

Party Campaigns: Thru Branch or Shop Nuclei?

By Martin Abern

IN judging the territorial branch and the shop nucleus the question always to be answered is: which is most effective for carrying out the Party program?

Well, let's take the recent Workers Party election campaign. Speed plus efficiency are especially needed in the parliamentary work. There must be quick and systematic mobilization of the Party membership for all the duties in connection with the election campaign: speakers, literature distribution, collection of finance, etc. Very well. How does our Party function thru the present form of organization, thru the territorial branches?

First, the National office, let us say, issues a set of instructions for the conduct and arrangement of campaign meetings, the widest distribution of literature, collection of funds and so on. This notice of instructions goes to every branch secretary, C. C. C., D. E. C. Our press, to help along, also carries the instructions and propaganda.

Party Branch Slow in Getting Started.

Our party branches generally meet every two weeks, some less often. The branch secretary receives the instructions from the national office. Even if he sends out letters, which is rare, for a special branch meeting, about two weeks elapse before the branch meets to take action on the Party instructions and program for the election campaign. It is safe to say about one-half of the branch, at best, shows up at the meeting. A discussion takes place—where to sell or give away literature, the difficulty of collecting money (a thousand reasons given here) how to secure petitions, if required, and many other things with which every comrade is acquainted.

A few comrades are awake to getting to work in the unions or on the job. But on the whole, life is desultory, they declaim: it will take a long time before the masses are awakened, and more of the same. With religious resignation many comrades continue to await The Day. Only a small part of the branch membership—who will deny?—is mobilized for the elections' campaign after much delay and exertion.

Branch Depends on Active Few.

The election campaign is on! A few street meetings, pretty good crowds—a fairly exotic feeling among the comrades aiding in street meeting work. A couple, at the most, new members brought into the Party. A few neighborhood indoor meetings held with middling success and failures. Comrades discouraged, cynical, some dogged and faithful. A bare handful of the comrades aided in putting even these meetings over. The meetings deal with very general issues, phrasily but not meatily put; no real talk on how to aid the workers in the shops. A huge demonstration meeting follows. Thousands attend, including for the first time in the campaign, hundreds of our Party members and sympathizers. The International is sung, stirring speeches are made, much literature is sold, the comrades feel elated. Then they file home and for most of them the elections campaign is over, except to read the votes the Communists got.

There is house to house distribution of literature, more than usual since the Party is hammering away at that. Who does not know how difficult it is to get an appreciable number of comrades out to distribute literature! How pitifully few. Money is collected, chiefly from the comrades themselves. They make sacrifices. But these sacrifices should and could bring more and better results. Our press gets very few letters from the workers telling how they are affected by the Communist campaign.

Perhaps a few brighter colors could be shown. But that can be left for the other comrades to do. What does remain strikingly plain is that our present organization form is cumbersome, slow in getting the membership into action, and then but a small part of it, and brings small results for the efforts. And if these are the gains

from the election campaign, with its easier, perhaps hectic, means of arousing the workers, because our organizational structure is deficient, how much more deficient is it for more vital and dynamic actions—in strikes, demonstrations, DAILY WORKER drives, and the like? Unspeakable and yet, it must be noted that the present branch form of organization is historically an electoral machinery. It seems its even poor for that.

Now, how about the Shop Nucleus and the Communist election campaign? It beats the old all hollow for speed, efficiency, results. How? Assume we have a Party of Shop Nuclei, what happens?

The National Office issues its program and instructions to the secretaries of the Shop Nuclei. The Shop Nucleus is the Party unit consisting of the comrades working in the same shop, factory, or mill. Within 24 hours after receipt of instructions from the N. O., the Shop Nucleus members can hold a meeting and lay out their work. The nucleus members concern themselves mainly with propagandizing the other workers in the shop.

Shop Nucleus Gets Quick Action.

The comrades know their fellow workers, somewhat at any rate. They have a knowledge of the workers' needs, all of them are directly and constantly up against the same problem, whether it be the boss or shop conditions, strikes. There is a basis of approach by the comrades to the other workers. The discussion can start on baseball or the Prince of

Wales and can easily end in a discussion on economic conditions, politics, the candidates in the field, the Communist program. The workers know each other, that counts a good deal, approach is not so difficult.

So, first, the Party nucleus can get together almost immediately. They can lay out a program of work in the shop; how to start discussion on topics of the day, sell or distribute the DAILY WORKER or other literature to the shop-mates, appeal for funds. Does any comrade doubt how much more successful our October 26—November 2 literature distribution week, successful as it was, would be if systematically distributed directly on the job? As for propaganda meetings, these vital shop discussions and political discussions are worth a dozen neighborhood meetings, altho these could still and will take place, but let us hope in better fashion.

Even from a standpoint of collecting money from our own comrades, did you ever stop to think how much easier a comrade would give up some money when he has just got paid off and has it? A few days later, it's spent for various things—slim chance to get it from him then. One machine shop nucleus in Chicago illustrates that by a regular weekly donation to the Party collected on the job. An accepted duty.

Shop Nucleus Is Organized to Work.

Most important to see is that the Party campaign work brings results because the Party unit is organized for work on the job. If the shop is

unionized, the nucleus can lay out work in the union in support of the campaign. The instrument of the shop nucleus in this case would be the T. U. E. L., in which, of course, every union comrade is active. Comrades speak of the shop fractions, Party committees of action and propaganda in the shop, doing this work. They might, but they don't. The reason for that is because the work isn't permanently organized like that of the shop nucleus, the basic Party unit, is. Of course, shop work is difficult, in many ways, but less difficult and no more dangerous than is a territorial branch. Communist work always has its dangers. That phase of it has no bearing here except insofar as dangers can be removed. That can be discussed another time.

And, comrades, lest we forget, we want a mass party, a mass Communist Party, a Communist Party of and in close contact with the workers, exercising ideological control and trying physically to be with them. This shop nucleus and shop nucleus work makes it possible.

Bolshevize the Party Thru Shop Nuclei.

Without elaborating further, it should be plain that in election campaign activity and more so in the other Party campaigns and activities, the shop nuclei offer the best mediums for Communist propaganda and organization. Shop nuclei will help us Bolshevize, Leninize the party. Forward to Shop Nuclei!

Letters from Our Readers

Use It On The Boss.

To the DAILY WORKER:—I read your encouraging article asking workers to write something of their experience in the shop, mine, mill, etc. So I thought and asked myself, should I or should I not write of the condition in the shop I worked? No, was my answer. I shall not write, because my vocabulary is too poor to express half as much as I feel about the boss and foreman and all the parasites sucking the blood of the workers. No, said I, until I will be able to act, fight, write and call the masses to fight against the capitalist class. I said no until I bought a paper which claims to be a friend of the poor, and also "fights" for them. Then it made my blood boil.

An article like that in a paper where Mr. LaFollette will be the Moses to free the American workers from misery and our present deplorable system. No! Impossible! I looked again and again whether I bought the kind of a paper I was looking for. Yes, it was the same. But how in the world did Mr. Hillquit feel when he read that article. How could our great "savior" Mr. Berger sit in congress and read an article in his paper where it says, "There is not work—and there cannot be work, plenty of work—for all who are willing to work—under the wage and profit system of industry."

And how could Mr. Zigman, Kaufman, Pearlstein, read in their paper "Wages will buy the plain necessities of life." But wages will not buy good food and plenty of it; good clothing and plenty of it; good homes, well located, well furnished, and plenty of them."

And how in the world could Mr. Hillquit, Berger, London, Abe Cahn and all the rest of their clique read "the capitalist class legalizes and holds on to this system thru the control of the government; and the control of the government is seized and held by the capitalist class by means of political parties—parties committed to the capitalist system of industry." And read again (but workers, do not laugh. It is an honest opinion, I suppose so.)

"Thus the workers cannot defend themselves—they cannot escape 'til they have a political party of their own, a labor party for themselves, by themselves, composed of millions who toil on the farms and down in the

mines; toil on the railways, in the shops, mills and factories—composed also of men and women who are unemployed. Clearly it is up to them."

Now, workers read it again and again; read it to the people who believe in the doctrine of that paper; read what it further states: "Without personal hatreds, without any malice whatever, the socialists fraternally seek peace, justice, plenty, life, a full glad life for all. We know that modern machinery, modern tools, modern knowledge, modern methods and means of production make it practicable for those who are willing to work to produce abundantly for all who are willing to work; and that thus want and fear of want can be removed from the lives of all who are willing to work—in a wholesomely reconstructed socialized society."

Who made all those statements? Whom do they represent? Do they mean it? Do they actually fight for it? Ha! Ha! No! I will leave it to the readers, to all of those who believed and still do believe in their honesty to find out for themselves how corrupted and hypocritical are the statements made by people who in reality do not believe a word they say. How many proposals for the amalgamation of the unions were brot to conventions where they used all means, directly or indirectly to defeat them; for they did not succeed in defeating them completely. How many workers and farmers will they ask and influence to vote for a labor faker and an old cheap republican politician, Mr. LaFollette, who is against the labor party, against changing the capitalist system to a workers' and farmers' government?

How many workers were starving from hunger and were put in prisons and killed under the social democratic regime of Germany?

How many workers will be condemned to work ten and twelve hours a day and lower wages in Germany and all other capitalist countries if the Dawes' plan with the help of the social democrats all over the world will be put into effect?

No! We know you and those who doubt it will find out how hypocritical and demagogic to act different than what you say. The DAILY WORKER the Workers Party of America, the Communist Party of all the world, they are the ones who fight and work for a government by and for the working class. And each and every one

who writes and believes in all that which is said, his place is in the Workers Party of America.

J. MARCUS,
St. Louis, Mo.
Member of the Y. W. L.

Editor's Note.—If your vocabulary were as impoverished as you modestly state, that would be an added reason for venturing a description of your boss or the conditions under which you work, rather than a polemic against the yellow socialists, which is a task likely to exhaust even a generous supply of English.

Permit me to say that, tho your editorial is appreciated and is published partly because of its merit and partly by way of encouraging yourself and others to accept our invitation literally, at the same time, indignation against Berger, Hillquit, et al., is a poor substitute for a brief description of some incident that may have occurred at your place of employment. The DAILY WORKER would prefer ten words from the lips of a wage slave on the events of the day than a string of curses at the system in general from a college professor.

Read the article in the magazine again, and follow the suggestions made there. We do not care anything about your style, your grammar or your vocabulary, but in the name of Marx, let us have facts, not editorials. That was the very thing Comrade O'Flaherty's article sought to protect us against, but the foe has again burst thru our breastworks.

Come again comrade. Let us have the facts, let the boss be whom he may.

Open Forum, Sunday Night, Lodge Room, Ashland Auditorium.

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