

Workers (Communist) Party

How Should Communists Organize Their Work?

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PART II.

The party work as defined divides itself into two main categories. The line of demarcation between these types of party work is not hard and fast. Some party work is done directly thru the party apparatus. Other party work is done indirectly, that is, thru the utilization of non-party apparatus, that is, an apparatus which is not a unit of the party or not even in any way controlled by the party or subject to substantial party influence. In reality, party work done in one case usually overlaps activities in another case. For instance, a party member who holds office in a non-partisan organization invariably co-operates with and utilizes fully the party apparatus in order to get the maximum Communist results in his efforts among the non-party masses. Likewise, it is the poorest kind of a party functionary who calls party work complete when he doesn't manage to tie up the tasks of his use of a particular section of the party apparatus with some living movements, with some living organizations of the non-Communist working masses.

We must take extraordinary care in the choice of our party organizers.

There is at this moment room for a considerable raising of the level of party organizers. But even much more care must be taken in the selection of party organizers charged with Communist responsibilities in directing class activities of mass non-partisan organizations. In such instances, not only do we find the ordinary party difficulties facing our organizers, but we find the additional difficulties that are to be expected in cases where we deal with working masses that are insufficiently developed politically, and with less class-conscious spokesmen of these masses.

Guarantees For Success in Communist Activities For Non-Party Mass Organizations.

There are certain simple methods

of procedure that we must rigorously adhere to if we are to succeed in our work in non-party mass organizations.

First of all, we must have a sense of working class honesty about ourselves. Some time ago a prominent labor leader told me, half in jest, that in his opinion Communists were those who fool themselves, who fool each other, and who fool everybody else. Such charges are the most oft resorted to weapons of the reactionary labor bureaucrats against the Communists. We must take extra care to avoid giving to the so-called socialists and labor bureaucrats even the slightest pretense which will enable them to misrepresent our united front efforts to the masses of workers. Concretely speaking, an example of carelessness by Communists in their united front dealings is to be found in the manner in which our party handled its withdrawal from the Farmer-Labor Party ticket and the nomination of a Workers Party ticket in the national elections of 1924. We all shared in varying degrees in this error. Fortunately our party has long ago outgrown such careless practices.

A sense of proletarian responsibility is an absolute prerequisite for the success of united front campaigns and for the winning of prestige by our Communists in non-party mass organizations. By that I mean specifically that we do not have to make empty promises or to be unrealistic, or to assume tasks which we are not capable of achieving. Bravado is a dangerous enemy of Communists.

The Question of Communist Identity.

It is not necessary to stick the official Communist label on working class activities in order to make them class activities. It certainly is not necessary to stick the Communist label on non-party organizations of a mass character in order to enable our members to breathe more freely and work more actively in these organizations. Credit for the Communists can be translated in ways much more

effective than formal labelling. But we must warn against a tendency often manifesting itself in our ranks, to consider that the Communists identity must under all circumstances be hidden, and that the Communist Party, as a party, must under all conditions in non-party mass organizations be buried by our spokesmen. Working confidentially or without brass bands and loud speakers must not be translated into nailing the coffin lid of the Workers (Communist) Party. This tendency—now and then arising as a reaction to the mechanical approach once held by some comrades in that they contended that the Communist Party shingle must be put out in the main windows of every non-party organization in which Communists participate—is none the less a serious danger and must none the less vigorously be fought.

The Question of Concentration.

In order to achieve success in our united front activities and in order for our members to get the maximum results working in non-party mass organizations, it is understood that the diffusion of energies must be avoided. In many non-party organizations of a mass character, the Communists cannot assume and meet responsibilities without harming those organizations and discrediting the party.

For the party as a whole, it is also necessary to learn to concentrate more on certain campaigns rather than to map out many plans and too many campaigns, united front conferences, etc. This appears almost too elementary to need mentioning, yet we are suffering somewhat from violating this axiom. We have in the past launched too many campaigns which we not only did not bring to a successful conclusion, but which we did not even continue energetically after our taking the initial steps.

The sooner we learn to apply with vigor and system such elementary principles of Communist strategy, of the proletarian strategy, the sooner will our party become a mass Communist Party.