades were activated in the International Workers Order, in work among women, in raising finances for the section, in assisting the shop units to distribute shop papers and other material.

### **Improve the Inner-Life of the Unit**

Unit meetings now last two hours at the most. This is made possible by the fact that the sub-committees first discuss their phase of work and bring concrete proposals to the branch. This business-like method of work impresses the new members. Attendance at unit meetings is very high. Check-up on attendance is the first point on the agenda and captains are appointed to visit absent members.

Our agenda is fixed for each meeting, but yet is sufficiently flexible to fill every need of the branch. The first point is attendance and dues. The second, minutes of previous meeting. Third, recruiting and new applications. Fourth, educational discussion. While the section representative is solely responsible for this point at present, comrades are being developed in the unit to carry on the work after he leaves. Fifth point: proposals of the various sub-committees, and check-up on individual assignments. We avoid new decisions until previous ones are carried

out. The meeting closes with announcements. This may seem a lengthy agenda; *but we always keep in mind the necessity of concentrating the efforts of the unit on two or three points, such as recruiting, education, and unit organization.*

Putting the unit on its feet was not done overnight. It took several months and required great patience. It was necessary that two major points be kept uppermost in mind: to increase the political understanding of the comrades, and to set up a correct organizational structure that would enable the unit to function effectively. To advance the comrades politically so that they know what they are doing gives them self confidence. We must realize that the people down in the units are the ones to carry out the work of the Party, and, therefore, great efforts must be made by the leading committees in section and district to develop these comrades.

# New York State Section

ISSUED BY NEW YORK STATE COMMITTEE, COMMUNIST PARTY

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## Real Life for Branches \*

By ANN ROLLINS

MANY of us are proud of the fact that the branch meetings have become more educational and more interesting. We point to the fact that our attendance on educational nights is excellent and that the comrades display a real live interest in the discussions. Some of our more courageous and modern branches even serve tea and cake and rush to the Section the following day, enthusiastic that the evening was a success. That is good, comrades, and should be encouraged. Every possible means should be used to attract a maximum number of people to our branch meetings. But let us stop and take stock for a moment.

What is the actual result of the fine discussions which take place? For example, what results are there from the discussion on Comrade Browder's report to the Political Bureau? How many branches know to what extent unemployment has increased in the territory as a result of the business recession and taken steps to see that these unemployed get on relief? How many branches issued leaflets on the sit-down strike of big capital? How many branches raised the question of new low-cost housing in relation to extending employment as well as getting better housing conditions? How many branches have issued leaflets on the attack on organized labor, especially the C.I.O., have called upon the community to support the Wage-Hours Bill, have organized delegations to the local Congressman and Senators on this question? How many

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\* From a report delivered to New York County Branch Executives on Jan. 16, 1938.

leaflets and meetings were held on the war question, urging the boycott of Japanese-made goods and how many stores picketed continuously? How many branches have issued leaflets or held meetings to express the solution of these problems in the Soviet Union and, through this, begun a systematic education of the people on socialism? Any of these problems, correctly raised and followed up by the branches, would bring the Party forward and lay the basis for a real mass movement in the territory.

I would like to illustrate this point with an example taken from a branch whose meetings I have attended for the past several weeks. Several weeks ago a leading comrade was invited by this branch to lead a discussion on the business recession. The discussion was interesting and the comrades were enthused. This enthusiasm brought forth the suggestion that a leaflet be issued on the milk question and a committee was designated to do this. The following week the leaflet was brought to the branch meeting—not too many leaflets—and after some coaxing, comrades took them for distribution. The membership as a whole did not know the contents of the leaflet nor what action it called for. And that ended the milk question for the branch. The following week there were questions and answers on Comrade Bittelmann's "Review of the Month" dealing with the business recession. Again a very interesting discussion. Again the comrades, feeling that something was amiss, suggested that the branch assume some activity. A few comrades even made several suggestions. But that was all. The fourth week a comrade was invited to lead a discussion on the housing question. Again questions and discussion. After the discussion, a comrade who had been raising her hand for some time was recognized, and very timidly she told the comrades that she was working with a tenants' organization, had started to organize a house and would some people please volunteer to assist.

After each of these meetings, the branch broke up into groups where efforts were made to get volunteer canvassers for the *Daily Worker*.

In the meantime a whole month passed. Workers were being laid off who perhaps did not know how to go about getting relief. Rents were being raised. Milk prices remained high and there was no milk station in the branch territory. And a month of indecision means a great deal to an unemployed family, means a great deal to a low-paid wage earner to whom an increase in rent and food prices spell actual starvation.

Frankly, what difference does it make to the territory that such a Party organization exists there? Is there any difference between this branch and some educational forum, other than that our deliberations are more profound and based upon a working class philosophy, since neither our deliberations nor any actions were transmitted to the people in the community?

What was at fault? First, the branch executive cannot merely arrange for a "pure" political discussion. The contents of the discussion, especially insofar as definite actions must result from it, must be discussed by the executive and a plan of action brought to the branch. This the branch executive failed to do because it did not understand the connection between political education and its concrete application in mass work. Second, since someone in the branch was sufficiently alert to suggest some action, namely the issuance of a leaflet on milk, the branch executive failed to see that the leaflet was issued and distributed that very week, and failed to follow up this leaflet with further action on the milk question. No connection was established between the cost of milk and rent. No effort was made to construct these scattered discussions around our Party's analysis of the business recession, and to initiate a systematic campaign in the territory against the sit-down strike of capital and for decent living conditions for the people in the territory.

What kind of a branch is this? It is a good branch, one of the better branches in our county. It consists of 134 members of whom about half live in the branch territory. They are composed primarily of young American people, intelligent and alert. They have recruited 40 new

members into the Party and, of a quota of \$1,200, have raised over \$1,300. But they are mostly white-collar workers and artists and so are not typical of the people living in the community. In fact, they are strangers to the community—outsiders. Outsiders not because they are known as Communists, and socially ostracized. Oh, no, they are outsiders because they are not known to their neighbors at all—they merely come home to sleep. They never talk to their neighbors. They can't be bothered with children, so they never have time to get friendly with the kids playing in the streets. They don't know the grocer or butcher, because they never cook, and probably brag about their impatience with cooking and such things. In other words, they mind their own business. And even should they develop some friendship with their neighbors, it does little good, because, like gypsies, our comrades move from place to place, having no ties in any particular neighborhood to keep them there. And it is because there is the basic difference between the lives our comrades lead and those of the average American family that our comrades find territorial work unpleasant and strange. Instead of each comrade looking upon the place where he lives as the place for him to carry on agitation and organization, just as he does in his shop and mass organization, he continuously seeks some other field for his activities. Having these activities elsewhere, they feel that they can forget they are Communists when they reach home and suddenly go "underground"; in other words, they can't expose themselves to their neighbors.

Let us spend just another minute with this branch and see what a typical agenda of such a branch is. Every week it has a political discussion. For this there is a general allotment of one hour. Then there is an educational director's report, with a certain amount of time allowed for the report and discussion. Following that, there is the sale of literature—or perhaps I should say the auctioning off of literature through high pressure salesmanship. This is followed by a report on the Party Building Drive, the collection of drive money which had not been turned

in as yet, and individual pledges taken for the following week. Then, to top it all, there is a special point on the agenda for the organizer's report which consists of all the announcements. For each point a time limit is set of from five to fifteen minutes, and since they can't possibly keep to this limit, they are constantly reminded by the chairman, who tries to fill his job properly, that they are falling behind and should please hurry, for after all this the election district groups have to meet. This is a typical branch meeting—some branches are a little better, some still worse.

The Party branch is an organization of comrades who *live* in a certain designated area—just as only comrades working in one shop are members of the shop unit. But today we find many branches of our Party composed almost entirely of comrades living outside of the branch territory. We propose that these comrades be *gradually* transferred out of the branches into the localities where they belong.

The branch should be organized on the basis of a certain number of election districts,\* and should be divided into election district groups to be composed only of the comrades actually living in the election district. Each election district should have an election district captain, appointed either by the branch executive or the branch itself. The best comrades should be selected for this position and these comrades should be trained to understand their political task in the election district. He should be known to every worker in the district and every person in the election district should know where and at what time he can be reached. The rest of the comrades, as members of the election district committees, should each be given a definite number of houses, beginning with the house in which he or she lives in which to work.

The branch as a whole should meet every other week where the general political problems and their application to the territory are discussed and the plans are laid

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\* In New York City, the election districts are political sub-divisions of a few square blocks, each of which has a polling place.

down for the branch. At these meetings, we also collect dues. The alternate week the groups meet to check on past activities and the carrying out of the plans laid down by the branch meeting of the previous week. This can be carried through successfully only if the branch as a whole will become a real political body, not merely for purely abstract discussions but a body that will lay down the policies and plans for the whole branch in the community. In other words, what we call an educational meeting can only be considered an educational meeting if it teaches our comrades how to carry out the policies of our Party in their own day-to-day work. Therefore while we should have political discussions at the bi-weekly meetings of the branch as a whole, we must make sure that from each of these discussions there flows a concrete plan of work for all the election district groups. Then, when the election district groups meet on alternate weeks their problems will be that of further concretizing the plans of the branch to their own particular election district. All assignments and all check-up should be done at the election district groups. The problem of literature should be raised at branch meetings in connection with the political discussions, but the mass-distribution literature should be sent to the election district groups to be distributed among the comrades for use in their work with their neighbors. Current publications of the Party, such as *The Communist*, the *Party Organizer*, *The Communist International*, the *Inprecorr*, should be sold by getting orders in advance from the maximum number of comrades. The *Daily Worker* likewise should be handled through the election district groups.

The Communist Party branch has an obligation to the people in its community to express its opinion on *all* questions concerning them, giving in a modest, but clear-cut manner, suggestions and slogans to meet every situation. Just as the State Committee or Central Committee of our Party voices its opinions and suggestions on problems concerning the state and nation, just so must the branch function in relation to its territory.

# Story of a Woman's Day Unit

By SONYA SANDERS, Bronx County

WE, of the women's day unit, do not segregate our unit activities from our everyday life. While we shop, our milk petitions are in our bags, and we are on the alert for signatures. While we wait for our fish to be cleaned or our chickens to be plucked, we speak to women on recruiting, we ask for contributions for, as well as sell, the *Daily Worker*. We are doing a splendid job.

Quite a few of our mothers are involved in mass work. We have a fraction of active women in a mothers' club in our neighborhood school. These women had a meeting to see how they could get the school organization involved on the milk question. It was a rather ticklish task because to the reactionary women on the executive of this mothers' club milk was "politics," and so untouchable. So you can picture what a job we had before victory was ours. At one of the school meetings, one of our comrades took the floor under "Good and Welfare" and proposed that the organization send a telegram in the name of the mothers' club of Public School . . . to Mayor LaGuardia, demanding to know why there is no milk station on Jennings Street. One comrade after another got up and supported this proposal, and before the reactionary women of the school club realized what was happening we won the entire membership over and we had a one hundred per cent vote to send this telegram to the Mayor.

However, we have handicaps and problems as well. Our most acute and major difficulty, although it is a "necessary" difficulty, are our children. We take them along to meetings, but many times we cannot spare a mother to care for the children. Because of this the children are unruly and disturb our meeting. Finally, we decided that at each meeting a different mother supervise the children while the meeting was in session but we realize that a more permanent arrangement must be made to provide care for our children while we are occupied with other activities

besides our regular meetings. In order to intensify our work in our territory, we decided to have a neighborhood kindergarten. At the present it will function one day each week and the children will be left in charge of one mother while the rest of the unit will go into the territory.

### **Experiences in Daily Worker Canvassing**

Now I would like to relate one or two incidents that I experienced while canvassing with the *Daily Worker*. In the early days of my canvassing, when I rang bells and occasionally heard babies cry, instead of asking the man or women who came to the door "why the baby is crying" or "can I be of help"—I would try to politicalize them and give them a sales talk on the paper. For my efforts I would get the door slammed in my face. I realized that I would have to start using my head. Now when I knock at a door and sense there is trouble in the home, I ask whether there is anything that I can do. This approach has won many friends and readers.

One Sunday morning I rang the bell of an apartment where I had been politely refused many times before. This time a little girl came to the door. She told me her mother was ill in bed with the grippe. I entered the home and the mother was taken aback at seeing me. I quickly explained that I wanted to help her. She told me that her husband is unemployed but that he had got an odd job for a day or two and so there was no one at home to care for the family. I prepared the dinner, dressed the children, straightened up the house, and departed leaving the *Sunday Worker* behind. On the following Sunday I was not only welcomed in that home but also in the homes of her neighbors. That woman paved the way for me by telling her friends that the Communists were humane people after all. Not only have I made readers of them but they are possible recruits for the Party.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. This kind of approach made it possible for me to recruit four members in one day.