

Improved Organizational Forms Will Make Recruiting Drive More Effective*

By F. BROWN

BUILD our Party into a mass Party! Increase the circulation of the **Daily Worker**! How many times have we issued these slogans? How many times has the Party resolved to build the circulation of the **Daily Worker** to 75,000, and to double the size of the Party? Yet in spite of our resolves, in spite of the directives from the center, the circulation of the **Daily Worker** increases at a slow pace, and although recruiting is carried on everywhere, our Party does not grow into a mass Party.

There are many reasons for this, and the Central Committee is resolved to discover them and to correct them. A new drive, having as its objectives the realization of these two slogans: to build the Party into a mass Party, and, to increase the circulation of the **Daily Worker**, is being initiated by the Central Committee. This is not an ordinary recruiting drive—but a drive which will really place the Party on the road to becoming a mass Party, a drive in which we will not only gain new masses for our Party, but which will also lay the basis for keeping them. The circulation drive of the **Daily**

* The major portion of this article is from the report given to the November meeting of the Central Committee.

Worker is not an ordinary campaign for new subs, but a campaign to bring the **Daily Worker** to the toiling masses of America, a campaign for subs, which will bring a new army of steady readers to the **Daily Worker**.

The details of this drive, and various aspects of it, are discussed in other articles in this issue of the **Party Organizer**. We want here to deal only with the perfection and improvement of our organizational forms, in order to make this drive effective and able to achieve its ends.

In order to see what improvements and eventual changes must be made in our organizational forms in order that we will more firmly connect ourselves with the masses, gain new members for our Party and new readers for the **Daily Worker** let us examine very briefly one by one the actual organizational forms. It is by such an examination that we will find out where improvements and overhauling are necessary.

Shop Nucleus Is Best Organizational Form

First, the shop nucleus. Is this form of Party organization in the shop necessary? Does it suit the present needs? Are changes necessary? To this question we have a decisive answer. It is the proper and best form. The trouble here lies not in the fact that this is not the best form of organization, but that our shop nuclei, in the main, are still far from fulfilling their proper function—that of **being the Party in the shops**. While we have made some advance in this direction since the last Party Convention, the shop nuclei have not yet increased in membership, because we have not put into effect the decisions of the May Plenum which correctly specified the necessity of more direct guidance by the leading Party forces in order to better orientate the shop nuclei to their role. Therefore we must say: build more shop nuclei, better and stronger shop nuclei, give them more guidance and assistance. Make them real political bodies capable of issuing shop papers, and better shop papers, capable of becoming political leaders of the masses in the shop, capable of recruiting the best elements. Make them a real strong influence in the shops.

Second, let us examine our work in the trade unions. In this field of work we have made progress. Through our activities some of the best militant workers have been recruited into the Party. Here, however, we know that the results in the trade union field were brought about by the work of the most active comrades in the trade unions and by comrades from the leading Party committees. All the Party members in the trade unions have not been involved in the daily work of broadening the progressive movement, in becoming the

driving force in building and strengthening the unions. What are the causes of this situation, which once removed, will enable us to move forward more rapidly. First, it is an established fact that where fractions have been built their activities are still inadequate, still sectarian, that the fractions lack political life, that they act purely from a trade union point of view. More than that, the Party members organized in fractions represent only a small portion of the trade union membership in the locals in the trade unions. Second, that the life and activities of the street units in which the majority of the trade union members are organized transfer the activities of these comrades to the neighborhoods. We must solve this problem. Through what forms, by which methods can we activate the trade union members? Can this be done through the fractions? Can we improve the life and activities of the fraction, and how? Or is some change in form of organization necessary?

Life and Activities of the Street Units

To answer this question, let us examine very briefly the life and activities of the street units which still embrace the large majority of the Party members. In my opinion, here lies the main trouble. If we solve the problem of the territorial units we will find the key to the solution of the other important organizational questions. It is well-known that the situation in the territorial units is unsatisfactory, that the life of these units is becoming more and more complicated, to such a point that many units are stagnating and some are even going backward.

Street Units Overburdened With Tasks

This situation is due to two main causes: First, to the fact that these organizations are overburdened with tasks, and second, their actual composition. On the first point, the territorial units are failing in their main task of connecting the Party members with the neighborhood organizations, of orientating them toward deeper penetration of the masses in the neighborhoods. When we consider the tasks that a street unit is supposed to accomplish: (a) influencing and organizing the masses in their territory, (b) penetrating the neighborhood organizations, (c) concentrating on a factory in their neighborhood, (d) developing and organizing the unemployment movement, (e) spreading the Party literature and Party papers, distributing the shop papers in front of the shop gates, distributing material for the various campaign, (f) conducting all kinds of campaigns (election, anti-war, anti-fascist and defense), and then if we consider that the units are supposed to guide and check on the activities of the individual

Party members in their respective organizations, it becomes clear that these organizations have a herculean task on their shoulders, with duties and tasks in all directions which bring them to a practical standstill, to an inner circle. The Party members who attend the meeting are overburdened mentally; by the end of the meeting they do not know where or how to start.

If we consider that many of the tasks are connected with the raising of funds, so much so that a good unit member, besides paying his dues, must buy the papers and pamphlets offered him and contribute either to the election, **Daily Worker** or defense campaigns, and at the end is offered various colored tickets for affairs, both District and Section, to cover headquarters and other expenses, not to speak of other colored tickets which are smuggled into the units for mass organization affairs—then we cannot be surprised that good workers who enthusiastically join the Party get cool because they consider the Party asks too much of them, not only by overburdening him with activities, but that it is too expensive. Let us read a letter sent to the center a few days ago:

"An awful calamity happened to my Unit of the Party, and the tragedy is still greater when I know that the same thing is happening to all other units of our Party. We lost four members, all Americans, good elements, among whom one was an ex-serviceman. This one came to the Unit meeting and told the comrades that he does not like the life of the Unit, he hates to come to meetings because he sees nothing else at these meetings but leaflets, tickets, peddling of all kinds. Another one was very active to begin with. Then he disappeared. We visited him and brought him back to our meeting. He says he cannot come back into the Party. He will remain a sympathizer. We did not press the reason for his action because we thought that he does not want to confess before the bunch of comrades."

Another comrade explained that he started to distribute the **Daily Worker** and was unable to do this work, yet the Unit insisted. Another received a box and was sent out immediately to collect in the street. He could not do it, but the Unit insisted and this comrade was lost. Besides, in this Unit there is no political education to retain these members. He states here:

"Comrades, unless something is done on the top (sections, districts, etc.), unless this avalanche of all sorts of letters, instructions, tickets and 'mobilizations' is stopped, all our talk about retaining members in the Party will be in vain."

Maybe there is a little bit of exaggeration in this letter and the comrade that writes should have tried to remedy the situation by stepping in vigorously because he is a leading comrade. Nevertheless, this gives a picture of what is going on in the street units.

On the second point, because of the fact that the majority of the employed workers are still in the street units and they are also trade union members, we find that these comrades find their life most difficult because of a duplication of work. While the trade union comrade is supposed to conduct a campaign in the territory under the guidance of the unit, he must also conduct a similar campaign in the union. This leads to friction, limits his activity, and, above all, hampers the political development of the comrade, especially the new members.

What Is the Solution?

How can this be solved? First, by gradually eliminating from the Party units the many tasks which belong to mass organizations. This demands a drastic change in the building of mass organizations, the I.L.D., the American League Against War and Fascism, Unemployment Councils, by assigning proper forces trained for this purpose. I say "trained" because only by doing so will we break the sectarianism which the Party members bring into these organizations and orientate them to building the mass organizations on the basis of their program, together with the non-Party members who will be drawn in if these sectarian habits are broken.

Second, by stopping the selling of tickets for non-Party organizations.

Third, by orientating the territorial units to their main tasks of connecting themselves with the masses in their neighborhood organizations, to agitate in the neighborhoods the problem of immediate demands for the workers, linking up the various campaigns with this main task. This calls for the issuance of neighborhood papers, as the spokesmen of the Party, on the various issues confronting the workers. The moment the territorial units start to work on such papers, the orientation of the units will change. They will begin to approach the various problems arising in the neighborhood more concretely and better connect themselves with the masses.

At this point we have to ask the question: Is the actual organizational form of the street unit suited to such tasks, to such needs? Not at all. If we want to make the territorial units political bodies in a given territory, capable of grasping the problems of the masses as well as the political problems arising every day, then the neighborhood unit cannot be built on the basis of streets and blocks, but on the basis of a given geographical and political entity.

In the last few years, the Party orientation has been to build the districts on a state basis, and for the districts to identify themselves with the state organization of the Party. If this is correct for the districts and the sections, it must also be applied to the sections and the territorial units.

Such a change implies, of course, the enlargement of the territorial units, especially in the larger cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc. By such a reorganization we will be able to solve another problem, which in turn will strengthen the activities of the Party on a territorial scale, namely, the problem of education. With our present small units, because of their weak leadership, the educational activities and social life is poor. We must move away from the bedroom, and have the units meet in the various existing halls, with units of 50 and 60, and not of 10 and 15 as at present. Thus, we will be enabled to have the possibility of selecting better leadership, leadership capable of presenting the political problems more effectively and leading the units in their work.

More than this, we should experiment by devoting two out of the four meetings a month to education, to the discussion of the political problems that present themselves to the Party nationally, in a particular city, in the territory of the unit, setting aside the other two unit meetings for the assignment of activity, dues, etc. We should even try bringing two or three units together at least at one of the educational meetings, so that this meeting will take on the character of a forum at which a capable comrade will present the political problems to be discussed and lead the discussion.

Adopt Organizational Structure to Needs of Situation

At this point, the question arises: are we deviating from the Party structure if we propose such changes? Are we taking over the structure of the Socialist Party the moment we reorganize the neighborhood units and sections on the basis of the existing political divisions? Not at all. The fundamental difference remains, namely, that the main weight of our Party organization must lie in the factories, the trade unions and mass organizations. We only want to be more realistic, more practical and adapt our organizational structure to the needs of the situation. The second question is—were we wrong before, at the time that we reduced the size of the unit? The comrades will remember that the size of the units were reduced at a time when we started vigorously to mobilize the masses of unemployed, at the time when the reduction of the size of the units was a preparation for eventual illegality of our Party, not to be caught unprepared. Today, however, the needs of the boldest united front movement, the building of a Farmer-Labor Party, demand from

our Party a form of organization that can speak and connect itself with larger masses. A division of large units into groups of active comrades to perform the various daily tasks will in itself be a good preparation for eventual necessary retrenchment in the future.

Today the problem is to come more boldly to the masses with the program of immediate demands, and our task is to organize ourselves accordingly. The American workers that join our ranks will feel much better, will feel at home in a unit of 50 or 60 that meet in a hall than in a small unit of 10 or 15 crowded into a bedroom, sitting on the beds and floor. This situation, however, cannot be uniform for the whole Party. In small industrial towns, in company towns where protection is needed, we must organize according to the situation. In such places the small units are a necessity. The same applies to the South and in states where large units would be a target for the spy system and for reaction. In larger cities, by enlarging the units, we will be able to get rid of a duplication of activities of the comrades active in the trade unions.

Comrades, the reorganization of the territorial units, by which we will be able to solve some burning problems and prepare ourselves for new improvements, and eventual change in our organizational forms, is already a big task that will require real concentration of energy. A too drastic change all along the line, without the necessary preparation, without the necessary experience, is not advisable.

Our aim must be better to adopt the organizational forms to the needs of the present day without the loss of one single member, but on the contrary by strengthening our connections with new thousands of workers, with those militant workers that lead struggles, that have eagerly listened to the decisions of the Seventh World Congress, with the thousands that demonstrate under the banner of the anti-fascist, anti-war struggles, with the thousands of potential Communists outside of the Party.

This implies not only new organizational improvements and changes, but at the same time a real turn in the political education of the Party membership. This also implies a real turn in the development of new cadres, taking into consideration the needs of the districts for the purpose of strengthening the leading Party committees in the sections and units.

Insofar as the still high fluctuation in our Party is concerned, the low political level of the basic organizations, the lagging in recruiting, this is due mainly to the weaknesses of the leading bodies, to the links between the top leading committees and the units. While today we can register an increase of over 2,300 dues payments over October last year,

yet from January up until October we recruited only 13,500 workers, in comparison with 17,400 of last year.

Mobilize for Recruiting

This shows immediately that one of the main organisational tasks in connection with the improving of our organisational forms is to mobilize the whole Party, shop nuclei, fractions, the Party membership in the neighborhood units, to intensify recruiting.

The growing menace of fascism on the one hand and on the other the more determined resistance of the masses to the continuous attacks on their living standards, on the democratic rights won after hundreds of battles in the last decades, demand that our Party becomes a more positive factor in the life of this country. Our Party must be the driving force in the forging of a powerful united front movement of millions of toilers as the bulwark against fascism—the leader of the American masses on the road to a better and secure future.

We will accomplish this historic mission by making of the 30,000 Party members, of thousands of potential Communists outside of our organization, of the militant trade unionists in America, builders of the Party of the American working class.
