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President's Page

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The President's Page

The very nature of a federation, which I have pointed out before on these pages, requires that its leadership be distributed widely among its constituent parts. This, of course, is an enviable concept but beset with certain problems and weaknesses. For example, it is not a matter of a central federation office cranking out executive policy, nor publishing Board-of-Directors' decisions and orders and having them obeyed. Nor is it a matter of one of the officers pressing an idea-lever and having his sparking whims accepted and effected throughout the federation. Instead it is a matter of the federation respecting the leadership of the diverse independent, individual parts and expecting each to formulate its own ideas, define its own policy, face up to its own problems and pursue its own objectives.

In this respect the independent parts of a federation — the guilds of the National Federation — have a serious responsibility to live up to the first-class standards of leadership required to pursue their objectives and to express the symbols of unity that hold a federation together. Leadership of this kind, however, is not easy; but when an organization does not assume the rudiments of such leadership and allows itself to plunge into stygian laxness, its system will surely disintegrate. In fact the sad observation is that serious issues of leadership face parts of the National Federation: some guilds are inactive, some lack meaning, some can't get programs beyond the pill stage, some are literally dead. Generally such guilds, however badly led, or not led at all, represent the weaknesses and problems of distributive leadership.

On the other hand the happy truth is that innumerable guilds abound in vitality and purpose. Well managed and well led they demonstrate clearly that the concept of distributive leadership can indeed develop and flourish. Their leaders are continually searching for ways and technics to make their guilds' purposes more functional and to participate actively and constructively in them. Such guilds are showing they have within their power the talent and energy to be informed, critical, and adaptable; in fact each is shaping and determining not only the moral unity of its profession but also pursuing a vision of what holds the federation together.

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