

Party Recruiting Drive

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THE PARTY IN THE DRESS STRIKE

By I. AMTER.

The Party is the leader of all the struggles of the workers. This consists not only in formulating the policy for the workers, not only in giving direct strike leadership at the top, but particularly in the work that the rank and file of the Party carries on among the rank and file of the strikers.

The Party formulates the policy for the strike not in the offices of the Party, but in direct consultation with the workers. Only in this way will the strike policy—the general policy and the strategy and tactics of the strike, be correct. The Party has made mistakes in the past in formulating the demands of strikes, outstanding in this respect being the last dress strike. But this time, the Party directly consulted the workers, discussed the demands with them and then knew that the demands were correct not in the abstract, but in that they would rally the workers, and that the workers feeling and knowing that these were the necessary demands in the situation, would be willing to fight for them.

The Party gives leadership at the top not only in watching the development of the strike. The Party learns from all past strike experiences, and also the strike experiences in other countries, as gathered together and interpreted on the basis of revolutionary strike strategy by the Red International. Thus the Party is able to correct mistakes, advance the militancy and move forward from post to post. This is essential for the success of the strike, and that is why the Communist Party is the only safe guide in any strike.

But this is by far not all in strike leadership. The rank and file of the strikers are the body of the strike. They must be convinced; they must be led; they must be developed into leadership. The strike has many phases, many sides, many activities for which the rank and file must be trained. This does not take place spontaneously, but through the direct participation and activity of the rank and file Party members. This means that the Party members must be the first in activity: 1—in the committee; 2—on the picket line; 3—in tireless activity explaining, stimulating, encouraging; 4—in recruiting into the union; 5—in helping to train forces for the strike and the union; 6—in selecting the most militant elements for recruitment into the Party and YCL.

This demands endless devotion and energy from the Party members, but for that they are Communists. They are not Communist only because they know Marx and Lenin better than the non-Communist worker. They are not Communists only because they talk more militantly. They are Communists because they recognize that the class struggle must be intensified and has a definite goal and only the Communists are leading the masses forward towards it through struggle.

The needle trades workers are militant. It is true that the new elements that have come into the trade—the Spanish, Italian and Negro workers—have never belonged to unions and have not been on strike before. Therefore they need considerable attention. The Jewish workers are old timers in struggle, and do not need so much attention. The Party comrades therefore must be organized to carry on their work particularly among the new elements, to win them for the struggle, for the union, and for the Party and YCL.

This means that the Party members in the strike must be ORGANIZED for their work. They participate in the strike not only as strikers, but as COMMUNISTS. They must organize their forces (fractions) in the blocks, the streets, the halls, with a fraction secretary at each place. The fraction secretaries must meet to coordinate the activities of the Party members in the strike. There must be regular meetings of secretaries. There must be regular meetings of the general fraction and more frequent meetings of the leading fraction. This is essential for the conduct of the strike, if the strike is to be reviewed, its weaknesses be examined and corrections be made. The Party fractions must not only

discuss the directives for the strike with the workers, but must also use the directives to check up on the activities during the strike. For only thus will we be able to control from day to day whether the objective is being reached and the proper strike methods are being applied.

One of the most important objectives of the strike, in addition to winning conditions for the workers, is the building of the union. This is usually neglected and the workers finish the strike without their organization being strengthened. This must positively not happen in this strike, and the union must come out of the strike vastly strengthened. This strengthening must be not only in numbers, but in new forces that will be trained into leadership for the union. The new elements in the union can and must be trained for leadership. They come out of this period of fight, ready to struggle, not tainted with any pessimism. They will provide new blood for the union that will help to make it a mass union.

The core and life of the union is the Communist fraction. The Communist fraction in the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union is our largest fraction—and yet it must be enlarged. New blood must be brought into it out of the new elements in the present struggle. Out of the new recruits that are brought into the union—the young Italian, Spanish, Negro, American and Jewish workers—must be won recruits for the Party and YCL.

If the Party fraction performs these tasks under the guidance of the District, it will have carried on real Communist work. But this is not all. The Party sections and units have their definite tasks. This is a strike not of the dressmakers alone. It is a strike for which the broadest masses of the workers must be rallied, for this strike will be a rallying call for the other trades of the needle industry, for the building and printing trades workers whose conditions face a sharp lowering under the attacks of the bosses. Therefore the Party must rally the mass organizations. The Party fraction in the TUUL must call to the support of the dressmakers the other revolutionary unions of the TUUL, and through the revolutionary oppositions in the reactionary unions, also the rank and file of these unions.

But even here our task does not end. The Party as such must plunge into the strike. Party units and sections must assign forces for the picket line and the other duties of the strike, so that the workers will see that the Party is not a party of phrases but actually, as a Party, gives militant support to the strike. Only in this way will the workers gain faith in the Party and join the Party. The Party and YCL members who are assigned for duty in the strike, must be attached to the Party fraction and be checked up not only in the fraction but also in their units.

The District expelled a charter member of the Party for refusal to go into the strike full time. This is setting the pace, and the District expects that the units and sections will check up systematically and rigidly, so that intense Bolshevik discipline will be established in and through the strike. The section committee and unit bureau members must set the example to the other Party members. It is not sufficient for a section committee member to be able to explain the demands and the character of the strike, and its significance at this period of the crisis. It is their duty, by example, to show the Party members how to participate in the strike. Party members failing to carry out their duty must be mentioned by name. Only thus will individual responsibility be established, and Party discipline become a fact.

This strike is of extreme importance—and by proper activity, check up and correction, many of the mistakes and shortcomings of the past strikes will be avoided—and the union and the Party come out of the strike immensely strengthened and invigorated. In addition to winning better conditions for the workers, this will be the best indication as to the success of the strike.