

The Plenum Decisions

On Re-organization

By SAM DARCY.

THE last full session of the National Executive Committee was the first body of comrades representing the general membership which was able to discuss the re-organization on the new shop nuclei basis with some real experience to go by. Up to and including the last convention our discussions were largely theoretical—this was the great weakness that made possible our committing the mistakes which were uncovered at the last session.

At the end of the last convention in October we had approximately 1,500 members. It was clear to us when we began the re-organization that very few shop nuclei could be organized. The Y. C. I. plan for re-organization provided only for the building of shop nuclei directly from the old branches. In our anxiety to re-organize as quickly as possible we worked out a scheme of concentration groups as intermediaries between shop nuclei and the old branches and we thought that with good direction we would be able to make these concentration groups devote the major portion of their time to the winning over of new elements from the factories and in this way forming shop nuclei. This plan was put into effect in most of the districts including all the important ones. At this last plenary session we have examined the results of the work and have come to the following conclusions:

First, it is clear to us that in the actual process of re-organization on this basis we lost very few members. As a matter of fact largely because of the raising of the morale of our membership in many districts we gained members, not (we must make it clear) because of the new organizational form, but rather because of the intensification of our activity. The fact that this was possible is of great importance in bearing light on what happened subsequently. For, when we began to realize that the concentration groups did not function very effectively* we had to take into consideration the fact that by and large there was a good spirit and morale during and immediately after the re-organization, and it could not be said that the concentration groups did not function well because of the lack of the willingness on the part of the rank and file to make them function. We must, therefore, look to other cause to find why it is that concentration groups did not function effectively.

The Y. C. I. laid down as our first task, in issuing the instructions on reorganization, that we lay the ideological basis for it by conducting a campaign over a considerable period of time; during which we would explain to the membership in every detail not only the importance and need for re-organization but also the method of functioning under the new form. This addition implied the organization of a large cadre of comrades who can lead in the work of each group. This we failed to do. The period which was supposed to have been devoted to the laying of the ideological basis for reorganization, that is, the years, 1923-1924-1925 were devoted largely to a discussion of the issues raised during the factional fight and the question of the reorganization was dealt with not in the manner outlined by the Y. C. I., but only as a factional issue, a football between the groups. In the League, where the factional fight raged not only upon the questions of policy, but also on organizational matters, reorganization was particularly used in this bad fashion. We found, therefore, after the convention that we had not laid the ideological basis that was necessary to make the reorganization a successful one. But yet, we proceeded with

energy.

A national organizer was sent out on the road, instructions were sent from the national office regularly, our press continually carried articles, but because the time limit for the completing of the reorganization was set for only three months ahead it proved an impossible task. For concentration groups can only function effectively where our membership is on a high political level, are not discouraged by meeting in very small groups, and give utmost loyalty to the movement, to the exclusion of everything else. We must now admit that this was not the case in November, December and January of 1925-26 and the ensuing months of 1926. Our task during these months was not only to lay the basis but also to do away with the bad effects of the factional fight—and this was too much for three months work. However, we permitted this weakness in our organization to exist for too long a period of time. The result was that the good spirit and morale that we first built up immediately after the convention degenerated during this time and in some districts notably Chicago, and the Twin Cities tended to weaken the organization considerably. So that just prior to the plenum when we began to take steps to correct the weakness in our organization we found our task a very much harder one because the mistake we made in our reorganization was aggravated by the bad morale that developed after it. The plenum faced this problem squarely and came to the following decision which should be carried out in every district; as soon as possible and without waiting for further instructions from the N. E. C. (National Executive Committee):

Our immediate task is to transform those concentration groups where we have the slightest possibility of recruiting any new members into shop nuclei. There are many such but the actual organizational steps in the building of shop nuclei is sometimes delayed thru the lack of initiative. Thus there is the possibility of organizing shop nuclei in the Dow Printing Plant in St. Paul, the International Harvester in Chicago and we believe in at least twenty-five to thirty similar instances thruout the country. This should be done immediately and without further delay. There are a few concentration groups that are functioning well. These should be encouraged to continue functioning and all possible help should be given them along this line. However, those concentration groups which are not functioning well, and for which there is little possibility of good functioning because of lack of group leadership, these should be liquidated and the comrades transferred to street nuclei.

There must be no haste or incaution in this. The comrades on the committees who have charge of this work must proceed carefully and weigh the abilities of every individual comrade and each group of comrades with great care and no personal prejudices. The conclusions reached must be unquestionable and with the agreement of all comrades including those that make up the groups in question. There must be thorough discussion of each individual case and no changes should be made mechanically. With these steps, taken over a period of several months, we will be able to liquidate the errors we have made, and make our units better functioning.

*This article does not attempt to point out the weaknesses of concentration groups themselves as basic units because we are convinced that the comrades well understand them. It might be well however to remember that such difficulties as finding a place and time suitably for all becomes a major basic problem under the circumstances.