

The Party Building and Daily Worker Drives

BY F. BROWN

DURING the election campaign we were able to shake the prejudices of masses in regard to our Party. This was achieved because of our correct line and also because we were able to introduce new methods of agitation. For the first time we used the radio and were able to speak to millions. We issued millions of pamphlets, etc.

Today we are confronted with the problem of how to bring these masses a step nearer to us. It means that we must continue our mass agitation and propaganda; we must continue to use the radio. And more than that, we have to make up our minds that one of the best means of reaching the masses is to develop the circulation of the *Daily Worker* and increase the output of our literature. We need more mass meetings, more forums, more lectures, etc. In this regard, the suggestion for a Speakers Bureau is a very good one. But the Speakers Bureau cannot be limited merely to the Center. It is necessary that each state organization erect such an apparatus and develop

a whole group of speakers, in order to reach the small towns especially.

Furthermore, Comrade Weinstone was correct when he said that we must make more use of the theatre. Parenthetically speaking, the trouble is that, while a few years ago we made some headway in this direction and succeeded in developing a proletarian theatre, today many of these amateur actors, and many of the people who were involved in this movement, have become actors in the theatres of the W.P.A. and are doing some good work. This means that we are confronted with the problem of building up a proletarian theatre.

These are some of the many ways through which we can reach and influence the masses and bring them closer to us. But it is not sufficient to channelize this growing Left-wing mass movement towards our Party. Mass agitation must be followed up with concrete deeds. It means that we must mobilize the masses around specific issues, and in this regard the problem of a more independent role of the Party in respect to the mass struggles and drives conducted by the trade unions is of the utmost importance.

This is one way to make the masses realize the role of the Party, to make the masses appreciate the Party, not just the individual Communists who are active in the particular phases of work and struggles. It is not sufficient to bring large masses closer to the Party. We must recruit masses of workers into our ranks. We know that most of the recruiting is the result of the work of the lower organizations. More than that, it is the result of the activities of individual Party members. The conclusion must be that to achieve mass recruiting, mass agitation must be followed up by mass activities of the lower organizations around specific issues. If we want to make the lower organizations more active in this direction, we must improve, first of all, the education in our Party, improve our organizational activities. This is the key to the problem that we have discussed so many times.

We see that we are still confronted with a gap in our

Party. We are still operating with a stratum of the most active comrades. This was evident in the election campaign, at the beginning of the steel drive and other drives. It means that the lower organizations are not yet active, are not participating actively in the struggles, are not developing their own initiative, and in some cases are stagnating. The units will develop initiative only to the extent that we raise their consciousness to their role, to their problems. Here we see that the central problem before us is to treat our Party as an organization in itself, as an organization that needs constant guidance, systematic education, assistance, help.

The way we are handling the *Daily Worker* is the best example which proves the lack of system in our work, which proves that we do not properly handle the Party as an institution, an organization for itself. In the last two or three years, the *Daily Worker* built up its own distributing apparatus, and we were satisfied. We thought that the problem was solved. The line was to simplify the work in the units and rid them of some of the many burdens they had. And what happened? Today we have reached a point where we have the apparatus of the *Daily Worker* working independent of the Party organization. In a very few instances and with some exceptions in regard to the *Sunday Worker*, the lower organizations of the Party are not distributing agents of the *Daily Worker*. The figures prove this clearly. The conclusion is that exactly at the moment when we are moving forward, when the influence of the Party is growing in the trade unions, we are confronted with a stagnant circulation.

To reach a goal of 50,000 circulation, it is necessary, in my opinion, first of all at once to develop a real ideological campaign in our Party, for the purpose of making every Party member *Daily Worker* conscious, to make every Party member understand what the *Daily Worker* means—that the *Daily Worker* is the most powerful educator of our Party, which is not just published to guide the activities of the most active revolutionists in this country,

but to guide *every* Party member. Second, that the *Daily Worker* is one of the major instruments at our disposal for reaching masses, for bringing masses into our movement; the best instrument to make masses acquainted with the line of the Party on all the vital issues of the toiling people.

Concretely, how can we go about solving this problem? First of all, it will be necessary to improve the distribution apparatus of the *Daily Worker*. This means that in every district one of the most capable comrades, politically and organizationally, will be put in charge of the distributing apparatus. More than that, we have to take immediate measures for the training of a special corps of *Daily Worker* agents, just as we have training schools for the development of leading comrades on the function of section organizers, etc. We need a number of short courses for *Daily Worker* agents, in which we can discuss the building of a distributing apparatus and all methods of reaching the masses.

Take Pittsburgh, for example. It is not an easy thing to build a district apparatus there. A comrade with organization ability is needed there, a very capable comrade who will work out the plans of how to reach the various towns in this large area, a comrade with initiative, with experience. Do we have many of these experienced people? No, we don't. We have to make them. But this is only part of the operation. The *Daily Worker* apparatus is not sufficient. It will be necessary for the next period to make of the Party a real distributing apparatus of the *Daily Worker*.

In this respect, I think that if we will be able, through our educational campaign, to make every Party member conscious of building the *Daily Worker* circulation, there will be no problem in the units on the question of house-to-house distribution of the *Daily Worker*. We did this before when the Party was much smaller, and with success. Why can't we try it again? The most important of all measures to raise the circulation is *that every Party*

member become a subscriber to the *Daily Worker*. This will solve many problems. First of all, it will mean raising the educational level of the Party members, and, secondly, they will become *Daily Worker* conscious and understand the importance of getting new readers for the *Daily Worker*, which means new subscribers.

In regard to recruiting. Recruiting will increase to the degree that we build up the *Daily Worker*, that we increase our agitation. But more than that, to the degree that we will be able to activize the lower organizations and develop their initiative, and to the extent that our Party will come forward with its independent role in the various campaigns. At this point I also want to emphasize—to the degree that our Party members in the trade unions will really start to recruit. Up until now, in my opinion, there were many reasons why mass recruiting was prevented to some extent in the trade unions. But today, these old reasons are merely excuses. One or two years ago, when we began to entrench ourselves in the A. F. of L. unions, our comrades had to work carefully. But today our comrades are known, their work is appreciated. The question now is to come out more boldly with the independent role of the Party, to make known to the masses what the Party is doing, what the Party role is. By properly mobilizing our forces inside the A. F. of L. unions we shall be able to strengthen our ranks by the thousands.

In the last year we've learned something very important—that the best forces we are getting into the Party are those who come from the trade unions, the most healthy elements, the most eager to learn. Here I want to raise a special problem, which will have to be solved. In the last two years many trade unionists were recruited, and sometimes high standing trade unionists. Now, what kind of Communist education do these trade unionists receive? Comrade Williamson, for example, is the personal teacher of three or four in Cleveland, the same is true of Pittsburgh, Chicago, etc. Do we think it is enough, however, just to train these leaders of masses? These comrades never

saw a unit of the Party, and have had no opportunity for theoretical training. They are very loyal comrades who follow the Party line with regard to trade union problems, but they have not had the opportunity to develop into full-fledged Communists, Party leaders. This is an important problem because there are a few of these comrades in key positions, in high leading positions among organized masses. We will have to find the ways and means of educating not only such comrades, but also all trade unionists if we want to get real results in recruiting, and also get better results in the trade unions so as to entrench ourselves solidly, to come forward boldly with the independent role of the Party.

Do we know all these things? Did we discuss many of these problems before? Surely we did. There is nothing really new before us. Then what is to be done? In my opinion, at the present time there is one thing that has to be done, and if we do it this will bring real results. We have to create the guarantees for the fulfillment of just two main tasks: one, to develop the circulation campaign for the *Daily Worker*, get every Party member to become a subscriber; and, two, to develop recruiting as a daily task.

Such guarantees can be created by establishing the proper apparatus, the proper personal responsibility. In one of our resolutions there is a point where, in speaking about recruiting at mass meetings, it says to "make neglect of appealing for members a breach of discipline". I would say that it should by all means be considered a breach of discipline if *from now on* the district bureaus, section, and unit bureaus of the Party will not have on their agenda every week, or every second week, a review and control of the activities in *Daily Worker* circulation and recruiting. Only in this way will we be able to check up on each other as to what has been done. If we will not adopt such a simple method, we will go along in the old way. The pressure of so many tasks will make us neglect these two questions, unless we give them systematic attention.

We should not lose any time in calling special membership meetings. We must concentrate on the two tasks put forward, even at the expense of other work. Yes, at the expense of many details in our work that can be handled by other comrades. It is only by concentrating exactly on these two simple tasks that we will take a step forward in stabilizing and improving the Party, which is the only guarantee for successful work among the masses.