

Party Organizer



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Shop Paper Reviews

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National Hunger March and the Next Steps

THE National Hunger March aimed to broaden the united front struggle for federal unemployment relief and for the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill; to involve large sections of the working class in local struggles; to dramatize the struggle in a manner that would rouse the masses throughout the country; to present the demands to the U. S. Congress. These aims in the main were achieved.

It is necessary, however, to clear up some ideas that exist in the minds of Party members.

1) Was the hunger march necessary? There were those who argued against the march, *not understanding* or *underestimating* the political significance of the march: the opening of the United States Congress, which had no intention whatever of considering unemployment relief and the fact that it was a *Democratic* Congress, which in view of the election of Roosevelt, was to be compelled to make good some of Roosevelt's promises. This could be done at no more *impressive* time than at the very opening of Congress. Therefore the march was correct.

2) There were ideas that the National Hunger March would dampen the development of local struggles.

3) There are ideas prevalent that since only a delegation of 10 each were allowed to present the demands to the House of Representatives and Senate, these workers could have been selected in the various localities and from the different industries, and have accomplished the same task. This is the position of the liberals, Socialists, etc.—that the march was a “futile gesture”. This means to underestimate the entire role of *mass* mobilization, *mass* organization and *mass* pressure.

What has made the country ring with the question of *starvation* is just the National Hunger March, and with it the question of federal relief and insurance. But the march alone did not accomplish this. The intensified local activities and struggles leading up to the hunger march, the open hearings and trials, disclosed the mass hunger as never before. The mobilization of the workers at these hearings, struggles and demonstrations, the hundreds of thousands of workers who greeted the hunger marchers passing through towns; and, as was revealed through the actions in Washington, the splendid response of the workers everywhere against the imprisonment of the marchers, helped to deepen the class-consciousness, helped to revolutionize the workers throughout the country.

Achievements and Weaknesses of the Hunger March

The strong points of the march must be pointed out: 1) More struggles in the cities and towns in preparations for the march. 2) All the marchers were elected by definite bodies of workers. 3) Good composition: a high percentage of Negro workers, men and women, especially from the South; nearly 1,000 young workers, including some homeless youth; a high percentage of native-born workers. 4) Only about 30 per cent of marchers were Party and Y.C.L. members (the check-up is not yet complete). 5) Better participation of the revolutionary unions (295 marine workers) and of some outstanding union leaders—marine, mining, textile, needle. 6) Splendid working class discipline and militancy, and good division and column leadership.

The shortcomings were: 1) An *insufficiently broad* united front. Only *few new* A. F. of L. and other reformist locals and mass organizations were reached that have not as yet participated in our struggles. (About 250 A. F. of L. members were present.) The opponent unemployed organizations were weakly represented. 2) Weak political preparation for the march. 3) Inadequate organization of the Party press, with the exception of the *Freiheit*. 4) Totally inadequate exposure of the enemies and splitters of the movement (A. F. of L. bureaucrats, S. P., Musteites, etc.). 5) Insufficient preparations in Washington itself, where, for weeks, a barrage of propaganda against the march, along the lines of Hoover's "discouraging" tactics, was being conducted. 6) Totally insufficient preparations for the return march, as a result of which there were some serious losses from exposure and needless struggles. 7) Failure to organize broad demonstrations in all the districts on December 6, the time of the presentation of the demands in Washington. 8) Failure to energetically recruit into the Party and Y.C.L. from among the militant marchers.

Our Present Tasks

The struggle must be intensified not only for adequate local relief but to force action by the U. S. Congress.

1) Local struggles for relief, against evictions, for shelter, for food and clothing for the children, for veteran's relief. This can be amplified by struggles for the immediate concrete needs, *no matter how little they may be*, of the workers in the blocks and neighborhoods, which will rally the workers for struggle. This means the establishment of the broadest united front in action.

2) County and state conferences and marches, drawing in the farmers.

3) Setting up of committees in all the red unions and mass organizations of every character, to carry on the fight for relief of their members, and to draw the membership, through dele-

gates to the neighborhood unemployed councils into the general struggles of the unemployed.

4) Penetration of the locals of the A. F. of L., Railway Brotherhoods and independent unions, on the basis of the decisions of the Cincinnati Conference of the A. F. of L. Rank and File Committee for Unemployment Insurance; to intensify the struggle for relief and insurance along the lines laid down by this committee. Drawing of these locals into the Unemployed Councils through delegates and into joint activities. At the same time they must intensify their struggles against the bureaucrats, against expulsion for non-payment of dues, for relief from union funds, cuts in salaries, etc.

5) Continual exposure of local conditions through investigations, open hearings, trials, etc.

6) Persistent exposure of the splitters of the unemployed movement—the various fake insurance schemes being put forward by politicians, A. F. of L. leaders, the Socialist Party—Borders outfit, Musteites—Unemployed Citizens Leagues, and other local organizations.

7) A struggle against the right opportunist errors in the united front—a capitulation to the treacherous policies and practices of the reformists, on the ground that this is “against the policy of the united front”, that the “reformists will expose themselves”, etc. (This has been excellently exposed in the article by Comrade John Williamson in the December issue of *The Communist*.)

8) Building of the Unemployed Councils, especially in the towns reached by the hunger march. Building of block committees as the *basic* units of the Unemployed Council, but with greater flexibility when the workers themselves desire a more compact form of organization. Building of language organizations among foreign-born workers, who can be better reached through their own language.

9) Recruiting of the unemployed into the revolutionary unions of their trades and systematic recruiting for the Party and Y. C. L.

10) The Party territorial units must a) Build up block committees in their territory in the name and with the knowledge of the Unemployed Council. b) Fractions must be built in the block committees (and unemployed councils) of all Party and Y.C.L. members. The unit must direct the work of the Party fraction in the block committee. c) The districts and sections must work through the corresponding fractions, and not through decisions handed directly to the councils, through so-called representatives in the block committees and councils.

The building of the unemployed councils and the active struggle for local relief is the surest road to forcing the United States Government to grant federal relief and unemployment insurance.

I. AMTER.

Unemployed Council Leads Fight Against Special Assessment on Small Home Owners

THE successful struggle conducted by Branch 63 of the Unemployed Council of Chicago in defeating a special assessment on small home owners and involving them in this struggle is an experience which will be of great assistance to unemployed councils throughout the country. Branch 63 is located in 13th Ward, close to the Crane Co., a large metal shop of concentration of Section 7 of the Communist Party and the Steel Workers Industrial Union. The territory embraces a large number of small home and property owners. Workers who worked all their lives, bought small homes for themselves and their children, now are unemployed or working part time and are not able to meet the payments on their mortgages and are about to lose their homes.

The Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union, Southside section, realized the necessity of reaching the unemployed in this territory, especially in connection with organizing the Crane shop. About two months ago the union called a mass meeting at which 75 were present, 25 of whom joined the Unemployed Council. Several meetings of this council took place in a private home. Discussions took place on how to get relief for one or another worker, but the work made little headway. The leading committees were composed of nearly all new elements, never connected with a movement of this kind and they felt somewhat helpless.

Home Owners Taxed with Special Assessment

In the beginning of October, about 1,000 home owners living South between 43rd to 50th and Archer, embracing four blocks east and four blocks west of Crawford Ave., received a notice from the Board of Local Improvement to pay a special assessment for opening and widening of South Crawford Ave. Some of the small home owners were assessed as high as \$100.

The Unemployed Council at its meeting decided to immediately circulate a petition against the assessment and in a few days they collected several hundred signatures.

Politicians' Attempt to Prevent Struggle Defeated

The Lloyd's Property Owners Association of Chicago, operating in that neighborhood, with a membership of 400, claimed to be organized for the purpose of serving the property owners. At its membership meeting where 200 were present, the leaders took the stand for the special assessment. Seeing the dissatisfaction on the part of the home owners, the politicians controlling the organization arranged for another meeting to con-

vince the home owners to pay the assessment. At the second meeting held in a church, the politicians with the aid of the priest, succeeded in getting 90 per cent of those attending to vote for the payment of the assessment.

The Unemployed Council, however, continued to collect signatures against the assessment and then called a mass meeting on Wednesday, October 19, just one day after the meeting in the church. The attendance was good; more than 400 workers responded. The Unemployed Council had gathered all the necessary information on the assessment and pointed out that pleading or depending on lawyers would not help the small home owners, but only mass mobilization and action would defeat this assessment. After a discussion a vote was taken on the question. The 400 home owners, with the exception of a few politicians in attendance, voted against the assessment. A committee, consisting of 25 home owners, was elected to work out further plans.

On Friday, October 21, the Lawn Civic Association, another organization of politicians and real estate men, who thought that here was an opportunity to make some money, called a mass meeting. The speaker pointed out the difficulties in fighting such an assessment and proposed to fight for a reduction since it was too late to kill the assessment. The representatives of the Unemployed Council took the floor and sharply attacked the association, warning the home owners not to be misled. The Unemployed Council representative received tremendous applause. The politicians seeing the situation used all sorts of demagoguery, appealing to the loyalty of the home owners as peaceful citizens, bringing forward their religious beliefs and warning them against the Communists. That these fakers were unable to convince the home owners was shown when the vote was taken. Everybody present with a few exceptions voted against the assessment. A second vote to decide which organization should lead this fight resulted in endorsement of the Unemployed Council's leadership. This meant a real defeat for the politicians. In order to maintain their influence the politicians and real estate men promised to co-operate with the council, but the co-operation was given in words only. When the Council called upon them, they were not there. This was utilized by us to prove to the home owners the real role of these people.

Win Partial Victory

Alderman Bryan Hartnett and Ward Committeeman Baker responded to the invitation of the committee to attend a mass meeting. Realizing the situation, they demagogically spoke against the assessment and promised to give full co-operation. Some of the workers were impressed with their statements. Our comrades correctly pointed out to the workers that these people came out against the assessment now particularly in view of the organization and the coming elections.

After this meeting, the delegation went to see the alderman and ward committeeman, both democrats, and demanded from them to go with our delegation to see the president of the Board of Local Improvements, Lindheimer, who has the full authority to drop the case. The conference with the Board of Local Improvements took place November 2, 1932. The politicians, especially Baker, were pleading before the conference not to send a big delegation, only to send one or two representatives. A delegation of 35 small home owners was sent. Our delegation stated definitely that more than 600 small home owners would under no circumstances pay this special assessment. After long demagogic speeches, they proposed a six months' postponement of the assessment. The delegation stood firm and demanded that the project be entirely dropped. Finally, they agreed to one year's postponement. We did not achieve the killing of the proposition but made a motion that before the board would take definite action on the matter a new hearing of the home owners should be called, to get their opinion. This was granted.

Throughout the conference with the board, the politicians, all part of the democratic machine, tried to push Baker, who ran for alderman, and to make him the representative of the home owners. When we demanded a written statement in regards to the concession, Baker stated, "I will see that you get this statement through me." Our delegation demanded this statement immediately from Lindheimer, which was given to us. Through this move, we eliminated Baker.

Council Wins Confidence of Workers

The significance of this struggle is that the Unemployed Council reacted to the burning issue confronting the small home owners and was able through correct tactics to undermine the leadership of the politicians and win the support of the workers. This struggle proves that workers who have never followed our leadership are ready and willing to fight providing we show decisive leadership in defense of their interests. Now we have the task to link up the fight against the special assessment with other issues—foreclosures, high taxes and numerous other questions. Also, the struggle for relief must be intensified. More than 24 relief cases were handled successfully by the unemployed council up till now.

One hundred twenty-five workers joined the Unemployed Branch and 96 belong to the home owners' committee of the Unemployed Council. The question of the City Hunger March was brought before the home owners and 76 participated. The majority of them demonstrated for the first time in their lives. On November 22, a mass meeting in support of the Hunger March to Washington was called and 25 were present. The meeting unanimously endorsed the march and elected two delegates and raised \$10.68 towards the expenses.

Today, we see in this branch workers developing who will become good material for our Party. It is up to the Party members in this branch especially to strengthen the leadership and get in close contact with the most promising elements. No doubt, there are also many members who work or used to work in the Crane Company. These should be drawn into the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union.

A Unit Organizes and Leads Rent Strike

UNIT 13 began its activity in a residential section in New York with the view of developing a struggle against evictions and for reduction of rents. At first, the workers in the territory, still partly employed, and some of them having doubts as to the success of such a struggle under our leadership, did not immediately respond to organization. But we persisted in our work, went house to house regularly, worked out a definite plan on the basis of the specific conditions in the territory, popularized the Unemployed Council as the leader in the struggle for the unemployed workers. During the election campaign we explained to the workers why the Communists endorsed the Unemployed Council and pledged its support.

Our aim throughout our activity was to convince the workers that only through organization and support on the part of the workers living in the territory, will it be successful in defeating the evictions and lowering the rents. His activity had results. The workers began to see in our comrades real organizers of struggles and defenders of the interests of the workers.

The workers on Crotona Park E., in the territory of Unit 13, faced evictions. Immediately they came to our comrades (most of whom lived right in that particular territory) and called on them for help and guidance in defeating the evictions. We took up the issue without delay. It was decided that to conduct this struggle effectively, a strike should be organized in the house affected, establish a house committee, and uniting in this struggle all workers, regardless of their beliefs, around this one issue of eviction. We succeeded in doing this. Workers from the Workmen's Circle, Socialist Party, Jewish Verband, were fighting together with unorganized workers under our leadership. When one of the Socialists made a statement at a house committee meeting that the Communists are interested in political gains and not in winning the struggle this was combatted by showing to the workers that the aim was to organize the workers around this issue and to defeat the evictions, as already proven in the process of the struggle.

The strike of the workers received tremendous support from

hundreds of workers and drew them into the struggle. Representatives of the strike went to the synagogue attended by the landlord, exposed the landlord's action and succeeded in getting the workers attending the synagogue to support the strike. When the landlord evicted one worker, even the capitalist press was compelled to admit that 500 workers participated in this struggle and about 2,000 workers stood watching the scene.

Despite the attempts of the police the workers on Franklin Avenue were successful in winning their struggle. This struggle gave us the opportunity to prove to the workers the possibilities of fighting landlords that belong to the association. The protection given to the landlord, the arrest of workers, and the trials helped to expose the city government as part and parcel of the Landlord's Association. But particularly, it proved to the workers that organized action will defeat the attacks of the landlords.

The result of this struggle has been that the Party comrades who participated in this struggle are now recognized leaders of the workers. And what is of special importance is the puncturing of the bug-a-boo of Communism spread by the capitalists. The workers know that we can lead them in struggle and are ready to fight with them for their demands. They have confidence in us.

The entire action has brought good results. The Block Committee has been organized and deals with the problems of the workers. Preparations are under way to develop a center in the territory to serve as an educational and social center as well as to provide leadership for the rest of the territory. As a result of this struggle the Unemployed Council reports that at least a half-dozen houses are ready for organization and steps are being taken in this direction. The spreading of the influence of our press, especially the *Morning Freiheit* whose circulation has greatly increased. The failure to popularize the *Daily Worker* during the struggle is reflected also in its present circulation. And this has to be overcome.

While no systematic recruiting for the Party and the Y.C.L. was conducted during the struggle, immediate possibilities exist to draw in a number of workers into both the Party and League.

Only four members of the unit actually participated directly in the struggle. But the whole unit was involved in working out the details of the struggle.

J. G.

Organized Struggles Defeat Police Terror

BREAKING the police terror in Elmwood Park which has been going on for some time, was a problem which Section 8 had to solve. The May First demonstration was smashed by the police and hired gangsters. The political groups were de-

terminated to smash the growing movement of the unemployed and part time workers who were organizing to fight against the foreclosures of poor home-owners and for more relief.

When the village elections took place last Spring the Communist Party was on the ballot, which was a victory for the workers in face of the opposition of these different political groups. Our Party, after fighting these elements who tried to keep us off the ballot in court, had just two weeks time to hold one election rally. Even in this short time we were able to secure about one-seventh of the votes. This shook the props from under these political gangs throughout the suburbs.

In Maywood the Socialist Party refused the Workers' Ex-servicemen's League their hall, although the hall was rented and paid for. We demanded an answer from the Socialists. We forced them to admit that the politicians, together with the leaders of the American Legion and the officials of the American Can Co., one of the J. P. Morgan concerns, gave them orders to keep us out of the hall. The police were in front of this hall with machine guns in order to keep the workers out. Also, in Melrose Park, the workers were beaten, slugged and jailed on the same day, May 1. On May 6 the workers were lined up against the wall and shot down by machine-gun bullets. Eleven comrades were wounded and 58 arrested for daring to protest against the attack on the workers which took place on May 1.

In Elmwood Park the relief supervisor, Charleston, has his headquarters in the police station. Every time comrades from the council went there to demand relief for needy families, this capitalist tool called the police and together with the village firemen (who, by the way are deputized, carrying guns and belts full of lead slugs) would throw the comrades out or jail them.

I wish to relate here one example—a case of the wife of an ex-serviceman who came to the council and told us they had nothing to eat. Her husband was called to the Forest Preserves for work that morning. Since there were only another comrade and my self in the council headquarters, we went with this woman to Charleston. There we got a committee organized very quickly. I told the woman to present her case. He told her to come back Monday.

This happened Friday and for three days she would have nothing to eat. She started crying. We told her to stop crying—that the council was there to see that she and her three children would eat, and we wouldn't leave until she got relief. The workers were immediately sympathetic. They stood up like a solid wall, demanding food. The coward called for the police. They rushed in, grabbed me, but the roar from the workers and my determination to fight back put fear into the hearts of the police and they called for reinforcements. With them came the big fat Judge Mendriski. I had been before this judge many

times and now was my chance to expose him. They asked me what the hell I wanted in here. I told him this mother of three children came here to get something to eat and they refused to feed her. We are here to see that she is given food. I looked right at him, and said: "What the hell are you here for, to help this serpent deny this mother with her three children food? You don't care, you with your belly packed with steak." "Lock him up," was his reply. They pulled me out, but the workers followed and demanded that I be released. The police, seeing the determination of the workers for my release, were forced to let me go. The judge, also, seeing the militancy of the workers said: "Let the Red go. Next time he comes before me, I will beat him up." "Yes," said I, "that is what is on your mind, to jail and beat workers who fight for the right of the workers to live." The judge issued another order to lock me up.

Down in the jug this mother made the remark that she was going to "end it all". She came over with her husband and three daughters that evening and this is the story she told me and my wife. "I went home, turned on the gas. Just then the insurance man happened to be in the block and stopped in to see if I had money to pay him for insurance. My head was about to burst. Away he went. A few minutes later a neighbor came in and being stopped the second time I went out to get some air and the next thing I knew I was in the hospital and found out that it took one and a half hours to revive me."

As a result of this struggle the charities were forced to give her relief.

Here is another case. Jacobson, a painter, belonging to the A. F. of L. went to Charleston to ask for relief and he got a box. When he came back a second time he was refused. His oldest son who is around 25 years of age, works for Sears & Roebuck and makes \$11 per week. The charities demanded to know where the boy was working. The father was afraid that the boy would lose his job, so he refused to answer, saying that Charleston could come over and investigate; that there was nothing to eat and that if he did not need the relief he would not ask for it. Jacobson was refused relief four or five times. Now Jacobson had been a hard worker all his life. He had been fooled by the capitalist talk that good times will return. But, with winter coming on and no coal in the house, he began thinking. His wife and another woman came over to the council and we elected a committee to take them to the charities.

When our committee came into the relief station, the case was turned over to a case-worker by the name of Miss Bauer. When she saw our committee, she wanted to run out. But we had the door blocked and made her stay in. She screamed for the police and they came to help send Mrs. Jacobson away again. Mrs. Jacobson was refused relief. When she got home Mr. Jacob-

son was found in the basement hanging to a rafter. Now was the time to act to stop other fathers from taking this way out. We got on the job quickly, rented a large hall, which they say holds 700 to 800 people. We got out a leaflet, and distributed it in large numbers. The hall was filled with workers at 7 o'clock although the meeting was called for 8. We knew from reports that the workers gave us that the police were going to try to smash this meeting. We were on the watch. At 7:30 up came police, 15 or 20 uniformed cops and about 50 hired thugs. They surrounded the hall, armed to the teeth.

Comrade Good was supposed to be the judge of the mass trial and he was late. Meanwhile, the police were trying to put fear into the crowd. Good finally came and we decided to start the meeting. I was chairman. I took the chair and opened the meeting. I knew that if I would mention Jacobson's name, I would immediately be arrested, so I spoke about all the other cases we handled. The workers, including many from fascist organizations like the American Legion, Scandinavian American Club and other religious organizations, cheered and applauded our activities and program. The police were licked, so I started to talk on the Jacobson case and up stepped the chief of police and said to me: "You have no right to try these men in this way. It is illegal. If you could prove that this is murder and that the men are responsible, you should take them to court and prosecute them in a legal manner." The workers booed him out of the hall and yelled: "Go on with the trial."

Worker after worker got up and testified as to their conditions. Then, to prove the charges of the workers against the charities, the woman who was with Mrs. Jacobson got up and told the entire story. She told the workers that everything we said was the truth and she will stand by the Unemployed Council because the council is doing good work. The applause was tremendous. Comrade Good was then introduced to sum up. He exposed the police and the bosses' court, gave a very good talk and the workers are still talking about this meeting. Resolutions were passed to stop the police from interfering with the council committees. Resolutions were also passed to send telegrams to Washington to act on the immediate demands. Resolutions also passed for immediate clothes and for the removal of Charleston and Miss Bauer. We won all these demands except the last one, which the council is still working on. Also the workers are not bothered by the police. The workers are still carrying on activities to gain more concessions. Workers are joining our council. More councils are being built in the suburbs west of us. Struggles are going on all through these towns.

Party Unit—A Leader of Unemployed

DESPITE the great stress that has been placed upon the importance of block committees and carrying on block activities, this work is still seriously neglected in our Party. The first task of a Party street unit, is to acquaint itself with the conditions, and become the leader of the workers in the territory in which it operates. Since the greatest problem confronting the workers today is unemployment and part time work, the task of building the house and block committee, the instrument through which to lead the workers in their struggles for relief, against evictions and high rents, is of outstanding importance. But here, we still conceive of work among the unemployed and the struggle for relief as demonstrative actions. This wrong conception originates from the attitude that "we cannot gain anyway". To prove the incorrectness of this, we have but to point to one instance how a Party unit in New York has been carrying on block activities.

Our units that have been "concentrating" for years on one thing or another, would be greatly surprised if they would listen in at one of the meetings of this unit. Here the conditions of the workers on the block are actually discussed. "This worker is going to be dispossessed"; "this family is starving"; "how to combat white chauvinism"; "the block committee is going to the Home Relief Bureau, we need more comrades", etc. The conditions of individual families, as well as of the whole block are discussed and whatever actions are planned these are worked out on the basis of the conditions in the block and as a result of discussions with the workers on what has to be done.

Lead Fight for Free Milk

Besides winning relief for many of the families by leading actions against the Home Relief Bureau, the most important struggle that has been carried on in this block was the struggle for free milk. First the unit, after learning the immediate needs of the workers, decided that the fight for free milk was of immediate importance. The question was raised at a block committee meeting. The workers instantly formulated the demand. The methods used to organize this struggle were excellent. The workers of the block committee together with the unit comrades, canvassed the homes with petitions demanding of the city a free milk station in the block. After thoroughly canvassing that block and the adjoining ones with the assistance of neighboring units, getting a registration of the need of the workers—how long unemployed, if working, what wages—holding open air meetings, issuing leaflets, etc., a date was set for a demonstration at the home of the alderman.

By this time the entire territory was not only thoroughly acquainted with the issue, but many had participated in some

form of action in preparation for this struggle. The alderman refused to see the delegation elected by the demonstration and nothing was immediately gained. But on the very next day this demonstration was followed up by demands upon the milk trusts for milk, with the result that milk was obtained many times from three milk companies. But here our comrades fell into a serious error. The milk was granted without necessity for struggle. When a milk company demanded an apology from the block committee because it had issued a leaflet stating that the milk company had been forced to grant milk, a letter was sent to the company stating that there had been a misprint in the leaflet which should have read that the workers were forced to apply to them. It is here that the Party's leadership was not sufficiently decisive. If we had explained to the workers that the company had been forced by the organization in the block to grant the milk and that militant action will defeat attempts to withdraw the milk, the workers would have been willing and ready to put up a strong fight for milk and would not have so readily retracted from the leaflet of the block council. But this was not done.

It is not always easy to avoid these errors in carrying on activities on a block scale, especially so in the fight for immediate relief for the workers. In the struggle for immediate relief, there is the danger of separating the getting of relief from organization and struggle. The main emphasis in the struggle for relief must be directed against the city administration. Where we direct our demands against some large food trust, there too, the demands should be accompanied by militant action. We must show to the workers that these trusts are not separate and apart from the city administration and are directly responsible for unemployment and misery.

Bringing Out the Face of the Party

The manner in which the face of the Party is brought into the struggle is of great importance. This we can also learn from the methods employed by this particular unit. *The Communist candidate in the territory worked together with the block committee. The members of the unit worked with the block committee.* The Party in the election campaign pointed out to the workers what its stand was on unemployment insurance and immediate relief, and pledged support for the struggle. This it carried out in action by working with the block committee and has thus won confidence of the workers in the block.

Negro Share Croppers Building Their Union

THE work among the Negro share croppers in the Black Belt was begun more than a year ago. But before August of this year, there was no proper form of organization, no system of meetings, initiations and dues payments, no basically established locals with a captain, secretary and literature agent, and what is more important, there were no concrete, planned or conscious activities being carried on by the members. Their meetings were held in vacant houses where they would listen to long and radical speeches made by the comrade working among them. Many of the croppers would walk distances of six to seven miles. After the meetings, all the members would leave without any particular tasks assigned except that all would pledge to be present at the next meeting.

Strengthening the Union

But now, all the members understand that they belong to the Share Croppers Union. Four months ago we had only 22 locals established, but now these have increased to nearly 50. The share croppers' union is built as follows. Series of small locals are formed and each local consists of 10 members (with the exception of certain territories where 12 or 13 live near each other). One cropper is captain, another secretary and a third is literature agent. The main task of these three functionaries is to see that the local functions, takes up the immediate problems of the croppers and decides what steps to take on these issues and to build other locals, women's auxiliaries and youth sections of the union. The leading body also sees that all its members attend the meeting, read the *Daily Worker*, write articles, pay dues and help to educate the membership.

The local meets weekly. The captains of the various locals meet at separate meetings, make full reports of the work of their locals and lay plans for future activities. Previously the captains of one section which is seven miles from the other section would walk to the captains' meeting and it would sometimes be 11 or 12 o'clock before they would get back home after the meeting. This system of meeting soon developed irregular attendance, and as a result, the following change was made. All captains in a particular section meet together. Each group of captains has selected one comrade to represent their section to the county captains' meeting. This comrade is known as the County Committee Captain of a particular section. Also another comrade is elected by the captains of the same section as sub-committee captain whose duty is to assist the committee captain. Generally the committee captain works on one end of the section while the sub-committee captain works on the other end. Once every two weeks the committee captain and the sub-committee captain meet together with the captain and sub-captain of the other sections and check up on all the work in the sections.

The Demands of the Share Croppers' Union

The Negro share croppers are the lowest strata of agricultural toilers. For generations they have been kept in virtual slavery by a system of "furnishing" which kept the cropper family always in debt to his landlord. The prices of supplies, the rates of interest (sometimes 60 per cent) are determined by the landlord. No matter how high cotton prices rose, the landlord did the arithmetic and the cropper family was kept always in debt. Now the landlord class has no market for its cotton. The croppers are left starving in their cabins. No furnishing or production credit is given. Evictions for non-payment of rent take place regularly. The landlord can confiscate the stocks or serve attachments for the farm implements when the share cropper fails to pay his debts.

It is on the basis of these conditions and grievances that the Share Croppers Union formulated the demands, around which it is rallying larger and larger numbers of Negro share croppers:

A minimum price of 10 cents per pound for cotton

The right to sell our own cotton

No forced "pooling" of cotton

No confiscation of the livestock or attachments of farm implements

No evictions; no forced collection of debts.

Free school buses for the children of the croppers and tenants without discrimination against the Negro children

The right to organize for bread and fight against terror and war.

Already, the landowners are beginning to recognize the force of organization. After the distribution of leaflets (which because of the terror must be done illegally) the recognition of the landowners that the croppers and tenants were organizing into the Share Croppers Union, the right to sell their own cotton has been won on one plantation. A share croppers' committee was elected also to present the demands for clothing and shoes for a cropper and his family. When the committee went up to the landowner he was forced to grant this demand. The secretary of the landowner immediately issued an order for the clothes for this cropper and his family and in addition the cropper was given \$11 in cash and his wife \$12. All the members of the family were thus supplied with the necessities of life to tide them over the winter.

On another plantation the croppers and tenants have won the demand of debt cancellation. Some croppers and tenants here according to the landowner's figures owed as much as \$300. The landowner had told them to vacate their homes and move nothing off the place. But since the distribution of the leaflets and seeing that the white tenants were in agreement with the policy

of the union and were expressing their willingness to join up, the landowner was compelled to withdraw his threat and in addition cancelled all back debts.

Our Immediate Tasks

But our job has just begun. Our central task now and in the immediate future is to win over for the union a broad section of the white tenants and croppers as well as the majority section of the Negro croppers and tenants. There are great possibilities to draw the most militant white croppers and tenants into the union on the basis of united action of white and Negro croppers. Today the white tenants visit the Negro croppers and tenants, eat at their homes, go hunting with them and help them gather their crops, etc. Since last year's struggle at Camp Hill the whites express a different attitude toward the Negroes. Prior to the Camp Hill struggle, the whites did not mingle with the Negroes as they do now. They say, that the landowners had told them that the Negroes were organizing against them—the white tenants—and they believed them. But since then, they understand that the union is fighting for them as well as for the Negro tenants and croppers and they want to join. But there still remains some mistrust among the Negro croppers towards the white tenants because of the role played by the misled white tenants in the past. However, the very conditions in the Black Belt is undermining this distrust and forging the unity of the white and Negro croppers and tenants.

We plan to develop a system of white locals of the Tenants League with an interchange of delegates from the Share Croppers Union. The white captains of the tenants' local will attend the local of the Negro share croppers. The Negro captain will attend the white local. In this manner, we will weld the unity of the white and Negro share croppers and tenants.

The next step is the organization of plantation committees on the large plantations where we have tremendous possibilities.

We are also planning to secure simple and popular literature as a step in the education of the share croppers. The *Weekly Farm News Letter* will be sent to all white tenants as a method of breaking them into the movement.

The strengthening of the Party is an important task. Already there are three Party units which have been organized in the various sections. The comrades who are Party members are the best elements for the Party, the most developed, loyal and active comrades, many of them played an active and important part in the struggles here. But many more members can and should be won for the Party.

How to React to Grievances

IN a metal shop in New York the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union had been carrying on successful work. In the spray department the shop group embraced one-third of the workers, with one or two Party members. Here the workers worked 54 hours a week. But during the busy season the boss compelled them to work 60 and 70 hours a week. This question was thoroughly discussed in the shop group and it was decided to convince the other workers to quit at the end of nine hours. Through individual approach, by speaking to the workers during the lunch hour, after work—and the members of the group themselves, taking the initiative to quit at the end of that time—we succeeded in getting the other workers in the department to follow suit. This struggle was won and the workers now work only the nine hours. In addition the demand for lunch money when the workers were called in on a holiday was also won.

As a result of this the group has grown considerably.

* * * *

In another metal factory where 80 workers were employed, the workers complained that there was no heat in the plant. This issue was taken up. We had a small nucleus of five workers there—but through individual discussions with the workers we succeeded in rallying them around this demand. It was decided that the workers present this demand, and if not granted, that they lay down on the job and produce less than ordinarily. The workers raised hell. One worker quit in protest. The workers began to carry out their decision. The boss was compelled to heat the place. The worker who quit was called back to work. This also raised the prestige of the group and it grew as a result of this struggle.

* * * *

In another factory—employing hundreds of workers. The workers in one department were getting very low wages. We were carrying on work there. Here we succeeded in getting the workers to produce half as much as they used to produce in the past. The wages were soon increased from \$10 to \$12 and \$14 a week.

* * * *

In a railroad shop in Long Island four fellows were taken off the job of cleaning the pits. The workers were enraged. The issue was raised in the railroad bulletin. We had no group there, just contact with one worker, who gave us this information. Immediately after the bulletin was distributed the four workers were taken back. The employers were afraid of the consequences.

A similar example of where the bulletin succeeded in winning the demands of the workers. In a railroad shop, to cut down expenses, the employers had eliminated a number of work trains.

The result was that the workers had to wait one hour for a train. Many times they missed the bank on pay day and could not cash their checks. The workers were kicking about this. Here also we had no group—only one contact. This issue was written up in the railroad bulletin. The work train was put back.

* * * *

In another Long Island shop, where we had no group with the exception of one contact, we decided to do something along one issue—the issue was speed-up. This issue was a burning one in the shop. We decided to make contacts with a number of workers and even though they were not ready to join an organization in the shop, to get them to work in unison in the shop—and lay down on the job. We succeeded in doing this and about 15 workers in the department cut down their production. This finally forced the foreman to agree to the demands of the workers.

The workers in this plant get through work at midnight. It is difficult to meet in a house at this time since we would be noticed. It is a custom here for gangs of boys to stand on the street corners—and we adopted this method to meet with the workers. After midnight we meet, stand on a corner and discuss the problems in the shop. Six workers have already joined the group in the shop.

New Member Builds Unit

At the Ford meeting in Kansas City a worker filled out an application card for the Party. He told us then that this was the twelfth time he had filled out an application for membership and had never before been drawn into a Party unit. He told us that he had decided "to keep on filling out applications until their office will be so full of my name and address that they have to notice me." We have finally noticed him and today he is in the Party. Immediately he brought a few workers together from his neighborhood and a new unit was formed of which he has been made unit organizer. This unit is doing real good work now, has participated in the election campaign, arranged meetings, sent comrades to Negro churches and fraternal organizations to speak on the elections and the Hunger March.

How a Unit Deals With Local Problems

EDITORIAL NOTE:—*The following minutes of a unit in the mining section in Southern Illinois is a good example of how a unit should deal with concrete local problems. We want to raise two questions, however: What has the unit done in practice to carry out the very good decisions? Secondly, why haven't mine nuclei been established in at least two of the mines where three or more comrades are employed?*

Minutes of the Nucleus

Attendance: 12 comrades present: 4 from mine —; 2 from mine —; 2 from mine —; 3 from mine —; 1 non-miner.

Order of business: 1. Discussion on Situation in the Mines. 2. Unemployed Work. 3. Dues and Membership. 4. Discussion.

Report from First Mine

Miners disgusted. Many who were enthused about the Progressive Miners Union are not even coming to meetings any more. They are now questioning the advisability of the building of the P. M. A.

Nomination of officers took place. Our nominees nominated but officials so manipulated that they were not nominated by the local. Elections took place after man of the miners had left the meeting. The vote was much larger than given to us.

A By-Law Committee was elected. Brought in recommendation that the salaries of the officials should not be cut too much, at most 12½ per cent. Because of the late hour and since many of our people were absent, our comrades decided to have the discussion on this question postponed, and it was carried.

Resolution in support of the National Hunger March adopted almost unanimously.

Report from Second Mine

Miners disgusted. Do not any longer speak of the P.M.A. Are asking what the P.M.A. did for the miners. Miners pointing out that the P.M.A. did not fight in Franklin County, the home of Lewis and Walker, but Lewis and Walker are coming here, to the home of the P.M.A. to carry on a fight and are more or less successful because the P.M.A. is doing nothing about it.

Miners beginning to realize that the striking miners must be taken care of not by the miners that are working and through the 1 per cent check-off, but a fight must be put up that the city and various institutions take care of them. Also, must carry on a struggle against discrimination.

V. nominated for vice-president almost unanimously. C. lost out but P. running for scale committee was nominated by all members, and there was no opposition to R. running for Trial Board member.

Report from Third Mine

No life shown to matters outside of their own mine. The men are actually revolting against the passivity of some of the leaders of the P.M.A. in connection with the strike. The men ready to quit work any time in support of the strikers. This question discussed very much. They would rather stop work than give the 10 per cent relief which is no relief at all.

R. nominated in the elections. Also, P. who met no opposition.

Resolution adopted to support the National Hunger March. Mine is working and could not send anybody to Washington the way mine — has done. At the same time they could not donate any money since there isn't any in the treasury (the funds are tied up by the U.M.W.A.) and the miners just started to work and have to support the strikers.

Report from Mine on Strike

Forty-three men were working Friday. The pickets handled very brutally. No effort made to have real mass picketing. The 43 men dug 16 flats of coal in 7 days (a flat is from 40-45 tons).

Resolution read but failed to take a vote on it. At the meeting no discussion took place as to the actual situation but took up the regular routine work. A matter of plain sell-out.

Discussion Brings Out Many Problems and Tasks

1. That the comrades popularize the achievements of the Unemployed Council in getting relief for miners whom the charity institution has refused relief and rent.

2. To mobilize the membership to have the locals elect committees to go to the charity institutions to demand relief and carry on a struggle against discrimination of the strikers.

3. To mobilize the rank and file to start mass picketing and stop all mines for that purpose. Elect rank and file strike committees to carry on this work. To revive the struggle against the opening of the mines by the Peabody in Taylorville (where they employ 1,200 miners from all over the U.S.A. and many who are not miners at all).

4. Party to issue leaflet to take up the above questions as soon as it is possible.

5. A meeting to be held with the other nucleus which has miners from three different mines all striking, and consider the question of calling broad meetings of left wingers for the purpose of carrying on the fight.

6. To have a slate of officers for local elections in every local where we have either comrades (7 locals) or good sympathizers (in the rest of them). Here the unit discussed the slate and worked out same for two mines, leaving the other two where election notices have not yet been posted until the next meeting.

Unemployed Work

Main points taken up already. Main thing to prepare the ground for inviting our marchers to report when they come back. Also to have report on the state-wide conference.

Collections of money for the National Hunger March raised very sharply. The locals while supporting the march did not give any money outside of Mine — which sent a marcher and paid his expenses.

Dues and Membership

Dues paid. A new member joined the Party from Mine — .

The question of the absentees was taken up. The four comrades not present to be visited. Comrades assigned to do this work.

Comrades reporting that they have new comrades for the next meeting. The nucleus would then have to be divided into two units, but meanwhile to hold all four mines meeting together until we get more members and establish ourselves.

The unit to get 10 copies of the Daily Worker each day. Thirty-seven cents collected to start getting the Daily. S. elected to take care of Daily.

Comrades reported that in Ridgely Precinct No. 7 our Party received 19 votes. All of them thrown into the waste-basket. We were not credited with any at all. In Precinct No. 10 our Party received 49 votes. Ten of them straight. Credited only with 11 votes.

Due to late hour discussion to be postponed to next meeting. S. assigned to read the resolution of the 15th Plenum and lead discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 10 p.m.

Give More Personal Guidance

The following extracts from a letter of an active Party comrade in Chicago throws much light on the inner life of our methods of work and our system of leadership. The comrade writes:

“Here is my own personal experience. I work every day. I have for several years. I joined the Party without any soliciting. Very shortly, I was on the Section Committee. Then I was drafted into a unit as organizer. Then because, I brought forward to the section that our unit territory was too large and that a new unit was necessary in the territory, I was released as organizer of my unit and told to go ahead and organize a new unit in one week. I had to go right out into a new territory and form this unit. Already, we are told to form an unemployed council. Now

I am not kicking so much about that. Here is what I do kick about.

"It is criticism. I will be criticized next Tuesday night at the organizers' meeting because the unit is not larger; because I have not done more; because I did not attend some meeting or other. I work hard every day in a building as a painter—not a union painter. I have a few there who read the *Daily Worker* and subscribe to it. I cannot break down the Catholic faith there and start a shop unit. I do the best I can. However, no matter how much I do, I always hate to show my face because there are things I do not do that I was told to do. Directives, directives, directives. An organization letter sometimes of three pages. Hell, I could not do one tenth of it. I am getting tired. I am just as much as Communist as ever, but I am not 10 Communists. Sure as organizer I should do all these things. But if I was to go to all the meetings I would be so busy learning what to do that I would not even get a chance to try to get help do anything. I can't be everywhere all at once. I must sleep sometimes. We have spent enough energy at inner meetings to overthrow the whole capitalist system. My wife won't stand for it either."

What are these complaints of the comrade? Are they raised because he is a passive member of the Party? Not at all. The comrade is an active comrade, working day in and day out. He raises here basic problems facing our entire Party—the problems of developing the initiative and self-activity of the lower bodies; the system of leadership to individual comrades and unit; the training and development of cadres—all important problems for our Party.

A new comrade entering into the Party because he shows willingness and a desire to carry on work is immediately burdened with a thousand and one tasks that are physically impossible for him to accomplish. He is drafted into leading work, drawn into many meetings, and soon he is busy every day in the week and cut off from the workers with whom he has contact. The comrade travels in a vicious circle, unable to do many tasks required from him. Difficulties develop with his family at home. This probably would not interfere with his work, but when at the same time he gets nothing but criticism all the time from the higher bodies, he becomes discouraged, lets down on his activity and very often drops out of the Party. This accounts for much of the present fluctuation of our Party.

What then is the job of the leading comrades? How can this situation be remedied? How can we avoid such situations

as the worker emphasizes in the above extract from taking place? The 14th Plenum resolution dealing with this problem states:

" . . . The center of gravity must be shifted to the development of the lower organizations, to the sections and units. The methods of leadership, assistance of checking up on the work of the lower organizations by the higher organs must be a method of personal guidance in accordance with the special conditions of the given field of work, of the given enterprise and not simply the sending out of circulars. In all lower organizations, committees must be formed which actually work collectively, and a stop must be put to the state of affairs in which the work is concentrated in the hands of a few comrades."

How then should the section leadership which deals with the units concretely apply these directives of the 14th plenum to the problems raised by this comrade? Instead of condemning the comrade because he has not carried out every task, the section leadership should recognize the work done by the comrade and encourage his activities. The problems which he meets in the shop should be discussed—how to get particularly those workers who already read the *Daily Worker* together; how to meet the question of religion in the shop; how to raise the immediate issues around the concrete grievances which will unite all the workers regardless of their religious or political affiliations. In his work in the unit, the section leadership should discuss with the comrade concretely the problems in the territory, how to organize the workers around these issues, how to establish collective work in the unit and activate the comrades around the issues in the territory; how to eliminate some of the inner meetings to enable the comrade to carry through this work. Pains should be taken to explain the tasks and decisions of the Party to this comrade, as well as to each unit organizer, how to overcome the difficulties in carrying out these decisions, how to apply these decisions to the specific problems of the unit.

In such a manner the comrade will feel encouraged, will feel that there is a leadership in the section and will feel that he is a part of the collective leadership working out the problems that face the Party. Such personal leadership will help to develop, train and not discourage new cadres. This day to day supervision of the work of the lower bodies cannot be replaced by long circular directives.

New Tasks Brought Out By Membership Study

SECTION 2 of Chicago recently carried through a membership control for the purpose of establishing a better division of work and assignment of tasks in mass organizations to every member. The facts found after an analysis was made, are very enlightening for our Party and show some of the basic weaknesses which must be overcome, especially in the fluctuation of the membership.

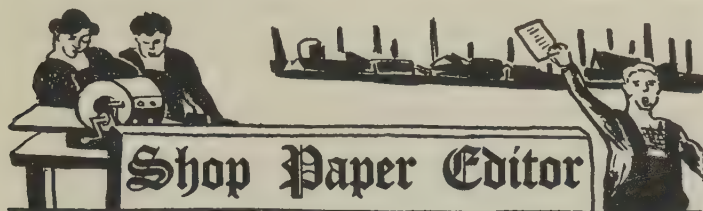
First, on the carrying through of the membership control. It was not a regular registration as is usually conducted. Commissions were set up with representatives from the district, section and units. A minimum of 25 minutes was spent with each comrade, discussing his activity in the Party, the work in the mass organizations, his proposals of improving the work of the unit, section, etc.

In all, 223 members showed up at the reporting places. Of these 76 per cent were Negroes, 83 per cent native born, 79 per cent unemployed and the rest part time and full time employed. But while 91 per cent reported affiliation with one or another mass organization which is a rather good percentage, the section at the present time is not utilizing the mass connections for the campaigns sufficiently. This is partly due to the political level of the membership, but basically because there is no guidance given to the members in their work in the mass organizations.

While the majority of those reporting had joined the Party in the course of participation in struggles, the Party makes insufficient efforts to further develop politically the new members. Only five reported substantial reading of Marxian literature, 22 are readers of *The Communist*, but the majority stated that they read only the C. P. Election Platform, and some other recent pamphlets. This, together with the decline in struggles developed by the Party, is basically responsible for the high fluctuation in that section.

The following figures show the tremendous fluctuation in that section: 58 per cent joined the Party in 1932, 28 per cent in 1931, 4 per cent in 1930, 5 per cent between 1921-1929, and 5 per cent charter members. This after the great influx of members in 1931, after the tremendous struggles carried on the South Side. The question what is happening to the hundreds of workers that applied and joined the Party must be of utmost immediate concern to the section.

The immediate tasks should be: to intensify the struggles for Negro rights and for the immediate demands of the entire working class on the South Side, and especially on the stockyards; to pay more attention to the raising of the ideological level of the membership; more personal guidance to the units and individual members in their mass work. This will make this the best section in the district.



The Head-Light—November, December, 1932—Southern Pacific
R. R. Unit, C. P., District 13.

We have on hand the November and December issues of *The Head-Light*. In both issues of the paper, there are a number of letters from workers' correspondents dealing with immediate grievances in the shop. This is good, since these letters will help a great deal to develop a struggle for these grievances. However, it is not sufficient to raise the issues. It is our task to direct the resentment of the workers into organized channels by telling them how to combat these attacks.

For example. In an article in the November issue: "Works 20 Years and Gets Fired", what is the solution given in the paper. It states, "The only way to deal with this Gorilla (the foreman who fired the worker) is to organize and meet them like the Russian people met their blood suckers." This is not the immediate solution to this problem. We should point out to the workers first of all that firing of the older workers means more speed-up, using less workers to produce the same amount of work. Second, that the foremen can hire and fire at will because of the lack of an organization in the shop which will deal with these problems. Thus, proving to the workers the need for the establishment of broad unity committees to deal with even the most elementary issues. At the same time to show that such an organization representing the workers can compel the bosses not to fire workers at will. In addition the paper should raise the demand for social insurance for workers too old to work.

While the December issue is an improvement in dealing with how the workers should organize in the shops, it does not differentiate between the united front movement in the shops, locals and lodges, the Railroad Industrial League and the Party. There is a tendency here to speak too much in the name of the "Railroad Industrial Union". There is no industrial union in the railroad industry. We should hammer away at the need for organizing the unity committees to embrace all workers regardless of religious or political affiliations to combat the attacks of the employers, to expose the sell-out of the Brotherhood leadership. At the same time, we should point out that the Industrial Rail-

road League embraces all workers not organized in the Brotherhoods. And then point out the relations of the Party to these organizations. In this way we will not confuse the workers.

* * * *

Waterfront Worker—December, 1932—Group of Longshoremen
—District 13.

A very lively first issue of the *Waterfront Worker* has reached us. In technical makeup it is one of the best gotten out bulletins we received. It deals in detail with the conditions of the longshoremen, the position of the I.L.A. officials, the "Blue Book" leadership and conditions in other ports. One specially good feature is the article on Tom Mooney and the 1916 Longshoremen's Strike, thus concretely linking up the case of Tom Mooney with the struggle of the longshoremen.

But what should the longshoremen do? This answer is not given clearly and decisively. Dealing as it does with a 10 cent cut in wages per hour, the bulletin, does not tell the workers how to organize. Instead, in only one short sentence it states: "What's to prevent us from organizing small undercover groups of those whom we know on each dock. This is the only way we can lay the basis of a real union. . ." While the first step is getting a number of longshoremen together, the aim is to develop a broad united front movement of the longshoremen on the docks of both organized and unorganized longshoremen and carry the struggle for the demands of the longshoremen into the I.L.A. locals by organizing the opposition movement to develop the struggle. This is not presented to the longshoremen.

What is more serious, is the complete failure of even mentioning the Marine Workers Industrial Union. Surely it is important in a bulletin of this character to point out the role of the industrial union, the demands for the longshoremen, the call for united action between the rank and file of our union and the I.L.A. "Blue Book" membership. But this is not reflected in the paper.

Why nothing on the hunger march and the fact that nearly 300 seamen and longshoremen participated in this important battle. Is this not of interest of the longshoremen of San Francisco.

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Ford Worker—December, 1932—Edgewater Plant, Ford Group,
District 14.

Another addition to the family. The first issue of the *Ford Worker* comes to our attention. The comrades have made a good start in this paper. The aim should be to continue the regular issuance of the bulletin in the shop.

Just a few pointers. If this paper is to receive response from the workers it should deal concretely with even the most ele-

mentary issues confronting the workers in the factory. This is not done. There is very little on the grievances of the workers. A system of workers correspondence should be developed to improve this angle of the paper.

A good feature is the article on the lessons from the last wage cut. This is a good beginning in preparing the workers to forthcoming cuts and the need for organizing to defeat these attacks. But what pleases us most is the article of the Doll strike which is used to show to the workers in the Ford Plant that organization and struggle can defeat cuts and win better conditions. But, why the use of the Trade Union Unity League, without an explanation of what the T.U.U.L. is. After all, this is the first issue of the paper—and it should explain to the workers just what the organization stands for.

More attention in future issues of the paper to how the workers should organize, what we mean by the Groups of Action in the shop, whom they should embrace, their united front character, and how they should function.

Keep up the good work.

* * * *

C. & S. Railroad Worker—October, 1932—C. & S. Railroad Shop Group, District 19.

Good technical make-up. But this is not true of the contents. Instead of being the voice of the shop group, the united front organization in the shop—it speaks in the name of the Party. This can be seen in practically all articles. In no place in the paper do we see why this group endorses the Communist election campaign, but instead the position of the group is replaced by the position of the Party. It is this general line in the bulletin which should be changed fundamentally.

An additional point which should be emphasized. The first article deals with the Railroad Brotherhood and speaks of it as a "Company union acting as it always does, as an agent of the bosses". This lumps the workers and the officials together and stamps them as a united reactionary force. The Twelfth Plenum Resolution emphasizes particularly the necessity to sharply differentiate between the leadership of the reformist unions and the membership. This is not done in the article. To carry out the line of the Twelfth Plenum in our work and in the shop bulletin it is necessary to avoid using phrases and name-calling, but to expose the reformist leaders on the basis of concrete deeds and words, to expose the conditions under which the workers must work, to point out the position of the shop group on all the issues confronting the workers in contrast to the position of the railroad union bureaucracy. In this way to prepare for a broad united front movement in the railroad shops.

Agit-Prop Work

Need for Political Education of Membership Greater Than Ever Before

IN the center of our educational activities must stand the training of the new members. This is of such great importance that the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. raises it very sharply in the resolution. It states: "*A chain of Party schools must be organized for the purpose of educating the newly recruited Party members. . . .*" For almost a year now we have been discussing in the columns of the *Party Organizer*, the question of establishing new members classes. At first we got out a special outline for these new members classes. It is over six months now that we have published Comrade Bittelman's pamphlet, *The Communist Party in Action*. This pamphlet was especially written as a text for the six weeks' courses for new members classes. We shall not here repeat the purpose and method of these new members classes. That was taken up in detail in a special article which appeared in the May-June issue of the *Party Organizer*.

From the reports we have, those districts which have made an earnest attempt to establish these classes, have reported real progress. The general weakness common to all districts is the fact that no real attempt is being made to establish such new members classes outside of the district headquarters cities.

The Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. also takes up the question of the training of cadres. The resolution states: "*To strengthen the Communist Party itself, by training cadres who are closely connected with the masses and trusted by them. . . .*" In the past year we had a number of district schools, a national training school, a regional training school and a miner's school. These schools have helped quite a bit in the training of new cadres. However, *the main method of the training of the cadres through political educational activities must be centered around the training of the whole body of functionaries.* Recently the system of week-end schools and special classes for functionaries in the sections has been developed. At these week-end schools, we have already in a previous issue of the *Party Organizer*, suggested the following main topics: 1) Elements of Marxism-Leninism. 2) A class in mass work, with emphasis on trade union and unemployed work. 3) Organizational principles. These schools should last for a period of between six weeks to two months. We can also adopt the method of arranging functionaries classes on each topic separately of the three mentioned for the week-end schools.

Our experience has shown that in spite of some weaknesses, all of our *district schools* without exception have really proven to be a great aid in the training of functionaries in the districts and should be continued. The district schools are for the purpose of training comrades who are longer in the Party and have already had mass experience. The district schools have as their purpose the training mainly of unit and section functionaries.

In addition to the district schools, we should also develop the method of *one-week or two-week full time section and district training schools for the training of unit functionaries*, such schools should also include a broader body of functionaries than the district training school—the same subjects to be taken up, practically in the same form, as in the week-end school. Some of the experience with our one and two-week full time training schools have proven to be very successful. We are printing part of a report giving the experience of the Minnesota district:

“All of last week I was in Iron Mountain where we held a one-week full time Party school. Two units were involved in this school. There were between 35 and 45 students at the school every day—including about 10 non-Party workers. The school started at 9 in the morning and ended at 5 in the evening. The main questions taken up were: Communist Party program, organization, structure; we emphasized the unit functioning the most. Then we had a trade union course which was taught by the N. M. U. organizer. We took up especially in detail the building of the Auto Workers Union in the Ford plant, and the unemployed work. We discussed some of the recent articles in *The Communist* on the united front. It was in my opinion a successful school. The Iron Mountain comrades liked it very much. The element at the school was American. I believe that the quality of our Party membership is much better than anywhere else. Most of the workers there are experienced Ford auto workers or miners, most of them having worked in Ford plants even before coming to Iron Mountain. They learn very easily. Also the age of the Party membership is relatively young; that makes a difference.”

Recently some improvement is to be noted in the political education and training of the membership, but this is primarily confined to the district headquarters cities. As one of the means of improving the political training in the sections outside of the district headquarters, we propose the establishment of circuit classes, that is, on different nights, in the various outlying sections. Classes for new members and functionaries to be arranged with one or two comrades covering them from city to city.

The reading of Party literature and resolutions is an indispensable part of our entire system of political training. On

various occasions the *Party Organizer* gave some facts showing how the district leaderships do not pay personal attention to this question. In the article which appears in this section on the Twelfth Plenum, facts are given emphasizing this point.

We refer the comrades again to the articles which appeared in the *Party Organizer* on the method of discussion in the units. We also quote from the Fifteenth Plenum resolution of our Party on this point. The basis for the political discussions in the units must be the struggle for the line of the Party (when we say struggle, we do not mean deviation hunting, slander and abuse, but the development of Bolshevik self-criticism). The struggle for the line of the Party on the basis of a concrete examination of the mass work of the Party, particularly by establishing the units as the leader in the mass work in its territory and shop, will greatly enhance the political life and interest for theoretical study.

We must remember that our schools are auxiliaries in the training of cadres. The main method of training the cadres is through the development of the mass work of the Party, through the development of the political initiative from below. The resolution of the Twelfth Plenum of the E.C.C.I. in speaking about the training of the cadres says: "The new cadres also must be drawn into the everyday revolutionary work among the broad masses. . . . Inner Party democracy, Bolshevik self-criticism, the discussion of the most important political problems in the lower organizations, concrete leadership of their work—all this must be the basis of all Party activity. This is also the necessary condition for strengthening iron Bolshevik discipline in the ranks of the Party."

S. D.

Raises Need for More Elementary Training

I HAVE some concrete suggestions to make.

Due to the fact that I am of American origin and have been exceptionally successful in the recent signature drive, I hope to have these suggestions taken seriously.

Our section is a new one and in a residential district. The section committee of which I am a member is also new to a large extent. The unit bureaus are new also in the main. Due to bad transportation it is difficult to keep in touch with each other. The whole section has become more or less burned up with inner meetings. Some unit meetings lasting until 12:30 P.M. with little attended to. Very little recruiting is going on. Very little literature is being distributed.

To criticize the leading committees and bureaus would be unjust in the extreme. For while we know we are not functioning properly, we can not put our finger on the exact trouble. We do try hard.

The main difficulty is to get comrades to realize their responsibility. Most of what I have said heretofore must be taken care of by ourselves I know.

Here is what I suggest. I am positive it is the most crying need we have.

A correspondence course in Communism. I think that all organizers and agit-prop units should take the course and all other members of leading committees, too. Also as many members as possible.

As it is now, I find that many unit organizers are made ridiculous by the peanut politicians on the signature drive. Besides, a simple course in Marx, such topics as planned meetings, political talk in meetings, discipline, and other very essential topics can be taken care of.

In that way, instead of just a gathering of reds we will have a snappy Bolshevik meeting.

It is hard for men who work day times to go to school. The Marxist Study Courses we have are entirely too deep for a beginner. I started a school with another comrade for each Sunday morning. We tried your study courses but had to discard them. The only thing that comes anywhere near being simple enough is *Shop Talks on Economics*. We were stuck from there on.

E. S.

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EDITORIAL NOTE: We are glad to print this letter since the comrade here raises sharply the need for elementary training. There is a correspondence course in Fundamentals of Communism which can be secured from the Workers School in New York. But the suggestions made in the article in this issue of the Party Organizer on Party training is the basis for carrying through the proper education of the new members and functionaries. We suggest that these are followed by the comrades in this section of Chicago.

"Precisely because little time remains before the revolutionary crisis matures it is necessary, without losing a moment, to intensify and accelerate our Bolshevik mass work to win over the majority of the working class, to increase the revolutionary activity of the working class."—*Twelfth Plenum Resolution.*

For Political Clarification On Twelfth Plenum Resolutions

THAT our Party has not yet been permeated sufficiently with the necessity of political clarification of the tasks confronting us in this stage of the "end of capitalist stabilization" can also be seen in the sale of the Twelfth Plenum Resolutions in pamphlet form. These resolutions have been made available to the districts for more than six weeks. These resolutions contain important and valuable directives for our Party. But what has been the response of the districts? Districts like San Francisco, Seattle, and others have *not yet ordered a single copy of the pamphlet Capitalist Stabilization Has Ended containing these resolutions. An important district like Philadelphia has satisfied itself with an order of 25 copies.—Cleveland has ordered only 100—Detroit only 150 copies.* No district, with the possible exception of Chicago, *has ordered sufficient copies of the resolutions to reach even district, section, unit and mass organization functionaries.*

Why this neglect on the part of the leading committees in the district to popularize these decisions? Why this failure to utilize such important historic documents of the Communist International, which are vital guides in our day to day work? How can we bring these decisions down to the membership if our leading functionaries from top to bottom do not study carefully the Twelfth Plenum resolutions, apply them concretely to the work in the districts and their specific problems in the sections and units? The failure of the district committees to be personally responsible for the widest possible popularization and broad discussion of the Twelfth Plenum Resolutions is nothing else but underestimation of the value of such decisions of our World Party to raise the political understanding of the entire membership and improve the character of our work.

This can be seen most glaringly in some concrete examples. In Harlem at a functionaries' class, out of 15 present, only three comrades read the Fourteenth Plenum resolution. At a functionaries' conference on the Twelfth Plenum decisions, out of 60 comrades (embracing the leadership of the sections and mass organizations) 25 had not read No. 17-18 of the *Communist International* which contains an editorial and some of the speeches at the Twelfth Plenum. Similar examples can be given in other parts of the country.

The decisions of the Twelfth Plenum if properly utilized will mark a step forward in raising the ideological level of the membership and its understanding of the tasks now confronting our Party in the light of the latest decisions of the Communist International, and strengthen the struggle against all deviations from the line of our Party. These resolutions are an important weapon. Let us use this weapon.