

Penetrate the Small Industrial and Agrarian Towns

By F. BROWN

EVEN as early as this spring the **Party Organizer** discussed the problem of penetrating the hundreds of small industrial towns in the various states, and made a whole series of suggestions for the planning of activities for the summer months. Only a few comrades responded so that the problem arose again at the last Plenum of the Central Committee. The building of the Party not only in the small industrial centers, but in the agrarian centers of the country, is of the utmost importance. It is a problem that we must solve in connection with the recruiting drive.

Comrade Shaw, in writing from Illinois, states:

"In Southern Illinois as pointed out at the last Central Committee meeting there is to be found indications that if these towns will be neglected by us they will become the recruiting ground for the reactionary forces. This danger appears more glaring especially in the small farming and industrial towns. These towns are bankrupt, industry deserted, 30 % of the small towns in Illinois are without light, small storekeepers are bankrupt and many of the small banks have not opened their doors since 1933. In the mining towns we find young men of 33 who have never had a job. The only hope of the youth is that some old miner dies so that they can take his place. The housing conditions are horrible; for years the mining and farming sections have not been repaired. The whole territory looks dilapidated. The small towns are being used by the big corporations as a union-smashing scheme."

This is not the situation in Illinois only, but in practically all of the small industrial and rural towns all over the country. It is especially in the small towns where our propaganda does not reach that the masses are very easy prey to all sorts of demagogic currents. The sections as organized today in most of the cases, with only one comrade (the Section Organizer) able to pay attention to the various units sometimes distributed over a large territory comprising a few counties, are unable to properly concentrate in the industrial, agrarian or rural towns where the Party is not yet established.

The problem of building the Party in these small towns is dependent upon the solution of two major points:

1. A better organizational readjustment of the sections outside of the large centers. This means that the sections must be based more on the political division of the states, etc. Furthermore this calls for the development of new forces for the purpose of strengthening the actual leadership in the sections and for additional forces for better readjusting the sections and for building new ones. In this respect more than in the past, in organizing the various training schools, section and district training schools, we must take into consideration the development of more forces coming from the small towns.

2. More planned assistance from the districts, and within the limit of possibilities, from the Center. This means that the districts must decide on which towns to concentrate. One of the leading comrades, one of the best agitators should go out, for example, on a tour, touching the three or four towns in which it is decided to build the Party. These tours must be well planned, with the meetings arranged in advance. The Party press can be effectively utilized to some extent in advertising the meetings in the small towns, and especially to make connections. The **Daily Worker**, plus the rest of the Party press reach hundreds of towns in which the Party is not organized. Correctly utilized, the connections can be very valuable in preparation for the meetings.

The few experiences gathered in the last period show that the building of the Party in the small towns is not at all difficult. The **Daily Worker**, the Central Committee, and the Districts have received especially in the last few years hundreds of letters from workers in the small towns asking for speakers, for organizers to build the Party. Most of the writers are workers who at one time or another worked in the large centers and came in contact with our movement. There are cases where the most developed of such type of workers, tired of waiting for an organizer, built the Party themselves.

In the small towns, more than in the larger cities, it is possible to approach and recruit into our ranks leading workers and farmers, those militant rank and file trade unionists, leaders of the trade union movement who were brought to their position because of their loyalty to their fellow workers, those who are known and respected by the whole community. In preparing the meetings in the small towns we must make special efforts to speak primarily to these elements. We will in this way not only solve the problem of building the Party in the small industrial and rural towns, but also the problem of recruiting into the Party those elements who are in close contact and have

influence over large sections of the population in their communities.

In planning the penetration of new towns we must at the very beginning keep in mind the necessity of taking all those measures which will insure the life and growth of these newly built units by continuous guidance. This means that in certain places where the sections have a stronger leadership, one of the members of the Section Committee will have to be responsible for the new units—in other cases the same comrade sent out from the districts.

In the spring and during the summer months when traveling is much easier, special groups of Party members from various centers can be built to visit the comrades in the small towns and thus create a bond between the comrades of the larger cities and those in the small towns. Such visits will not only encourage the comrades in the small towns in their work, but at the same time will take on the character of educational meetings at which the comrades should exchange their experiences.

The recruiting drive should be utilized to the fullest extent in carrying into practice the decisions of the last Central Committee Plenum. While the smaller districts will find some difficulty in getting the proper comrades to send out, the larger centers, by preparing the tour for one of the leading comrades, will gain considerably in extending the Party organization. Such tours require, of course, a certain expense which could be covered if not completely, at least in part, by mass meetings. To make the start possible, it is advisable that the larger districts build a special fund for this purpose. It will not be difficult to bring together a group of sympathetic people who will contribute to such a fund.

The details on how to organize the meetings, recruit and build the units are contained in the directives on the Recruiting Drive.

The workers and farmers of the small towns are waiting for us, demanding that we bring the Party program into small industrial and rural communities, that we help to organize the masses in these territories. The Recruiting Drive should be the beginning of the campaign for penetration into hundreds of new towns. A successful campaign not only will broaden out the Party organization, will increase the number of Party members, but will broaden the Party influence tremendously in new territory.