

PARTY LIFE

How to Work Among Workers In Fascist Organizations

Communists Must Distinguish Between Fascist Leaders and Rank and File Workers

By I. AMTER

In New Jersey, fascist organizations of every character are carrying on their work. The Nazis are reported to have their national headquarters in Newark. The Silver Shirts and Khaki Shirts are operating in many towns, and apparently are making headway among the young workers and especially the unemployed.

Their program is a demagogic one, and in their activities they pretend to put up a struggle for relief and jobs. Headed by men who are connected with the authorities, and many of them plain racketeers—like Art Smith, the recently-convicted commander-in-chief of the Khaki Shirts who was making a racket out of building up the organization—and Pelley of the Silver Shirts who charged \$10 each for membership in that organization—these organizations pretend to help the workers.

In Passaic the Khaki Shirts have organized a local, drawing into it a number of misguided unemployed workers under the slogan: "For God and Flag." They have taken the unemployed to the Relief Buro where they have been rebuffed with the proposal that they should write to Roosevelt and he will take care of them. These are workers who, up to a short time ago were employed on C. W. A. jobs and had been fired with no hope of relief. "For God and Flag" has not provided them with relief, but these workers have been inflamed against the Communists and militant organizations through the slanders of their leaders.

The Passaic comrades correctly took up a struggle against fascism. But in doing so made an error in two respects. (1) They failed to explain to the workers the development of fascism through the government, especially through the N. R. A.; and (2) and most important—they did not distinguish between the leadership which is fascist and the rank and file, which is made up of many misguided, misled workers.

When the proper approach was

made to these workers at a meeting in Passaic, the attitude of some of the rank and file who attended the meeting was quite different. The leaders left the meeting, but most of the rank and file remained, and applauded the speaker. But this was not all. They proposed (1) That the Unemployed Council should join with the Khaki Shirts in a delegation to the Relief Buro to get relief, provided there would be no political speeches, no political slogans; (2) If this were done, they stated, they would join in the United Front May Day demonstration.

Our comrades must not make the mistake that was proposed in the opportunist slogan of some comrades of the German Communist Party, "Smash the Fascists wherever you meet them," which was rejected by the Central Committee of the C. P. G. Often the rank and file of the fascist organizations is composed of many plain workers who are led on by the demagogic slogans of the fascist leaders, and have hopes that the promises of these leaders will be fulfilled. If we make the proper proposals, and have the proper approach, we can win these workers over to the revolutionary organizations. If we do not make the distinction between leadership and rank and file, we will not be able to carry out the decision of the thesis of the 13th Plenum of the Comintern, namely, to work in the fascist organizations.

The above example of wrong organization and its correction should help all the districts.

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