

PARTY . . . ORGANIZER

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DISCUSSION ISSUE

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Party Education for Our Present Tasks

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

NEVER in the whole history of the world revolutionary movement was the question of Marxian education of the workers so burningly urgent as it is today. The capitalist system is in decay, and as it fights to prolong its existence it throws up before the toiling masses a whole series of complicated problems the quick and correct solution of which are life and death questions for the working class. In former years the development of the general crisis of capitalism proceeded at a relatively slow tempo, but now it has taken on a swift pace, one vital development following another in rapid succession. Only a Party thoroughly grounded in Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism can possibly understand this whole complicated and swiftly changing world social process and show the way to victory for the workers through its veritable jungle of crucial problems.

On every side the world's workers are pressed by new and urgent tasks. These are far more complicated and vital than in earlier years. They include the building of socialism in the Soviet Union, the carrying on of military operations against fascist invaders in Spain and China, the struggle to preserve world peace, the struggle to defend democracy, the fight against fascism and Trotskyism, the problem of building the People's Front and democratic front, the questions of healing split trade union movements, of bringing about one united revolutionary working

class party, of combatting mass unemployment, of contending against towering government deficits and financially wrecked industries, etc., etc. All these problems, which are often international in scope, also directly or indirectly affect us vitally in the United States. And their successful solution demands that we have a numerically strong Communist Party that is fully armed with Marxist-Leninist theory.

These are days of extreme capitalist demagoguery. The present social system, as its general crisis grows deeper and deeper, develops an unheard of system of deceiving the masses with a thousand crooked explanations of what is taking place in the world and what to do about it. The most dangerous of these demagogic forces are the openly reactionary fascists and the no less counter-revolutionary Trotskyites and Lovestoncites who operate under cover of pseudo-revolutionary phrases. The aim of both these reactionary groups of demagogues is the same—to harness to the chariot of fascist capitalism the very masses who are striving to free themselves from this monster. It is the great task of our Party to defeat these tools of capitalism, to refute their innumerable lies and hypocrisies, to furnish the workers with the true answers to all the vital problems that confront them. But to do this our Party must be firmly founded upon the solid rock of Marxist-Leninist theory.

Education of Our Party Membership

The education of our Party membership (as well as all those masses that we can reach) in the principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is the most basic necessity for the Party's growth and functioning. Especially is this true in the case of the 25,000 new members that the Party has obtained in the last few months. These new comrades must be carefully educated in the synthesis of Marxian theory and practice. For this purpose our whole battery of schools, literature, Party press, etc., must be brought into play. And this great educational work must not be done in any abstract sense. The teaching of the basic principles

of Marxism-Leninism must be linked up with the daily work of the Party in the class struggle, as crystallized in the resolutions of the Party convention and the Central Committee, the speeches of Comrade Browder, etc., etc.

The effectiveness of our Party in the class struggle is to be directly measured in relation to the ideological level of its membership. That level must be raised higher and higher, even as the Party must be recruited to much greater numerical strength. The tremendous tasks before the Party imperatively demand this. Only a Party organized on a mass basis and fully equipped with Marxism-Leninism can basically understand what is happening in the world today and lead the masses in taking effecting action. Only such a Communist Party can truly serve as the vanguard of the proletariat; that is, a Party that can lead the workers in the day-to-day defense of their vital immediate interests and also point out the way for the eventual establishment of socialism.

Essential Problems of Organization

By FRED BROWN

THE cornerstone of the resolution on Party building is embodied in its first paragraph, which states that:

“The historic tasks now facing the American labor movement place decisively before the American Communists the basic question of building their Party into a true mass party trained in Marxism-Leninism.”

And concludes:

“The present tempo of the Party’s political and organizational growth is still too slow and is far from meeting the needs of the working class movement and the tasks confronting the Party. The time factor is now decisive. The maximum attention and energy of the entire Party must be centered on rapidly solving the problem of the political and organizational consolidation and strengthening of the Party as an organic and

key part of the task of forging the anti-fascist democratic front."

The resolution emphasizes how we shall be able to solve this problem. This will be not only through mass recruiting, through the building of a mass circulation of the Party press, by intensifying the activities of the Party members among the organized masses, the national groups, etc., but also by paying special attention "to the functioning of the Party apparatus, and of the Party organization proper."

Major Organizational Tasks

In my opinion it is especially on this point that we must lay real emphasis and extend the resolution by pointing out some of the major organizational tasks, upon the solution of which will depend the speeding up of the tempo of Party growth.

Since the Ninth Convention, our Party has not only gained in influence, but it has grown in quantity and quality. There is no doubt that in this period we have laid the basis for the building of a mass party. At the time of the Ninth Party Convention, one of the main problems before us was to decide how best to adapt the structure of the Party organization to the new political needs of the Party and of the working class; how to improve the existing forms of organization, develop new ones, enable the Party to root itself more strongly among the organized masses in the shops, trade unions and other types of mass organizations; how to improve the Party organization in the neighborhoods to enable the Party not only to get in closer touch with the masses, but to understand the problems facing the masses, to organize them around the struggle for daily demands and broader political issues.

To what extent did we solve this problem? In this two-year period in which the Party has practically doubled its membership, the apparatus has been strengthened to such an extent that we have Party state organizations in all of the most important states. Instead of the 27 districts of two years ago, we have today nearly forty state organ-

izations, and Party units in all forty-eight states of the Union. Small districts of fifty to a hundred members have grown into state organizations of five hundred and more—Florida, Oklahoma, Texas and others. The Party has grown numerically, and in quality, not only in the most important industrial states, but it has laid root and gained in influence in every state of the Union.

The organizational readjustments made at the time of the Ninth Convention by strengthening the Party politically and organizationally made possible the mobilization of the Party in the election campaign, with the known results. It mobilized the Party forces behind the C.I.O. drives and generally has helped in making the Party react more quickly to the various political problems that have arisen on a national, state and local scale. The new organizational measures as regards meetings, dues payments, the improvement of the inner life of the units, the development of greater initiative and inner democracy, combined with new methods of work with which the American workers are more acquainted, have further facilitated the drawing into the ranks of the Party thousands upon thousands of trade unionists, workers from basic industry, thousands of workers from light industry, and many professionals.

The results obtained were made possible because the organizational changes were followed by intensified education and by the development of hundreds of new leading forces in all types of Party schools.

The Branch Form of Organization

In a very brief time we passed from the unit to the branch form of organization in the neighborhoods, built according to assembly districts, wards, or other political divisions; the old sections changed their structure and adapted themselves to the new political needs. Today the state organizations are divided into county, assembly district and section organizations. As the Party's influence has been extended in the shops and trade unions, many shop nuclei have been strengthened and hundreds of new ones built. The new form of industrial unit, launched at

the time of the Ninth Party Convention, helped not only the growth of the Party, but was an effective instrument in the trade union drives. The industrial units have grown so rapidly that today they can be counted in the hundreds.

The problem before the Tenth Party Convention is to evaluate all the experiences gained in the last two years and see to what extent the reorganization measures taken at the Ninth Party Convention were fruitful, in which direction we shall concentrate our efforts today to improve further the structure and functioning of the Party apparatus and of the lower organizations to cope with the new political needs. We must see to what extent the changes in the lower organizations have fulfilled our expectations and whether some readjustment is necessary.

Strengthening the Party in Shops and Trade Unions

When we consider that today a big trade union movement has been established, that the C.I.O. is driving forward towards the organization of the unorganized, that the C.I.O. movement has raised the political consciousness of millions of workers, that a progressive movement is forging ahead in the A. F. of L. unions, that one of the main problems before American labor is trade union unity, that the progressive forces of the trade union movement must play a decisive role in moving the masses into the stream of the democratic front—we see immediately how important it is to strengthen the Party in the shops and in the trade unions.

At the same time, when we consider that in the last two years big political movements, under the influence of progressive forces, have developed, such as the American Labor Party, the Commonwealth Federation and others, the growing role that Labor's Non-Partisan League is playing in raising the political level of labor on a national, state and local scale, and that these movements are not merely organized on a trade union basis, but on a territorial political basis as well, we see at once how important it is for us to strengthen the Party organization in the assembly districts and wards.

How important it is to establish closer kinship of the lower organizations on a territorial scale! Concretely, it means that while the branches will have to support some of the activities of the shop and industrial units, the shop and industrial units in a given county or assembly district organization will have to participate more actively in the political activities of the Party in that territory.

In view of the above political considerations, it is my opinion that the resolution on Party building should be followed by an addenda dealing with this problem, as follows:

A Review of Organization Apparatus

A thorough review and tightening up of the organizational apparatus from top to bottom become necessary at this time to further guarantee the consolidation of the gains made to improve the functioning of the Party organizations, to meet present-day conditions.

Shop Units: The large number of industrial workers that have joined our ranks, as well as the large numbers of Party members already organized in industrial units, gives us an opportunity to build hundreds of new shop units and strengthen the old ones. To achieve this aim, it is necessary to raise the role of the shop units in its full Leninist light. We must combat opportunist tendencies that have reduced some of the old shop units into mere fractions, or have transformed some of the shop units into industrial units, thus limiting their political role.

The whole Party must be clarified on the role of the shop units *as the basic organization of the Party*, as the organization of the most advanced forces in the shops, that raise the daily problems of the workers in a political light, and connect this with the position of the Party on the political issues on a state, national and international scale. (We shall not forget that thousands of new Party members have no notion as yet of the nature and role of this basic organization.)

We must create the guarantees that such important organizations receive continuous guidance and help, so as

to enable them to speak to the masses regularly through their shop papers and daily contacts, thus establishing themselves as the Party in the shops, mills and mines.

Industrial Units: The Ninth Party Convention resolution made very clear that the industrial unit is a transitional form of organization, for the purpose of building new shop units and becoming a positive force in helping to build and consolidate the trade unions. What applied during the Ninth Party Convention still applies today. Industrial units, especially in the larger centers, have grown with great rapidity, have performed, and in many places are still performing, a very important role. Wherever these forms of organizations are properly guided, they become springboards for the building of new shop units. But where leadership is lacking, they grow without control, losing their perspective, reducing themselves to factions and creating wrong tendencies. There are cases where industrial units have been conceived as an organizational form of protection, creating dangerous theories of "separationism."

There are other cases where professional units have sprung up and developed without control, separating the professionals in our ranks from the proletarian elements and the most essential tasks of the Party. From now on we must see to it that the industrial units not only become political factors among the organized workers, but, at the same time, become a vehicle and a helpful instrument in getting the organized masses involved in political activities on an electoral basis.

Hence we cannot view all industrial units in the same light. They must be reviewed, one by one, under the direct guidance of the leading committees of the Party, for the purpose of determining which of them shall be strengthened, which are ready to be transformed into shop units, and which shall be dissolved and their members assigned to branches. In certain cases, where the political activities of the Party in the neighborhoods require the strengthening of its composition and leadership, it will be necessary to transfer some forces from some of the larger industrial

units to the branches. (For example, in some industrial units, where Party members are to be counted in the hundreds, it should not be difficult to get some of the comrades transferred for such a purpose.) Mechanical, overnight changes would be harmful and must be guarded against. We must keep in mind that in most cases, the weaknesses are to be found not in the form but in the content. Improvement of the leadership of this transitional form of organization will determine its future course.

The Party in the Community

Branches: Branches have proved themselves, time and again, to be one of the main instruments of our Party through which to spread our agitation among the masses, to be in close contact with the masses on a neighborhood scale, the main vehicle of the Party in carrying out political campaigns in the neighborhoods, and also the main electoral basis of our Party.

To improve their function, it is necessary: (1) To strengthen their leadership, (2) to limit their size to a number not exceeding 50 (as decided in previous resolutions of the Central Committee), and (3) to improve their composition by drawing in industrial workers. More frequent membership meetings on an assembly scale or section scale, to be addressed by leading comrades, will help a great deal in stimulating the activities of all Party organizations, and make them conscious of their political role and tasks.

While the establishment of the group system on an election district or precinct basis would help to activate the individual members of the units in the neighborhoods where they live, we must be on guard against the conception that the groups are independent units, against a mechanical organization of these groups, without consideration of leadership, size, etc.

The groups should be built not only where the group is necessary, but where there are guarantees that within the group there are a few comrades with initiative, who will know exactly how to *carry out the decisions of the branch.*

This means that while we are for this type of group system in a large center, we must keep in mind that it is a process of development that will take months, a process that will have to be watched and helped continuously by the branch and section leadership.

The improvement of the apparatus, the improvement of the political life and function of the Party organization, must be accompanied by an improvement in the system of collection of dues and attendance. This calls for careful selection of membership directors and financial secretaries in the Party organizations and the establishment of well-functioning commissions on a state, county and section scale.

The carrying out of these decisions will strengthen every phase of Party work, will enable us to plunge into the circulation drives of the three dailies, to carry through extensive recruiting as a daily task, to extend our agitation among the broad masses, so that the Party will have a broader circulation of our press, and a membership in quality and quantity which will be able to cope with the situation.

Work Among the Masses

A Discussion on Fractions

By ROY HUDSON

THE increased influence and strength of the Party, as well as the growth of the general progressive movement, necessitate that we adjust our methods of work to the conditions which confront us. In doing so we take into account the changes in the mass organizations in the direction of a more progressive and democratic character, as well as our relationship not only to the masses in these organizations, but to the progressive sections of the leadership.

At the Party Builders Congress, Comrade Stachel, speaking of our work in trade unions and mass organizations, emphasized the need for a complete change in our fraction system and pointed out that we were already on the road to abolishing the Party general fractions.

What are the reasons for these changes? Will it lead to strengthening or weakening our work, and how will we be able to establish the influence of the Party over wider sections of the working class movement? These are questions that will require examination and clarification at the coming convention.

These steps do not mean changing our fundamental policies. The policy of the Party has always been and remains that of helping to build and strengthen the mass organizations of the workers and people and to help realize the aims and purposes of these organizations. By exercising the same rights as other members, Communists always attempt to secure the adoption of policies that will most effectively enable the membership to advance and protect their interests; and at the same time have the duty of supporting and fighting for those policies democratically arrived at and approved by the membership. Thus, the changes proposed do not mean revision of fundamental policies, but adjustment of methods in the light of changing conditions.

Factors Influencing Our Change

What then are some of the factors that influence our whole approach to the problem?

First, the question of our work in fields under the influence of progressive policies, in which there is considerable democracy, and where the Communists are being accepted on a wider scale as part of the progressive movement and where in a number of cases we have established our "citizenship." Surely, here we must endeavor to influence the policies of these organizations in collaboration with all other progressive forces through the correctness of our arguments, and through exercising those rights guaranteed to every member—that of participating

in shaping policies and determining leadership, through the exercise of democratic processes. In such circumstances, it would be harmful to carry over methods of work that were and are correct in organizations where reactionary bureaucrats use their usurped power to prevent democratic participation of the workers in the affairs of an organization.

Organized fraction work, which under certain conditions serves to rally all scattered progressive forces and strengthen the fight for democracy and progressive policies, would, under different circumstances, build an artificial barrier between the Communists and non-Party workers and seriously hinder the cooperation of all progressive forces.

Let us see how the growth of the Party affects this problem. Not only is our Party a united party, whose membership can be relied upon to fight for its general policies, but the Party is no longer the weak force it was a few years ago. We have cases, which unfortunately are not yet characteristic of the Party's strength everywhere, where as many as seven or eight hundred Communists belong to a given mass organization in one locality. That such organizations are democratic and progressive goes without saying; otherwise there would be something wrong with the Communists who are members of it.

Here, the holding of general fraction meetings to discuss problems coming before the union is bound to create the feeling among non-Party workers that we have no confidence in them, that we are trying mechanically to influence and control the policies of the organization. Also, it contributes to an unhealthy atmosphere in the organization, in as much as it discourages the widest possible exchange of opinion at the meetings of the organization and the drawing in of the largest possible sections of membership into discussing the problems before their organization.

Such a situation would inevitably breed distrust against the Communists. The changes in our methods of work are a concession to this distrust, aimed at improving the rela-

tionship between the Party and the masses, but a concession which will not weaken the activities of the Party or the masses.

Responsibility of Communists in Mass Organizations

As for Communists who have been elected into the leadership by the members of the organization to which they belong, surely, the prestige of such Communists, and the confidence of the workers, would not be deserved if their authority and leadership were not won and maintained as a result of their own individual activities and ability to help the masses to arrive at correct decisions, as well as their direct responsibility to the rank and file.

If we are to lead, not through organized fraction work, but through greater Communist understanding, responsibility and work, then there will have to be *greater emphasis upon individual responsibility, ability and knowledge*. Every Communist will have to acquire a better understanding of the general policies and tactics of the Party, of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Only if we are armed in this manner will the Communists be able even more effectively to help the masses, among whom we are working and whose problems we know, to arrive at correct answers to the immediate problems confronting them and systematically to win them for greater support of the policies of our Party. It will also mean that the work of each comrade will be subject to a more critical review by the Party and a consequent higher degree of discipline and Communist responsibility.

Carrying through these changes will attach even greater importance to the work of shop, industrial and branch units, as the medium not only of developing the independent activities of the Party, but as a most important center for arming our forces with the policies of the Party. Greater stress will have to be laid upon regular attendance at unit meetings, upon improving the political life and the functioning of the lower Party organizations through the more active participation of leading comrades.

Some Experiences in Work Among Catholics

By SIGMUND G. EISENSCHER, Allis-Chalmers Shop Branch,
Milwaukee, Wis.

THE lessons of Germany, of Spain, of Austria, have not been lost for the Catholic workers of America.

Ever larger Catholic masses are beginning to see the contradiction that exists between the fascist demagoguery of the Hagues and Coughlins and the hard facts of their own experiences.

The major evidence of anti-fascist sentiment among the Catholics of Milwaukee is crystallized around the following of the *Catholic Worker*, who maintain a headquarters called the "Holy Family House." This group officially participated together with other organizations, including the Communists, in sponsoring the meeting last fall in memory of the Haymarket Martyrs. Although one of the speakers was a known Communist, the *Catholic Worker* group supplied the ushers for the meeting.

The majority of Catholic workers of Milwaukee, predominantly Polish, are in the basic industries, and have been largely organized by the C.I.O. However, the *Catholic Herald-Citizen*, a weekly Milwaukee paper controlled by the reactionaries within the church, for weeks conducted a vicious Red-baiting campaign against the C.I.O. This campaign was started with the beginning of the financial drive for the *Midwest Daily Record*, when some of the leaders of the C.I.O. unions openly spoke in favor of supporting the *Record*. The Red-baiting attack was centered upon the Allis-Chalmers Local of the United Automobile Workers of America, the largest and most outstandingly progressive union local in the State of Wisconsin, with over 8,000 members.

A large percentage of the membership of this local are Catholics. The Red-baiting of the *Catholic Herald-Citizen* came at a time when the union was approaching a plant

election to determine the bargaining agency for the workers in the plant, to be followed within a few weeks by the elections for officers within the union, and negotiations with the management for a new agreement.

The Result of a Leaflet

At that time the State Committee of the Communist Party issued a leaflet addressed to the Catholics, quoting from the recent reply of Pope Pius XI given to Cardinal Verdier to the "outstretched hand" of the French Communist Party. It also quoted Cardinal Mundelein's recent statement warning all Catholics against Red-baiters, and effectively answered the *Herald-Citizen* Red-baiting barrage against the *Midwest Daily Record* and the union leadership. The leaflet further exposed the "Christian brotherhood" of the supporters of Hitler and General Franco, and called upon the Catholics to unite with all the forces of democracy to defeat fascism. After a fairly good distribution of this leaflet in the plant, in other C.I.O. unions and in front of many Catholic churches, the effect was immediately felt. The *Catholic Herald-Citizen* immediately toned down its Red-baiting, and many Catholics wrote to the Party office asking for more copies of the leaflet. The failure of the Red-baiting was seen in the fact that the workers voted 78 per cent for the union in the Labor Board election, and the officers of the local were unanimously re-elected without any opposing slate!

The Allis-Chalmers shop branch of the Party, meanwhile, although it did not display sufficient initiative in reaching the workers in the shop in its own name, made good use of the opportunity to do effective recruiting. Among those recruited to the branch was a young Catholic, who without consulting anyone, took the initiative to mail to twenty of his Catholic friends a copy of the leaflet issued by the Party, signed with his own name. *The result was six young Catholic recruits to the Young Communist League.*

On March 25, a Civic Conference on Unemployment was held at the Milwaukee Auditorium, sponsored by the

C.I.O. the Workers Alliance, the Railroad Brotherhoods, and locals of the A. F. of L. The *Catholic Worker* group distributed their paper to the 4,000 who attended, which contained a leaflet quoting from Pope Leo XIII, as the basis for their support of the purposes of the Conference, and stated:

“The *Catholic Worker* group advocates immediate action, and will cooperate in any constructive effort to relieve the problem of unemployment.” It further stated: “Ultimately, the remedy for unemployment is a social order founded on the Christian principles of justice and charity. The outlines of such an order are set forth in the great encyclical letters of Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI.”

Demonstration of Anti-Fascists

The following evening, there took place in Milwaukee the now-historic mass demonstration of over 6,000 anti-fascists in protest to the “youth rally” held by the Nazi Volksbund in the Auditorium. The members and leaders of the *Catholic Worker* group participated in the large picket line. Of the four anti-fascists who were arrested for demonstrating their hatred of Nazism within the Volksbund meeting itself, two were Catholics. At the trial the next morning, one of the four arrested, a member of the Allis-Chalmers local, stated openly in court that he was a Communist, and expressed his feelings of horror at the sight of children in Nazi uniforms, reminding the court of the Nazi bombs dropping on the children of Spain. The two Catholics, fellow-members of the union, followed immediately afterward with a statement to the Court that they had participated because they were Catholics and opposed the Nazi program of racial and religious persecution. These statements had wide publicity in the local press.

The effect of an active member of the union coming out openly as a Communist was healthy and positive. Since then this comrade recruited three more Catholics into the Party.

These experiences are of tremendous help to our Party, especially in view of the National Conference for Catholic Social Action which will be held in Milwaukee on May 1, 2, and 3. The vital issues affecting all of humanity, the threat of unemployment, of fascism and war, will undoubtedly arise within this conference in the form of a struggle on the part of the progressive forces within the Catholic church against the attempt of the reactionary agents within the church to harness the millions of American Catholics to the chariot wheels of world fascism.

Our Party's Approach to Catholics

A few words must be said about the approach of our Party to the Catholics. Our approach to them must be on the basis of urging them to carry into practice their own Catholic ideals and aspirations based on the concept of the brotherhood of man. We must speak to the Catholics in the name of the Party, appealing to them also on the basis of their experiences as workers, facing, together with the entire working class, the suffering of unemployment and low wages, the threat of reaction and war imposed upon them by the capitalist class. We must explain the mistaken views of those even within their own church, who take a position against the interests of the people. We must convince the Catholics that if their religion is dear to them it must mean something more than a philosophy for the explanation of life, but should serve as a guide for living. In this way can we defeat all those who betray the religious feelings of the masses to their common enemy.

Let us follow the splendid example given in the words of Comrade Thorez, leader of the Communist Party of France: "We do not deny that we differ in our attitude towards religion. The Communist philosophical materialism is far from the religious faith of the Catholics. Our conceptions of doctrine are contrasting. *But in both Catholicism and Communism there is the same generous ardor to reply to the century-old aspirations of men for a better life.*"

Building the Democratic Front Among the National Groups

By N. NASTAS

WE ARE witnessing a constant growth of consciousness in the Party of the urgent necessity for speedily turning toward mass work among the national groups. This growth has made remarkable gains since the June Plenum. However, it would be a mistake to say that the Party as a whole has already tackled this important task. There still exists in the ranks of the Party, even among leading comrades, remnants of old conceptions with regard to national groups, based on the underestimation of the importance of these groups in the economic and political life of the country.

There is nothing strange that we had such conceptions, if we recall all those "theories" about the disappearance of the national groups simultaneously with the dying out of the old generation. This wrong conception led towards a slackening of the work and a weakening of the Party's influence among the national groups.

Decisions of June Plenum

The June Plenum put an end to such non-Bolshevik theories. It made clear: (a) That the national groups play a prominent role in the life of the country; (b) That the understanding of the disappearance of national groups with the dying out of the old generation is wrong, because the younger generations are closely tied up both communally and culturally and do not discard their national traditions, etc.; (c) That the national groups, including the younger generations, are very important factors in the basic industries of the country, where in most cases they constitute the majority of workers.

Accepting these as indisputable facts, one cannot imagine a successful united democratic front in the United States without these national groups in it. All these national groups, without exception, are potential forces for any

progressive movement due to the following reasons: (a) The social composition—predominantly workers, with a small strata of small businessmen. (b) Historically and traditionally, they always were a target of reaction and, therefore, they were bound to be found among the progressive forces in the country so as to protect themselves and fight against reaction.

The successful unionization of the steel industry in the Pittsburg area, where foreign-born workers and their descendants constitute a majority of the working population, the municipal elections in New York, Cleveland and Hamtramck, have given us new evidences of the importance of the national groups. Even in the municipal elections in Detroit, where the labor ticket received 37 per cent of all votes, the national groups were major contributors to this high vote.

In New York, Peter V. Cacchione, an American Italian, and the Party's candidate for City Council, came near to being elected. He received a great deal of support from the national groups.

In Hamtramck, a Polish city, Krystatsky was also a few votes short of being elected. In Cleveland, Andrew Onda, an American Communist of Czech descent, missed being elected to a local office by a few hundred votes, and remains one of the outstanding political figures in the city because of his deep roots among the Czech and other national groups.

This progressive trend is today accelerated by the fact that the intensive fascist propaganda carried on by the agents of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy—which for a period made headway—is being counteracted today not only by our activities but by the progressive forces of the trade unions as well as by the outstanding spokesmen of the New Deal administration.

The masses of the various national groups by moving with the stream of the progressive forces in the United States, by participating in the struggle against reaction in this country, are getting a clearer understanding of what fascism means. Nevertheless we can not assume that the

fascist demagogic propaganda, exploiting the national sentiments of the masses, has completely lost its appeal. It is therefore our task and that of the progressive forces to double our efforts to counteract and overcome the fascist propaganda in order to win these masses for the cause of progress, peace, and democracy.

In the draft resolutions for the Tenth National Convention of the Party, it states:

“The Convention raises before the entire Party the urgent necessity of speedily effecting a decisive turn in all phases of Party recruiting and mass work among the national groups and organizations, in the first place among Italians, Germans, Poles, Jews, and South Slavs and Spanish-speaking peoples.”

Our Tasks with National Groups

In order to succeed in carrying this out, it is our opinion that the following steps must be taken:

1. The Party as a whole must pay more attention to the importance of the work among the national groups and regard this as a vital instrument for leading the broad masses in the fight for democracy and collective security and for building the Party as well. This can be achieved by having all Party publications and literature, as well as mass meetings and lectures, stress the position of the national groups and the tasks of the Party; and especially by the selection of competent comrades as editors and contributors to the national press.

2. The responsibilities of all this work must be spread to all the apparatus of the Party; that is, the district and section committees, including responsible Party members in the trade union movement and in other mass organizations, such as cultural, benevolent, sport, etc.

3. Special emphasis must be placed on trade union activity. In this field, while on the one hand we must orientate our activities among the national groups toward trade union activity, on the other hand our comrades in the trade unions must be made aware of the importance of these groups.

We must at the same time strive:

1. To develop the activity designed to unite fellow countrymen of various nationalities into a democratic front on the basis of immediate issues, common to all working people, such as the fight for peace, for civil rights, against fascism, for higher wages, for better working conditions, etc., in connection with some particular issues that may concern primarily a particular nationality. Special efforts must be made to see that such activity is not confined to the so-called Left-wing movement, but is broadened out to include even church groups, fraternal organizations and all other types of organizations embracing thousands of workers.

2. To draw some of the new elements of the younger generation into leadership in the National Bureaus and in mass movements in order that the leadership may itself reflect the composition of the old and new generations of the national groups. Special emphasis must be laid on the educational activities of the people in the national groups, together with training instructors and leading cadres for this work, who should not be isolated from Party activities, but on the contrary, should be closely bound up with all Party activities in the sections, districts, etc. To accomplish this, steps should be taken to organize full-time schools for training leaders for the work among the national groups, as well as evening classes, discussion circles, etc.

Work Among Women of National Groups

Work among the women of the national groups should not be forgotten, as it often is. In some national groups the organized women play a very important role such as in the progressive movement, in the fight for peace and against fascism, as well as in the ranks of the enemies of the labor movement. We must bear in mind that it is necessary to involve in all the work of our movement this important strata of the population.

All these activities among the national groups, as in the general Party education, must be turned towards the fight

against the influence of the fascists and their Trotskyite agents. Some of our comrades tend to ignore this danger, thinking that there are no organized groups of Trotskyites in the mass organizations, forgetting that the main tactics of the Trotskyites, who have no mass base, is to work as agents and provocateurs of their fascist bosses.

The comrades active in this field must bear in mind that extensive recruiting to the Party from among the national groups is the best guarantee for the success of the movement for a democratic front among the national groups.

The Party in Akron

By ELLEN KELLER, Membership Director, Summit County, Ohio.

THE immediate problem before the Party organization in Akron, rubber center of America, is that of Party growth. The labor movement in the city, predominantly C.I.O., is one of the most progressive in the community. The Party in this city and county has merged itself considerably with the progressive movement, has high prestige among the labor forces and in the community, and has advanced generally correct policies in strike struggles and important political situations.* We are now confronted with the basic question of establishing a mass party in Akron, in line with the Central Committee resolution on Party Building.

We must solve the contradiction between the prestige and influence of the Party and its actual role, on the one hand, and its insufficient mass growth on the other hand. The key problem is to develop political work in the mass organizations, show the face of the Party more boldly, and take organizational measures to assure an increase

* Read "The Akron Municipal Election," by James Keller, in *The Communist* of January.

in our membership. The county committee must give far more systematic attention to this question, and the Party leadership in the county must take upon itself definite responsibility for making a turn in Party building.

Today (April) we have 250 members in Akron, Barberton, and Cuyahoga Falls, cities with a population of 250,000. On January 1, we registered 191, and we recruited, since January 1, about 60 new members. Our average monthly dues for the first three months of this year were 193. We have eleven branches—three in Barberton, including a shop unit; one in Cuyahoga Falls, and the remainder in Akron. In Akron proper, which has 40,000 rubber workers, we have three shop units, one in each of the three big rubber plants—Goodyear, Goodrich and Firestone.

Our comrades in the rubber industry are very active in the union, are among the best builders of the union, and influence the progressive elements. But we have not raised sufficiently the important general political questions facing the people today, and have not clarified the policies of our Party to the workers in their particular shop or in the union.

Activities of units in rubber industry

Consider our activities. In the Goodyear branch, our largest one, we have several comrades who exercise considerable influence in the union, and have the confidence of the workers, being elected to important conferences. They have taken the lead in defending the rights of the Negro workers. Through their activity and leadership, they strengthen the progressive tendencies in the local.

In the Firestone branch, our comrades pressed in the local for an organizing campaign among the 1,000 Negro workers in the plant. They themselves were among the most active in the organizing committee, and helped to cement the splendid solidarity expressed on the picket line in the 1937 Firestone strike. The union has become more alert than ever to the importance of organizing the Negro workers and has launched a new campaign

among them. Our comrades also were the first to agitate for the setting up of a Women's Auxiliary, and helped to launch this organization.

In Goodrich similarly, though the proportion of comrades active in the union is less than in the other shops, the branch itself being the smallest of the three, our comrades played a role in the fight against the recent attempt of the company to cut wages of the production workers from 17 per cent to 20 per cent, a fight in which the entire Party participated, definitely influencing the situation.

These examples show the effective work of our comrades as active and leading forces in the trade unions. But we must ask ourselves—what about the activity of the Party branches as such? How do they raise the most important political questions of the day, giving the Party's position on these vital questions? How have our branches built the Party in their plants? What is the distribution of our Party press and literature? Do our shop branches issue shop papers, or special leaflets on significant issues?

The best functioning and largest shop branch is the one in Goodyear. In recruiting, this branch has made some headway, especially of late, but in the other shop branches, recruiting is very slow. Only our Firestone branch issues more or less regularly a shop paper, and special leaflets from time to time on important issues that come up before the Firestone workers. *The Goodrich and Goodyear branches have not issued a shop paper or a single leaflet for a year.*

Our Party press is not sold at the shop gates or taken regularly into the plant to our contacts. Only the Goodyear branch, due mainly to the activity of one or two comrades, sells our paper in the local itself, and to quite a number of Goodyear workers in their neighborhood—about 75 copies of the *Saturday Midwest Record*. The other shop branches each distribute about 30 copies of the *Saturday Record* around the locals. As to literature, very little is distributed by the shop branches to the workers.

This is being corrected now, with a concentration on the pamphlet *Collective Security*. Serious underestimation of this phase of our work is apparent. *The county leadership must show our comrades how our press and literature can assist us in building the Party.*

Political Alertness

We cannot say that the comrades are yet sufficiently alert politically. For example, in one of the recent meetings of the Akron Industrial Council to which some of our comrades are delegates, the Trotskyites brought in a resolution for support of the Ludlow amendment, and for support of an isolation policy. Our comrades did not take the floor to explain the correct position of collective security. Only after one of the officials spoke against this resolution, was it overwhelmingly defeated. We missed an excellent opportunity to bring political clarity on this vital issue of an effective struggle for peace. We have not yet seriously considered how to develop a campaign among the workers on the very important question of lifting the embargo against Loyalist Spain.

Clearly, we must take steps to raise further *the political consciousness of our own members*, so that they may understand how best to discuss such issues with their fellow-workers and consequently advance their political understanding.

For the past several months, our shop branches have organized joint open branch meetings on an average of one or two a month, where they take up important local questions, the struggle for peace, the recent Moscow trials, and other issues. These meetings proved that workers are interested in hearing what the Party has to say. With a little effort on the part of several comrades, these meetings attract quite a number of non-Party people. At one of these meetings there was an attendance of 50 non-Party workers.

What were the concrete results? Why haven't we recruited into the Party most of those who attended?

Shortcomings of Our Open Meetings

First, these meetings were not properly organized for recruiting purposes. The same workers were not always invited to come to the next open meeting, with the result that at each meeting new faces would be seen. The fact that our comrades brought new contacts to each open meeting is certainly not bad in itself, but no record or list was kept of those who attended so they could be invited the next time. Secondly, there was no real follow-up of these people with literature, our press, and in other ways. This will have to be corrected, and more attention given to a systematic follow-up of all these workers who attend our open branch meetings.

One of the methods used, to bring forth the independent role of the Party, is the issuance of a special bi-monthly bulletin which is mailed to some hundred leading people in the trade unions, to professionals, and liberals. These deal with such subjects as the struggle for peace, the recent Moscow trials, local issues, etc. The few issues which we have already put out were received very well. Several leading trade unionists telephoned our Party office and commented very favorably on the bulletin, and asked to be sure to be kept on our mailing list. We are now trying to increase the circulation of this bulletin, and see that it is issued regularly.

Building Our Party in the Rubber Industry

To conclude. We know that the possibilities for building our Party in the rubber shops are great. The Party, as such, is respected, has prestige. Our Party comrades in the shops must, individually, through their own activities, and, collectively, through their branch activities, become the bridge between the Party leadership in the county and the masses of workers in the rubber industry. They must see that our influence actually penetrates to the *ranks*. The shop branches should become the center of Communist influence in their plants and among the members of their local unions. They should develop a

broader and more intensive political agitation and propaganda as Communist Party organizations.

To achieve this aim, the county committee itself must improve its methods of work. The gap between Party influence and Party membership is not due simply to weaknesses in this work of our comrades. We must state frankly that the Party leadership itself has not given this problem sufficient attention. Our county committee, in the light of the Central Committee resolutions for the Tenth National Convention, is now considering the questions raised in this article very seriously. We are determined to make a turn in respect to Party building, and are confident that we will grow at a much faster pace.

The Youth in the Democratic Front

By HENRY WINSTON, National Administration Secretary,
Young Communist League

A CARDINAL question before the progressive and labor movement is to win the masses of youth into the camp of progress.

“This is really a pressing problem of the day not only because youth are more important today because of the approach of fascism and war, but because of the role that they must play in industry and because it is a movement that is growing, which is wide and broad and unclear and confused.” (Stachel.)

A Powerful Progressive Movement of Youth

There exists today in the youth field a powerful progressive movement already uniting millions around a platform of progressive measures and issues.

Of special importance is the existence of a broad Negro youth movement in the South, embracing thousands of Negro youth around a program of equal educational

opportunities, the right to vote, to participate in the democratic primaries, the abolition of the poll tax, and jobs. The most active and progressive of these movements is the American Youth Congress.

The growth and development of the C.I.O. into a powerful organization has likewise had its effect on the youth. The education and organization of the working class youth are of basic importance for the creation of the democratic front, especially now when masses of young working people are for the first time enrolled in the trade unions. These new progressive trade unions participate in political as well as economic activities. The development of special activities that appeal to youth, such as education, sports, and cultural activities within the trade unions will create a broad movement of working class youth which will help to strengthen the entire movement.

Thus, a powerful progressive movement among the youth exists in all sections of the country, the base of this movement being the American Youth Congress, which includes such groups as the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, the United Mine Workers of America, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, the Methodist Youth, the Inter-Collegiate Christian Council, the Young People's Division American Baptist Publication Society, American Student Union, the Y.W.C.A., the Y.M.H.A., and hundreds of others. But the American Youth Congress is organized on the basis of specific planks. The participating organizations do not have to agree on the full program advanced by the movement. In this movement we have the association and collaboration of the most advanced strata of youth with other sections; because of this one cannot look upon the American Youth Congress as a group that will participate uniformly on all issues.

The Need for a Resolute Struggle Against Reaction

All the groups are convinced of the need for the struggle for and extension of democracy. But whereas there

is general agreement along these lines, they have not yet drawn the practical conclusion from their struggle—the need for a resolute political struggle against reaction. Most groups accept the Youth Act. All of them agree to the struggle for maintaining peace, but it is precisely in this field of struggle which concerns the fate of the world that we have the sharpest debate going on—the question of what should be the peace policy of the American government? One can note with satisfaction the movement of youth toward the position of concerted action for peace, even though it is not yet organized as a united force for bringing pressure for such a policy.

The problem, therefore, is one of further extending this movement and raising its level of understanding of the problem of today—help win large sections for the progressive camp of struggle for democracy and peace, against reaction and fascism.

The Young Communist League is the only conscious youth force working to develop the unity of youth and through this to crystallize a youth movement of the democratic front.

Many other organizations too strive towards the People's Front but only the Y.C.L. consciously educates, guides and leads the movement of youth for unity and works to win their majority for the democratic front as the present stage and development of the People's Front movement.

The Y.C.L. is able to play this leading conscious role because it bases itself on the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

At the present stage of development the existence of the Y.C.L. is indispensable for the proper development of the youth movement, for cementing still further its unity, and on the basis of developing greater clarity on all problems to unite the youth for a fully developed People's Front program.

The Congressional elections this year are of primary importance for the general progressive movement. They concern the very life of the youth. The problem before

the Y.C.L. is how can we move organized masses of youth in the direction of progressive political action as a force for checking reaction. As indicated above, the Youth Congress is the greatest reserve of progressive strength among the youth, but the Youth Congress obviously cannot, at this time, endorse or support any candidates. One must always keep in mind the tradition of non-partisanship which exists among the youth organizations. To win large sections of the youth for progressive political action, the need to convince them of the necessity for young people to concern themselves with politics is a major task.

It will be necessary through the work of the Y.C.L. to find the proper form for setting into motion large sections of youth behind progressive candidates in the coming elections, such as non-partisan youth committees cooperating with Labor's Non-Partisan League, getting individual youth organizations to support various candidates, youth clubs in communities organized around specific candidates, and through L.N.P.L. to advance a youth program and establish youth committees and other forms of organization.

To perform this task properly the Y.C.L. must also help young people draw the proper lessons from all of their activities in the mass movement. This means developing mass education among the youth which will at the same time help to combat alien influences that creep into their ranks. To the extent that this problem is solved—will the youth be drawn into the political struggle.

Recruiting into the Y. C. L.

If the Y.C.L. is to perform its proper role among the youth, the need for increasing the membership of the Y.C.L. is of utmost importance. The fact that the Y.C.L. has only 15,000 members creates the danger that we will not be able to cope with this mass movement. This is one of the reasons why the progressive movement has not moved forward at a faster pace. The progressive movement has reached such a stage that it cannot move

and develop further unless the problem of Y.C.L. growth is solved in the shortest space of time. To the extent that the Y.C.L. grows, will we be able to win larger and larger sections of youth for the democratic front. It is for this reason that the Y.C.L. has launched a recruiting drive to double its membership. Thirty thousand members by May 30 is the slogan of the Y.C.L. This is a modest goal, possible to achieve with the aid and assistance of the Party.

"The fact that the Y.C.L. has only 15,000 members is a challenge to every Party comrade," says Comrade Stachel at the Party Builders Congress, "and we must help build it as our fundamental and integral task."

The Chicago District of the Y.C.L. has worked out plans to recruit 600 new members with the Party accepting half of the responsibility. Philadelphia, Connecticut, New Jersey, Cleveland, Milwaukee and other districts have plunged into the drive. The assistance of all districts of the Party is needed.

Aims of the Membership Drive

Among the aims of the drive are the following:

1. To concentrate on increasing the Y.C.L. membership among youth in the basic industries, such as steel, auto, packing and mining.

2. To improve the national composition of the membership by making special efforts to recruit Negro, Irish and Italian young people.

3. To begin systematic education for the training of Y.C.L. personnel, with the aid of the Party, by a system of classes and schools of the Y.C.L. and Party.

Undoubtedly, the accomplishing of the above is the key toward solving many of the complex and complicated problems before the youth movement. How can the Party help? It can discuss the recruiting drive of the Y.C.L. in every district, section and unit bureau and work out concrete plans for Party assistance. A week can be set aside as youth week where the entire Party is thrown behind the drive by carrying through discussions

on the youth movement, the Y.C.L., its role, structure and methods of work, and the definite objectives to be accomplished by the Party.

Four things should be emphasized:

1. Recruiting into the Y.C.L. from the families of thousands of new Party members who have entered the Party in the recent period of time and who are yet unaware, in the main, of the existence and importance of building the Y.C.L.

2. Building Y.C.L. branches in communities where there is no Y.C.L. today, especially where the Party has experienced considerable growth during the drive.

3. Strengthening existing Y.C.L. branches, particularly of industrial youth, recruiting from the trade unions, shops and neighborhood.

4. Wherever necessary, to assist the Y.C.L. by assigning Party members to help the Y.C.L. organize its educational work and other activities.

If these steps are followed up the Y.C.L. will not alone increase its membership to 30,000 but will have improved its composition, and raised the political level of its membership.

Let's pull together and build a Y.C.L. of 30,000 by May 30.