

PARTY . . . ORGANIZER

. JUNE . 1938 .

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For 100 Per Cent June Control
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PARTY ORGANIZER

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The January 1938 Registration— An Analysis and Conclusion

By ORG-EDUCATION COMMISSION, C.C.

WE ARE coming to the Tenth Party Convention with an approximate membership of 75,000. It shows that our Party has doubled its membership since January, 1936. This growth is due especially to the successful recruiting drive that culminated in the Party Builders Congress.

The statistics gathered for the convention on the basis of the registrations of 1936, 1937 and 1938 indicate clearly both the strong and weak points in the Party organization. They enable us to draw conclusions regarding the further building of the Party quantitatively and qualitatively. They indicate in which direction we must improve the functioning of the Party, upon which depends to a great extent the increasing role of the Party as a political factor in the life of the country.

1. From our statistics we see that the number of shop units between 1936 and 1938 remained practically static. We notice, however, that since 1936, 582 industrial units were built, so that today we have altogether almost 18,000 members organized in units which are directly involved in work in the industries and in unions (shop and industrial units). Compared with 1936-37, we find an increase of about 12,000 members belonging to units of both types.

2. The neighborhood branches show only a very slight increase in the numerical growth between 1936 and 1938.

The number of members in this form of organization are, however, 14,000 more today than one year ago. This shows that the size of the branches has grown considerably, due especially to the latest successful recruiting drive. The growth of the branches in membership gives us the possibility today of establishing working groups in the election districts and precincts in the big cities. This will enable us to establish the individual members of the Party as citizens of the community, and thereby enable the Party to participate more successfully in the political life of the assembly districts, wards or precincts.

3. Negroes: The figure of Negro members in the Party shows that between 1936 and 1937 there was a slight decline. It is only in January, 1938, through the special efforts made during the recruiting drive that we brought this number to almost 5,000. While numerically we can record this increase, the percentage of Negro members in relation to the total Party membership remains practically the same. From now on greater efforts and systematic work and attention will have to be paid to the Negro neighborhoods and Negro organizations, not only for the purpose of increasing their number in the Party, but also to cut down the fluctuation which among Negroes is much higher than the average fluctuation in the Party.

4. Women: The increased number of women in the Party is very satisfactory. Between 1936 and 1937, it has been more than doubled. What is more encouraging is the fact that the number of working women between 1936 and 1938 has been practically tripled. These figures prove not only that with the trade union drives the working women are becoming more politically conscious, but also that the proper efforts made by the Party organization to draw the most militant women into the ranks of our Party have seen results. This pace must be kept up. There are possibilities of swelling our ranks with tens of thousands of working women.

5. The figures of the employed in shops show that since 1936 we tripled the number of employed in the light industries, and increased substantially also the

number of Party members working in the basic industries. We are far behind our aim, however, in deeply rooting the Party in the basic industries of the country. This is shown not only by the smaller proportion of those recruited from basic industries compared with the light industries, but especially by the small increase in some of the basic industries. Where a real effort has been made, as for example in steel, the results are obvious in comparison to mining, railroad, textile, longshore and others. One main task remains: concentration on the basic industries for the purpose of building new shop nuclei, strengthening the existing ones with intensified recruiting. This calls for special well-planned drives in the concentration districts—in the mining and textile territories, in the most important ports, etc.

6. In 1936, at the time we conducted a drive to get all eligible Party members into the trade unions, we had on record 12,000 members in trade unions. In January, 1937, we found over 14,000 Party members active in unions. In January, 1938, we reached the number of 27,000 members active in trade unions.

This is a real advance that the Party has made in the trade union field, especially in the industrial unions. Adding to the 27,000 the number of Party members organized in the Workers Alliance, we find today 50 per cent of the membership active in trade unions and unemployed organizations. This figure, beside its positive side which cannot be underestimated, shows, at the same time, that there are still thousands of members eligible for membership not only in trade unions but also in the Workers Alliance.

7. Among the national groups we find a slight increase among Italians, Poles and a few others, which is not in step, however, with the possibilities and needs to counteract the forces of fascism and reaction among these masses.

It is natural that, having reached its present size, the Party will attract increasingly more native and young people. One of our main tasks is to concentrate in this

direction. Because of the strong ties which our Party has established for years with the masses of the various national groups, because of the role they play in the basic industries and political life of the country, and their close relation to the new generation, it is necessary that we take special measures to strengthen the Party among these masses, and especially among the millions of Jewish, Italian, German, Polish and Spanish speaking people.

8. The social composition shows that in the last period the Party has made real headway in recruiting thousands of professionals and white collar workers. The Party will have to keep up the tempo of work among this stratum of the population. At the same time, however, we must emphasize and take the proper measures for building more intensively the Party among the industrial workers. While we cannot neglect recruiting among the professionals, the work of the Party organization must be concentrated mainly on the industrial workers. We must strive to get a much higher proportion of industrial workers in our ranks. (This is mainly the problem of the New York city organization.)

9. The figure on Party schooling shows the real effort the Party has made to concentrate in the direction of training forces for leadership. In the years 1936 and 1937, 7,000 members went through section training schools, nearly a thousand through district training schools, and over 450 through the National Training School. To this we must add other thousands of Party members enlisted in evening courses and workers schools.

These results must be viewed only as a healthy beginning, considering the tens of thousands of new members that need education, the growing tasks of the Party, the establishing of new schools on a state, county, section scale, of evening courses, of a greater utilization of the Workers Schools, must be regarded as the most important task for building and further consolidating the Party organization.

Recruiting and Fluctuation

During the year 1936, taking into account the number of men and women recruited and the number lost, as well as the registration of January, 1937, we found that we had a 32 per cent loss of the total membership, and a turnover of 72 per cent. During 1937, however, with more thousands recruited than in 1936, the loss of the total membership was lowered to 20 per cent, and the turnover reduced to 46 per cent. We must consider, however, that in computing the figures of recruited for both years, we considered the figure of initiations, which does not correspond to the number of assigned members to the units. It is necessary to state that from now on we shall adopt the system of considering as new recruits only those who have signed applications and actually been assigned to units—a system which is being followed by the New York district and a few others.

If we add the recruited up to date to the 54,012 registered January, 1938, we have today a membership of about 75,000.

The above figures prove two outstanding things:

1. A steady increase in recruiting.
2. A steady decline in fluctuation.

This achievement is due not only to the more intensive political life of the Party, but to the organizational measures put into effect since the Ninth Convention, and especially during 1937, for the mobilization of the Party in regard to the intensification of recruiting and cutting of fluctuation. The setting up of recruiting committees and the establishment of membership commissions and membership directors in the Party organizations for the purpose of checking on the attendance, on dues payments, etc., has helped a great deal. Briefly, to the extent that the leading committees paid more attention to this problem, the Party was able not only to strengthen its ranks, but keep the new members.

This conclusion shows that to speed up the tempo in building the Party, it is necessary to strengthen its political

life and education, and, at the same time, improve the organizational apparatus which must ensure continuous intensified recruiting, a better attendance at Party meetings, further improvement in the system of collection of dues, and so on. These are essential measures to equip the Party in carrying out its political activities.

Building the Party Through Mass Work

By I. AMTER, New York State Organizer

THERE is a middle-sized town in the state of New York that is of international importance. In this town there is one of the largest electrical production plants in the country with branches in various parts of this country and abroad. In relation to the war industry, it is one of the outstanding cities in the United States.

In this town there are other industries of considerable importance to the general life of the country. The organization of the workers in the first-named plants was phenomenal. Today the union in that plant has a general agreement with the company on a nationwide scale. Through the activity of this union, nearly all the workers of the town—about 12,000—have been organized into the C.I.O. The A. F. of L. has a small membership, not exceeding 1,000.

It is important to note also that this city has a high proportion of Catholic residents. The city also has a revolutionary tradition in that once it was controlled by the Socialist Party.

The Communists were very active in the building of the unions in that city. Together with the progressives

they have built up a reputation for the unions which *rejects Red-baiting and any attack upon progressive ideas.*

When the Party several years ago set to work to lay the basis for the union, the comrades working in the plant had to safeguard themselves. They knew that if they were discovered, they would be fired from the plant. This would have meant a complete boycott against them in the city and area in which this plant is located. But today the plant is organized, and there is a totally different situation from that of five years ago. Therefore, the possibility of building the Party and the circulation of the *Daily Worker* in that plant and city has been tremendously enhanced.

But the Communists in that plant do not yet see that they are living in a new period, that Communists are not feared or looked down on, that the Communists are recognized as among the best leaders in the plant. The comrades have not yet realized that in this new period the workers are thinking politically. They are directly affected by the proposals before the U. S. Congress for relief and recovery, wages and hours, etc. They must be educated along progressive lines on these and other questions.

There is a sort of "red jitters" on the part of the Communists, who thereby fail both to educate the workers and to build the Party in a situation that is most favorable.

The country is in an economic crisis. The town spoken of is also seriously affected by the crisis. One of the plants in the city which a short time ago employed 3,000 workers now has only 300 workers on part-time. What is the explanation to the workers? What education is being conducted to unite the workers together with the progressives in the city for the coming decisive Congressional elections? What is being done to build the Party, which is the *only guarantee* that the union will weather all the storms that face the people of this country and of that particular city?

A lack of boldness and an absence of a realization that the door is open for the building of the Party in that

town are the most serious obstacles facing us there. In fact, it might be stated that the chief hindrance to building the Party is *not* the Catholic workers in the city. On the contrary, these workers are militant, are beginning to think progressively and *scores* can be easily recruited into the Party. Here, as well as in similar situations elsewhere, the Party must come forward *boldly* through individual comrades in the plant, approach the workers fearlessly and recruit them into the Party. The standing of the Party members in that plant is high, and any attempt to fire them would meet with mass resistance on the part of the workers.

In short, sectarianism is deep, especially among the old Party members, and must be rooted out if the union is to be consolidated and the democratic front be built. Open unit meetings, informal gatherings and discussions, outings, distribution of the *Daily Worker*, our Party literature and shop papers—all tried methods—must be applied here, too.

Our responsibility is of the greatest moment. Widening of the circulation of our Party press and literature, together with the strengthening of our Party *manifesto* so that the unions can better face the critical situations confronting them and the country, are basic tasks before us.

What pertains to this city also applies to many others throughout the country which have similar conditions. The acquiring of *full citizenship* for our Party alone will secure the gains that have been made. Uniting with the progressive forces in the city, making it once more a progressive city with a solid group of Communists fighting in the forefront for democracy and peace—is our immediate task.

The Work of a Detroit Section

By BILL ALLEN, Section Organizer, Detroit, Michigan

GEOGRAPHICALLY our section is centered in the Thirteenth Congressional district. The population is composed of the following classifications: In the lower end there are thousands of Irish people, whose militancy is unquestioned. Then, there is the Chinese colony, which today is actively engaged in the boycott movement against the Japanese militarists. In the central part of the section there is the American population, of which 10,000 are members of the United Automobile Workers Union. In the northwest territory there are 25,000 Jewish people, who today are moving in an organized form in the fight against anti-Semitism. Professional and white collar people are employed mainly as office workers in our section. For example, the General Motors building and the Fisher building must be points of concentration. Last but not most important is the miles of waterfront which must become a special concentration for our section.

Our section was established October 1, 1937, with a membership of 162 in seven units. Today we are happy to report that we have 22 units composed of 520 members with a 468 dues payment in April. Of this, three hundred and fifty comrades were recruited in the last six months.

The Party membership represents a real cross section of the population. There are automobile workers, seamen, food workers, needle trades workers, transport workers, W.P.A. workers, milkmen, school teachers, office workers, social workers, doctors, newspapermen, newsboys, and miscellaneous white collar workers of many other categories.

Such a composition represents new problems for the Party: the question of maintaining stability and consistency in the carrying out of the day-to-day program of the Party.

However, we can record some small achievements: In the fight against reaction, the mobilizing of the

Jewish people to defeat anti-Semitism is an integral part. We have organized a series of mass meetings, all of which were held in synagogues with the active support of the rabbis. These meetings, at first, started with audiences of 200 but now reach between 400 and 500. This has provided a base for the commencing of an anti-Nazi League which will be an organizational medium and guarantee for bringing a large section of the Jewish people into the democratic front. This movement has developed for the first time a real united front, ranging from the rabbis and their congregations to the Communists.

We can say that in the field of professional and white collar people, the ice has been broken in relation to Party recruiting because of the raising of the correct policy regarding unionism and the fight against reaction in various fields. The results are that we have organized five new units, whose rapid growth is an indication of the correctness of our approach to the winning of the middle class.

The winning of the workers in the neighborhoods on basic economic and political issues moves too slowly, and we can only record the setting up of three new street units. This indicates that much more attention must be given to a definite program centering around those vital questions that prevail in the neighborhoods. A very self-critical analysis of the functioning of these units is also necessary to enable us to carry out successful work, particularly the building of the Party.

Stability and Section Apparatus

In the building of the section we have certain small successes to record—the development of forces and the building of an apparatus, which undoubtedly have been the medium for consistent recruiting. A corps of new forces, none of whom are more than a year in the Party, has been developed politically through our section council meetings which are held weekly. The first hour of these meetings is devoted to education with a different reporter

at each meeting who speaks for twenty minutes. This has been the medium for developing a fine corps of political people who understand the line of the Party and the need for building the Party, giving unit organizers to the section who certainly stabilize our units. As a result of this, stability in the section has been obtained. The fruits of this can be seen not only in mass recruiting but also in educating and keeping these new members in the Party.

Another contributing factor was a series of five new members classes, through which 250 new members had been trained in "What Is Communism." The strengthening of the units to receive and maintain this great influx of new members proceeded along definite lines. A regular section bulletin was issued weekly, easy to read and practical, outlining the tasks and how to apply them.

The establishment of a section executive committee, democratically elected from the section council, meeting weekly and collectively working out the day-to-day work of the section was another factor. This body devotes itself not only to making decisions but covers every unit weekly to guarantee the carrying out of these decisions in practice. Examples of this are:

1. A section-wide meeting of all comrades in the C.I.O. and miscellaneous unions, the working out of a program to help organize the unorganized, and to develop Party building.

2. A section-wide meeting of A. F. of L. comrades to do the same as was done with our forces in the C.I.O. Unfortunately, our work here has not been as successful and a number of weaknesses must be overcome, particularly more consistent Party recruiting.

3. The calling of a professional and white-collar section conference resulted for the first time in the mapping out of a practical program around the economic and political issues which will affect not only the middle class but all strata of the population.

4. A meeting of four street units and the preparation of a program against anti-Semitism, which is the first

step in moving the Jewish masses towards the democratic front.

5. The establishment of functioning committees, attached to the section executive committee, is proceeding along definite lines. For example, we have established a membership committee, an educational committee, a finance committee, and a *Midwest Record* committee.

6. Development of leadership is being furthered by the organization of a class of forty leading comrades in the section, who are being trained in the principles of Marxism - Leninism, using as their textbook Stalin's *Leninism*.

The issuance of eight shop papers with a circulation of 10,000 has served to bring forward the line and program of our Party among all sections of the population in the 13th Congressional district. This also serves as an instrument in involving scores of new people in the units and revitalizing many passive old members.

Our perspective is to increase our membership, which is now 500, to 1,000 members by January 1, 1939. We also plan to help establish a branch of the National Negro Congress, and several branches of the American League for Peace and Democracy. We are determined to play an active role in our Congressional district in the 1938 elections, and are already considering plans for developing several people's conferences in the different territories in our district. We plan to open a Party headquarters within one month. Enriched with the deliberations of the Tenth State Convention of our district, we are confident that we will be able to advance rapidly in carrying out the program and policies of our Party.

Forward To 100 Per Cent June Control

THE Org-Educational Commission of the Central Committee has already issued calls to all districts to prepare immediately for the June control of our Party membership. It is essential at once to establish the necessary machinery in all districts, counties, sections and units, so that the control may be carried through efficiently and speedily.

The Party generally has had excellent experiences in the January registration, which was conducted in a much better way than the registrations of the previous years. This was made possible, first, because of adequate preparation in advance of the actual registration period, and, second, because of improvements in the functioning of dues secretaries and the establishment of a membership apparatus. A similar approach to the June control will make possible a truly successful checkup of our membership.

In organizing and carrying through this control several tasks must be definitely borne in mind:

1. For the June control every possible effort must be made to put all our members in good standing (according to the proposed Party Constitution, this means not more than two months in arrears).

2. All Party members who received their 1938 books although they were still behind for 1937 should be paid up.

3. Maximum effort must be made to reregister the comrades who have not yet received new books and whom we are able to contact and bring back into the Party. Remember the declaration of the Central Committee that every member recruited into the Party during 1937 must be fully and completely accounted for.

An analysis of the first three months of 1938 shows that the dues payments reached the figure of 83 per cent of our membership. (This did not take into account the payments of 1937 back dues, as well as the full record of Party membership including those not yet registered.)

This showed very definite progress over last year. However, the dues payments in April were considerably below the Party membership. Now with the preparation and organization of the June control it is possible once again to carry through a checkup on dues payments that will greatly improve the standing of all districts.

We emphasize at this point that the June control offers us an excellent opportunity to review the status of membership directors and dues secretaries in the branches and sections, and to give our comrades a better understanding of the *political* necessity for paying dues regularly. At the same time it will enable all Party organization to check up exactly on what has happened to the many thousands of new members brought into our Party during the last six months.

Forward to a 100 per cent control!

The Party in Harlem, New York *

By GEORGE BLAKE, Organizer of the Harlem Division

THE Harlem Division has grown considerably since its inception as a single section of the Party many years ago. Then it numbered but two hundred comrades, including the Yorkville and the West Side territory. Now, as a result of the leadership of Comrade Ford and the active participation of many other comrades, the old Section 4 has grown to the point where it has been divided into four sections with a Division form of organization representing close to 3,000 members.

The Party in Harlem was originally built and established in the process of bitter struggle for relief, in support of the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. Today we

*From report made to the Harlem Division Convention, May 6-8, 1938.

are a great factor in the life of the people of Harlem, as a result of these early struggles, as a result of the further development of our activity, to the point where we are prepared now to take the next big step to unite the people into the democratic front and build our Party to become the most decisive element within this movement.

Our Party in Harlem registered, as of January, 1938 (according to the latest figures), over 2,300 members. Since our last convention in 1936, the increase has been close to 100 per cent.

A few words on the composition of the registered membership. Our Negro membership constitutes 30 per cent of the total number registered.

An encouraging development was the increase of our Negro women membership from a total of 187 last year—43 per cent of the total, to 307 this year—48 per cent of the total. This is a real achievement and is reflected generally in the improved mass work of the Party, particularly in key organizations in Upper Harlem where the women are generally very active.

We call attention to our Italian membership, which, since our new section was organized in East Harlem, increased from about 30 in April, 1937, to a little above 120 at registration. Very few of these comrades were lost to the Party in contrast to the heavy fluctuation suffered among Italian recruits elsewhere in the city. The Italian branch registered 52 out of 55.

The Problem of Fluctuation

I come now to a question of all-consuming importance in our work, the question of fluctuation. I have reported on the fourfold growth of the Party since 1934. This increase corresponds with the general growth of the Party in this period. Nevertheless, these figures conceal the tragedy of several thousand members lost in the course of five years. The registration this year indicates very little improvement in the stabilization of the Party.

What are the reasons for this heavy fluctuation, heavier than in any other part of the city and heaviest in Upper

and Lower Harlem, especially among our Negro comrades? What can be done about it?

In the first place, comrades, this is not a problem that arises only with registration. It is constantly with us throughout the year and expresses itself through such symptoms as poor attendance, low dues payments and irregularity of activity. It is a problem, therefore, that we must tackle in a systematic all-sided manner from day to day, from week to week and month to month. The general causes for fluctuation have been stated on many occasions in the past—poor unit meetings, inadequate facilities for the training and education of our membership, etc. This is still true, and particularly so in Harlem, although there has been considerable improvement in the life and activity of our branches in the past year. Our figures show that out of 1,460 new recruits in 1937, only 877 of these were registered. Almost 600 were lost during their first year in the Party, as many as we recruited during the Party building campaign!!!

It is quite true that we face many complex problems which do not affect other sections of the Party organization in New York. The national oppression of the Negro people which finds expression in the limitation of job opportunities, restricting employment among the men to manual labor, and the women to arduous domestic service, both the victims of insecurity and discrimination, cannot but affect the organizational consolidation of the Party and create special problems. The fact that the struggle for Negro rights still lags behind the general progressive movement in the country must also be taken into consideration.

However, it would be a most serious mistake to attribute our fluctuation in Harlem primarily to objective causes. On the contrary, the national oppression of the Negro people and similarly the underprivileged status of the nationalities residing in Lower and East Harlem provide the most fertile basis for popularizing our program, connecting it with their militant and revolutionary traditions, and for building the Party. If we try to

obscure the problem of turnover behind general objective causes, we will only defeat our purpose, distort the truth and never solve the problem.

Our solution will depend in the main on our ability to transmit to our unit and branch membership the program of the Party in terms of the organizational experiences and national traditions of the Negro people. We are an American Party, prepared to incorporate into our methods and forms of activity that which is best in American tradition. We must in Harlem now take the next logical step in this process of Americanization and incorporate the best traditions of Negro life into the very center of our units and branches.

In addition we must find the way to incorporate into our branch meetings the cultural forms of the struggle of the Negro people—group singing of men and women joined in protest against oppression. And, comrades, we can add our song of liberation to the traditional song of protest and lift the movement to a higher level. I will always remember how, at the National Negro Training School, the students lived and worked in song and how this served to cement the collective and establish a strong bond of unity among the student comrades.

What is true for Upper Harlem is true of our work among the Puerto Ricans, the Italians, Irish, etc.

The Education of Our Membership

To continue, the proper transmission of our program requires the greatest attention to the education of our membership on the vanguard role of the Party. Failure to understand this has accounted for a great deal of confusion, especially among comrades recruited from the Workers Alliance and from progressive trade unions of the C.I.O. As a result the fluctuation of these groups was very large.

The contradiction that exists generally between the influence and organizational strength of the Party is greatest in Harlem. We cannot be satisfied with registering an even growth with the rest of the Party, precisely

because of the objective conditions and the tremendous local popularity of the Party. In the final analysis our mass work, to develop properly, must continually and regularly lead to a larger and stronger Party. Again, comrades, the key to the problem of solving this contradiction lies in the vanguard role of the Party and especially in the branches. Even within the sections there was considerable irregularity in branch recruitment, directly attributable to the unevenness of mass political leadership. If the Milton Herndon Branch in Upper Harlem recruited 69 members in this period (assigned 52) it was because the branch established a large circle of contacts in its campaign to build local Parent-Teacher associations in the struggle against discrimination in the schools. If the James Ashford Branch recruited only three comrades in the same period, it was due to stagnation and lack of mass activity.

In Lower Harlem, the Gonzalo Gonzales branch recruited 33 members and headed the list in this section where recruitment was more evenly distributed among the eight branches there, precisely because this branch, through splendid initiative and with the aid of the section council, developed a broad united front campaign to boycott stores carrying fascist goods; and always kept its independent vanguard role before the hundreds of non-Party people who participated in the mass actions conducted by the Committee. And so here a branch, previously torn by inner difficulties, succeeded in overcoming these difficulties through timely action on vital issues. The branch now operates on a broad field of activity and has also succeeded, in part, in enriching the inner life of its branch to keep pace with its mass work.

Our shop and industrial units lagged considerably during the campaign. Containing about 40 per cent of the membership in the Division, their recruitment represented only 20 per cent of the total and in many cases units failed to recruit a single member into the Party.

This problem is all the more important in view of the necessity, in line with the Draft Resolution of the State

Convention, to strengthen the Party and the leadership in the basic industries of the community—transport, which has nine shops in our territory with a total of 4,500 workers and only one shop unit; steel; railroad (pullman porter, dining car); teamsters, (where we have no organization) and in such strategic industrial categories as laundry, building service, domestic workers (where union organization is extremely weak) and, finally, of key importance for Harlem—the hospital workers.

On the basis of our experiences in the last Party building campaign where we recruited an average of 140 a month, we confidently expected not only to maintain the same tempo but to increase it to 200 a month in order to reach a membership in Harlem of 5,000 by the end of the year.

The Harlem Legislative Conference

During the last four months we have witnessed the organization of the Harlem Legislative Conference, recognized as one of the outstanding political developments of the year, the unfolding in Upper Harlem of the job campaign which continues to take on greater and greater proportions; the renewed activity for Spain; the beginning and furthering of organization in housing; intensification of struggle on the basic issue of relief; the strengthening of the National Negro Congress in the campaign for the Federal Anti-Lynch Bill; the opening struggles in the Congressional elections in the 20th and 21st assembly districts in Harlem and a dozen other issues. The Party is operating on sixteen cylinders, but the trouble is that these campaign have not sufficiently aroused and stimulated corresponding activity in the vital centers of the Party organization in the units and branches.

A study of the recruitment in this period tells almost the same story as during the Party building campaign. With few exceptions, the same branches carry the burden, although the shop groups are beginning to perk up. This, then, is our task, even more clarified in the light of new experiences—to make these mass movements the property

of every Party unit, to involve them on the basis of a coordinated plan of work and to emphasize above all independent activities through open mass branch meetings, regular neighborhood and shop bulletins, leaflets issued in timely fashion, and, particularly for the next seven months, street meetings carefully organized and regularly conducted in every section.

Membership Tasks for San Francisco

By **FRANK H. SIEGEL**, California

THE important task facing us today is that of building the Party. On March 31 we had 1,400 members. By May 31 we hope to have 1,600 dues-paying members and an apparatus that will make possible the recruiting and keeping of 1,400 additional dues-paying members so that by January 1, 1939, we will be able to record 3,000 dues-paying members in the county of San Francisco. Considering the base our Party has already laid, the objective conditions of today and the will and ability to build the Party by the individual Party members, we believe this goal can be reached.

In our approach to building the Party in the next period, we must seriously consider the question of *quality* as well as quantity, so that we will be able to strengthen our forces precisely in the most important industries in San Francisco county. We must strengthen our influence precisely in those unions which have both economic and political importance.

In examining our recruiting for the first three months of this year, we find that the largest group recruited was 23 food workers, next comes 15 laborers, 12 canner workers, 12 longshoremen, nine office workers, etc.

The recruitment of these workers as individuals is good for our Party, but we must realize that while our numbers have been increased we have not been sufficiently strengthened in the basic categories.

Our past experience has shown that if our Party does concentrate on a given plan of work, with definite objectives and definite goals, we have been able to achieve the results sought. We must now take steps to organize specific concentration drives for Party building in particular unions and industries, such as among the marine workers, the warehousemen and the cannery workers. We are setting quotas that should bring into our Party at least 700 new members from the waterfront. Such strengthening of the Party will make it possible for the Communists even more effectively to aid the waterfront workers in maintaining and improving their economic conditions and in raising their political understanding.

In our uptown industrial section, we should pay particular attention to concentration on transport, steel, railroad, canneries, and other industries. We believe it possible to increase our membership from these and other unions by more than eight hundred.

With regard to professional and white-collar people, it is possible for us to double our membership from among these groups. We must come out boldly and declare to them: "Your future is tied up with the workers and your place is in the Communist Party." The results will justify these open tactics.

How to Defeat Reaction

We know that the central task of our Party today in the coming Congressional election is to defeat reaction. How are we equipped to handle this phase of our work? Of course we understand that much of the activity in the election campaign will be carried on through organized labor, Labor's Non-Partisan League, the Federated Committee for Political Unity, and existing democratic groups. We must also realize, however, that the main task of election campaign activity will center around the everyday

house-to-house precinct work, in which our neighborhood branches must most actively participate.

At the present time we have a comparatively small percentage of our Party members distributed in five neighborhood branches. These are good and loyal comrades, but in the main housewives and unemployed, disconnected from organizations and industry and lacking organizational experience. When we picture the giant tasks that the coming elections place before our Party, we can see how inadequate are our forces in the branches to meet these tasks. Therefore, we must take definite steps to strengthen and increase the growth of our territorial branches. We propose in the coming period to build at least one branch in each assembly district. We must plan definitely to increase recruiting among the Negroes and among women.

To reach our goal of 3,000 dues-paying members is possible provided we take the necessary organizational measures to guarantee the achievement. First of all we must see to it that every one of our units and branches has a functioning membership director. In the very small units, the dues secretaries can function in both capacities, but it must become a rule that where there are more than ten members in a unit a membership director should be chosen. Secondly, it is essential that membership directors and dues secretaries attend regularly the meetings called by the section and county for joint discussion and planning. These branch officers must so organize their work that absentees will be regularly visited after their first absence. A careful checking of attendance will help to increase dues payment, and will aid the establishment of a better inner life in the branches of the units.

A Systematic Plan for Recruiting

We will have to see to it that our unit and branch executive committees systematically plan the work of recruiting. We are convinced that for real growth of our Party, recruiting, Party building, should be on every agenda of the branch executives, which should systematically and consistently check up on their plans and decisions. Similarly, the

question of Party building should be taken up in some form at every branch and unit meeting. Let us create a real "recruiting consciousness" among our membership.

A few words on the question of leadership. Our Party has been growing, but we have not had a corresponding growth in the number of individuals to take over the leadership of our growing Party. An important requirement for the building of leadership is an active, conscious, revolutionary desire among our members to grow with the Party. Every comrade, no matter what position he holds, whether he is a membership director or a unit organizer; whether he is a member of the section committee or the executive committee of the county; whether it be the section organizer or the county organizer himself—that comrade should always have with him another comrade for training purposes, a "deputy" as Comrade Stalin has stated.

These are some of the tasks and plans which we must lay before our membership in San Francisco county, so that we may reach our goal of a 3,000 dues-paying membership, develop leadership in our ranks, and make it possible for our Party in San Francisco to wield political influence among the broad masses of our city and state.

How does your branch participate in community life? If yours is a shop unit, how does it speak to the workers of the shop, what problems does it raise, how is it being built? Write us about your experiences. Address Editor, *Party Organizer*, 35 East 12 Street, New York City.

Letters From the Districts

AN EXPERIENCE IN "DAILY WORKER" PROMOTION

By Philip Quart, Bronx, New York

WE HAD a *Daily Worker* Training School for the purpose of developing comrades to organize the promotion of the circulation of the *Daily Worker* in the sections, units and branches. One session was devoted to a practical study of canvassing for the *Daily Worker*.

The class chose two street blocks for canvassing in a territory which had a particularly poor showing in the *Daily Worker* promotion drive, and in which there was a concentration unit which had ordered only eight copies of the *Sunday Worker* in two weeks. The territory is mainly composed of Negro families.

We drew up a leaflet, linking up the *Daily Worker* with the immediate problems facing the people of the neighborhood: jobs, relief, the housing and rent problem and Negro discrimination. This leaflet was distributed Sunday morning, May 1.

The next evening ten comrades of the class paired off into five committees of two comrades each, a man and a woman. Each committee chose a particular house. Then several copies of the *Daily Worker* were distributed among us. We went out to canvass for home delivery subscriptions. An hour later we came together to report.

From the sixty families we had time to see we received nineteen subs. Eight others were regular readers of the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker* which they bought at newsstands. Four names were brought in of people who are prospective recruits to the Party and three names for Y.C.L. membership. Everywhere, but one place, were we received cordially and invited in to discuss the *Daily Worker*, the Communist Party and also the immediate problems confronting these people. Many asked the committees to come again and said that perhaps they would then subscribe to the *Daily Worker* and *Sunday Worker*.

From even this small experience we can draw several conclusions. There is a great need in our units and branches for education in the political significance and rich heritage of our press. The promotion of the *Daily Worker*, canvassing, and check up must be well organized. A new approach to the distribution of the *Daily Worker* must be acquired for too often the comrades forget that the *Daily Worker* cannot be sold in the capitalist sense, but that circulation will increase if we bring to the attention of the masses the role the *Daily Worker* plays in their daily life. Training cadres for *Daily Worker* circulation and promotion work is essential for a proper approach to building our press.

TAMPA, FLORIDA, STRIDES AHEAD

By Jack Jameson

Tampa, Fla., April.

THE Communist Party of Tampa, Florida, has undergone a complete transformation. No longer is the Communist Party limited here to Ybor City, Tampa's Latin quarter; no longer are the Party members here only Latin-Americans—even though native born, but of Cuban, Spanish, Mexican and Italian origin.

Since the last convention of the Party, there was formed in Tampa a small group of English-speaking Communists, originally called "The Anglo-Saxon Committee." The Communist Party, being virtually underground in this area, these English-speaking Party members set out to recruit members from the seamen's C.I.O. and longshoremen's A. F. of L. unions on the waterfront; from among the Negroes in Tampa, whom the Spanish-speaking Party workers never reached; from the unemployed and from the women and youth. They even recruited workers, both Negro and white, outside of Tampa.

The report of almost one hundred new Party members, enrolled in units now functioning in various localities, testifies to the splendid work of these American Com-

munists here and explains the great change that has taken place in the Communist Party in this city.

Tampa may be known as the "cigar city," but we have broadened our field of activity considerably from the days when our Party was composed of Latin-American cigar workers only. We have intensified the struggle for civil liberties. Communist Party members in various organizations and committees have been in the forefront of the struggle for the right of workers to organize in accordance with the Wagner Act; for the right to strike and picket peacefully; the right to vote for both Negro and white, without paying a particular poll tax, and for the right of the unemployed to organize and demand jobs or adequate relief.

Now, with an English-speaking Party membership, the recent convention of the Party in Tampa has, for the first time in its history, discussed Tampa's primary elections and taken steps to participate in the campaign, and help to build Labor's Non-Partisan League.

BUILDING NEW UNITS

A Report from Oklahoma

FOUR new units of our Oklahoma Party were established during the months of March and April. The Stillwater comrades have recruited three more students at Panhandle A. & M. College, at Goodwell, giving us a unit of four at our western outpost.

Another Stillwater comrade spent his Easter holidays at Shawnee and recruited a student unit of four members there. (This comrade recruited four during a week's vacation. We'll expect much of him during the three months long summer vacation!)

In Rogers Mills County, where we had three isolated comrades, we have ten new recruits, brought into our Party through the combined work of Comrade Eli Jaffe and Comrade Thurman. These new recruits are nearly all active members of the Rogers Mills County Farmers

Union. With Comrade Wells of Vinita, these comrades are doing fundamental work where our Party is still weak—among the membership of the important Farmers Union.

And our fourth new unit was organized by Comrade "Pomp" Hall, of the Warda Amos School Unit at Bristow. He has followed up his experiences at the National Party Builders Congress with some effective recruiting. He recently made a trip to Summit, south of Muskogee, and there established a new unit of nine members among the active workers in the United Agricultural Workers Union of that area. Comrade Hall continues to be the star recruiter for the state. In one bundle, he recently sent in fifteen applications.

WHY LONGSHOREMEN SHOULD BE RECRUITED—AND HOW!

By J. W., Texas

THE marine shipping interest in this country is one of the most reactionary and most powerful groups of employers in the United States. In order for the longshoremen and other crafts in this industry to meet successfully the attacks of the shipowners it is imperative that all maritime workers, regardless of craft, be united nationally. This means that the longshoremen must break away from the clutches and repudiate the sell-out policies of Joseph P. Ryan, head of the International Longshoremen's Association.

This will require a strong crystallized progressive movement within the I.L.A. Past experiences have taught us that a real effective and successful progressive movement in an organization such as the I.L.A. can only be developed if we have the Party established sufficiently to steer the progressives on the proper course. Therefore, one of the most important and immediate tasks facing the Party today is the building of the Party among the ranks of the longshoremen.

It cannot be done simply by going to the longshoremen

and inviting them to join the Party. It will have to be done here just as it has been done in other industries: by the Party taking an active interest in the struggle of the longshoremen for the achievement of their immediate needs. By advancing correct policies and participating in their daily struggles, we can put these policies into real life and thereby prove to them the correctness of our trade union policies. When this is done, it is an easy matter to win them to the rest of our program.

The longshoremen in Texas are traditionally the most militant and progressive groups of industrial workers in the state. They have demonstrated many times that they will fight to the last ditch in defense of their rights and living standards. Let's build the Party among the longshoremen!

ON MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

By Jean Harris, Membership Director, Spokane, Wash.

[The Northwest District (Washington, Oregon), has made good progress in membership growth and dues payments. The story below is reason why.—Ed.]

IN WORKING out a method of dues collections, we first began to develop close cooperation between the unit dues secretaries and membership directors. We felt that by doing so we would have *two* comrades in each unit who would work closely together and understand the importance of encouraging members to pay their dues regularly, thus developing more activity in the work of our Party. By bringing the unit dues secretaries and membership director together in regular weekly meetings with myself as section membership director, we were able to build an active and enthusiastic committee. Our discussions were interesting to all of us. We felt *responsible*.

Our first task was raising the monthly dues payments for our section. We kept a careful check on our records and knew at all times who was behind in dues and how

far they were in arrears. Once a week our unit dues secretaries and membership directors would get a car and visit those members who were behind. This was usually done on Sundays when we could expect to find the comrades home. The first results were surprising. Of course, we found that the comrades who were the worst offenders in regards to dues were those who were not attending unit meetings regularly and who were not particularly active in our work. We also discovered that almost all these comrades were ready and willing to pay their dues. By discussing our problems with these comrades, and also taking up their own particular problems in a sympathetic manner, we were not only able to draw many of them into active Party life, but to gain from them much valuable information which we can well utilize to strengthen our Party organizationally and improve the inner-Party life.

A Review of California Agitation Material

By GEORGE MORRIS, New York

BEFORE us is a batch of Communist leaflets, bulletins, neighborhood and shop papers and agitational material of all sorts from California.

In a general way, it is evident that California Communists, as those of other states, are learning how to make the Party's agitational material more attractive and appealing to the masses. There is an evident effort to make the appeal more concrete in given situations.

There is the milk leaflet, issued by the San Francisco Election Campaign Committee. A large head over it reads, "12 Cent Milk Unfair to Babies." Below, in less

than 75 words is the story of the large milk companies, how they gouge the consumer and farmer and how the milk commission helps them do it. Then, in large bold type, "Be on that picket line" [giving directions], "Smash the Milk Racket."

The story is all there in about hundred words, attractively displayed. The message seems to hit the bull's eye. The principle followed in that leaflet was to have a few carefully chosen words, well displayed, rather than a pageful of small type which few would read.

Another similar milk leaflet some weeks earlier was designed to bring pressure for a milk commission hearing which the public could attend. That leaflet carried a cartoon which showed the united front of the commission and milk monopolies against the producers and consumers.

The same principle was applied to a leaflet on Trotskyism. The head in large letters reads "Trotskyism—Enemy of Peace." The text is a simple statement of the war threat and the role of Trotskyism as an ally of fascism—stated in about two hundred words. For more details, come to hear so-and-so at the open forum of the Communist Party. That leaflet obviously aimed to attract people with a *central idea* and one that hits home. There is no attempt to go into details on the subject in the leaflet, as we know is often the case with poor success.

It isn't always that widely distributed material can take the form of a brief leaflet. Exposures on a timely issue running into the equivalent of two or three typewritten pages can be well arranged. Two four-page folders issued by the Los Angeles County Committee are examples. A large-type head over one reads "The Truth Behind the Raymond Bombing." Below is a cartoon showing a wave representing public opinion, swamping the united front of Mayor Shaw, Governor Merriam, Chief-of-Police Davis, open shoppers and underworld gangsters. On the bottom—"And What the People of Los Angeles Can Do About It."

The three next pages are devoted to relating the story of how an investigator who was digging into facts re-

garding the gangster-police collusion was almost murdered and how the lid over the state of corruption blew off. But the story is given in readable form—as a newspaper exposure.

Similarly in another four-page leaflet, a front cover cartoon and well-chosen titles, to arouse the curiosity of the reader, help to overcome the length difficulty.

“The Case Against Mayor Frank L. Shaw” reads the head over the cartoon. “And Why He Should Be Recalled from Office.” Opening the story inside, the leaflet does not leave its main objective to the bottom, but begins with the information that a petition is being circulated for the mayor’s recall.

Among the shop and neighborhood papers there are good and bad examples. We look through *Wings*, Vol. 1, No. 2., issued by the Communist Party unit in the Douglas Aircraft Corp. plant of Los Angeles. There appears to be little in it that reflects intimate connection with departments or certain situations within the plant. The contents appear to be comments on various issues concerning the plant—as if an editor wrote them.

But what is most striking in the Party bulletin is that one would not recognize it as a product of a Party unit if it wasn’t for a small box on the bottom of one page saying so. Otherwise there is nothing in the bulletin that would distinguish it from a C.I.O. or other trade union paper. A shop bulletin should be a more direct message of the Party and seek to show the relationship between the economic questions raised and the Party’s policy—to educate the workers on what the Party stands for and thereby also fortify the Party against Red-scare attacks.

Of course it would not be fair to draw conclusions on the basis of one issue of a shop paper. Other issues probably show an improvement.

But other papers issued by Communist units similarly fail to make our comments and stories on day-to-day questions flow more directly out of the Party’s policy—and to get the workers to see them in that light. The *Citrus Worker*, Vol. 1, No. 1, issued in San Bernardino county,

refers to the Party in only a general sense—in an appeal for membership and announcement of the paper.

The *West Adams Messenger*, a Los Angeles assembly branch paper, also the first issue, happens to be a Lenin Memorial number. But an announcement of the Lenin meeting and a short appeal under book reviews urging a study of Lenin's works are all the reference there is to the Communist Party in the paper's eight pages. Otherwise there are good articles on economic, legislative and civic questions. There is not even an address of branch headquarters, or where one may go to join the Party.

The *Broom*, Vol. 2, No. 2, a San Francisco Assembly branch paper, is well done technically, but only in one item, on the democratic front in the coming elections, is direct reference made to the Communist Party.

It doesn't follow from the above that every item in a shop or neighborhood paper must be a direct expression of the Party or should refer to it. But there ought to be sufficient expression of the relation between the Party's policy and the day-to-day questions we write about to indicate the Party's role.

Another interesting leaflet in the California batch was issued by the 57th Assembly District of Hollywood. It is addressed as an open letter to a councilman, who, though elected on a pro-labor platform, voted for an ordinance which curbs picketing. The letter recalls his campaign promises, compares his action to some bad examples in political circles and explains the meaning of the ordinance. It is an effective and direct way to put a councilman on the spot.

These comments on various types of agitational material issued in the California district call attention to certain good and also weak features. What is very significant, however, is the definite increase in the number of leaflets and bulletins. It is essential, in every district, to develop on a much broader scale such methods of bringing the Party policies before the broadest masses.